



powered by amref health africa

Our innovative six!

October 2017



“We offer African entrepreneurs our 60 years of experience in the African health sector and we open up our strong network to jointly develop innovative home-grown solutions for better health in Africa!”

Dr. Githinji Gitahi, Group CEO Amref Health Africa



Preface

Africa's health and development landscape is changing very rapidly. Innovation is key to meeting the evolving needs of patients and collaboration from new and unconventional players is essential.

At Amref Health Africa we recognise how this unfolding, new landscape impacts our core mission – improving the health of people in Africa. Innovative health practices need to be attuned to both community needs and budgets. Innovations not sized or priced to African consumers will not bring about the game changing transformation that is needed. This is where Innovate for Life comes in – a fund dedicated to matching the energy and resourcefulness of African entrepreneurs, with Amref's deep expertise in delivering community health in Africa.

To begin with, Innovate for Life's entrepreneurs will be immersed in the world of Amref – benefitting from our sixty plus years of excellence in community health care, our organizational scale across Africa, international network of Amref offices and deep network of corporate-, institutional- and governmental partners. At the same time, the communities, facilities and partners we work with will benefit from cutting edge ideas with an accelerated route to implementation and scale.

In short, we look forward to learning, changing and Innovating for Life together!

Dr Githinji Gitahi
Group CEO – Amref Health Africa



Mahauty Health Solutions

Mmachukwu Omonode

Clinical chemist and child nutrition advisor Mmachukwu Omonode was increasingly alarmed by the number of patients who came to hospital presenting with conditions easily resolved through better nutrition. For her the turning point came when she treated a seemingly healthy woman with severely high blood sugar who passed away shortly thereafter. She was diabetic and never knew. Her major diet even till the morning of her death was 80% carbs. After the incident, Mmachukwu resigned from her job and began to search for a career option that would enable her to address preventable deaths. The answer came when her daughter was born a year later. She learned that most babies in Nigeria were weaned using pre-packed food, typically high in starch and nutritionally imbalanced.

“ I couldn’t believe that you could be looking fine one day and gone the next just because of bad nutritional choices”.

Using her biochemical background and nutrition training, she began blending natural food options for her daughter. Surprisingly, she faced resistance from older mothers who disagreed with her approach due to traditional feeding practices, but decided to press on. She was soon able to launch her first product line offering preservative **free, nutritionally balanced foods**. A year and a half later, Mahauty Health Solutions baby and child foods are sold across Nigeria through a distributor network and a growing number of retail outlets. Meanwhile Mahauty connects over 6,000 mothers via social media and provides regular advisory sessions using Facebook Live, addressing the very real problem of poor nutrition.

Counterfeit drugs are a significant and growing problem across Africa. Vivian Nwakah experienced this first-hand when a friend's brother died in 2013 after taking fake malaria pills. Born and raised in the US, Vivian first visited Nigeria as part of her MBA program. While there she was intrigued by the country's vibrancy, and chose to stay. Though the market was new to her, Vivian had managed start-up's before and was both excited about the possibility of fostering change in the drug market.

“In Lagos, I am surrounded by tech entrepreneurs who are creating these massive companies and changing the way Nigerians are thinking about business”.

She soon connected with Dr Temitope Awosika, a pharmacist who had set up a hospital in Lagos, and Joao Pinheiro who had been the chief architect for Rocket Internet Marketplace – the backend of Jumia, one of Africa's biggest online retailers. Together the three came up with Medsaf – **a tech enabled pharmaceutical company that improves access to medication by reducing cost, increasing selection and leveraging industry data.** Medsaf's primary comparative advantage is an online, transparent and searchable marketplace for drugs. Medsaf serves medical facilities and insurance companies, and in its one and half years of operation has carved out a niche by ensuring safe medications with transparent pricing that lowers operating costs for clients.



Medsaf

Vivian Nwakah
www.medsaf.com



Mobicure

Charles Akhimien
www.omomiapp.com

Charles Akhimien chose an unlikely path for someone who had gone through years of training to become a physician. After completing his residency, he realised that though health continued to matter deeply to him, providing solutions one patient at a time was not going to satisfy his desire to improve health care and health literacy.. He wanted to see basic health information reach as many people as possible, regardless of their ability to reach a facility.

“I found I was too impatient to be a physician. I wanted to bring health to as many people as fast as possible.”

So together with his medical school classmate Emmanuel Owobu, Mobicure was set up – a tech platform that helps patients take charge of their health through information, community, fun and connectivity. Their first product was Omomi (my child) – **an app that brings young mothers together in an online community to monitor and respond to the health challenges of children under five.** Mothers receive regular child health related updates including a health monitor, wellness and immunization trackers and data delivered through quizzes and games. Since its launch in 2015 Omomi now has over 30,000 users and is growing at a monthly rate of about 8%. With the knowledge garnered through that first app, Mobicure’s team of 12 is building more tech based solutions to deliver healthcare across Nigeria.



Primary Health Vision Care Ghana

Michael Nsowah

www.primaryhealthgroup.org

When Michael Nsowah learned he had not been accepted into medical school, he was crushed. However, a new path opened - to learn optometry. While working at St Patrick's Hospital, in Offinso, Ghana Michael learnt first-hand the cruel human cost of limited access to eye care when he met a young man who believed he was blind, but only required basic treatment and glasses at a cost of \$2 to see.

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“There are no specialists in rural areas, when patients travel to the city it is often too late. We bring specialist care to their doorstep”.

Over 90% of Ghana's eye care professionals are in Accra and Kumasi hence finding eye care in rural areas is notoriously difficult. Also, as many people assume it is very expensive patients delay treatment until their conditions are irreversible, often resulting in permanent blindness.

In 2015 Michael set up Primary Health Vision Care Ghana – **a social enterprise dedicated to providing eye care, maternal and child health services through mobile clinics traveling across rural Ghana.** With his modest savings and a loan, he purchased the medical equipment to start services and partnered with community centre's to host the mobile medical outreach clinics. From these humble beginnings, the eight team members have treated over 15,000 paying patients across Ghana, and they continue to innovate daily to meet demand.



Usalama

Marvin Makau

www.usalamatechnology.com

Walking home from Nairobi's Strathmore University in 2012, Edwin Ingaji was attacked and robbed of his laptop and money. While grateful to survive, he was deeply shaken by the experience and the vulnerability he felt. However, by the time he arrived back to his campus, he was inspired. Edwin and his roommates, James Chege and Marvin Makau, began discussing emergency response times in Kenya, eventually leading the three informatics and computer science students to create Usalama – **a mobile based app for emergency services.**

“We took two years to develop the Usalama app because we wanted an industry level product. We are ready to scale.”

Developed over a two and half years Usalama has been customized to an industry standard product that provides a quick and seamless user experience. The freely downloadable app is activated when a mobile phone is held and shaken – the screen launches options to connect to ambulance, security and roadside rescue services. Security firms provide the app to customers as part of their service. The app also provides a virtual companion option that allows one's movements to be monitored remotely by family or friends and has free links to St Johns Ambulance and the Gender Based Violence Recovery Centre, providing a new frontier in emergency services.

Towett Ngetich is a young entrepreneur bustling with energy and enthusiasm. While studying at Moi University in Eldoret Kenya, he became increasingly aware of the challenges that students face in accessing safe and effective medicines. Many students were newly arrived and unsure of where to find certified care. Having spent time at several mobile development labs, Towett recognised an opportunity and began investigating tech enabled solutions to provide safe access to medical services. He soon realised that he would need the guidance of a pharmacist and connected with Evelyn Achieng, a fifth year pharmacy student at Moi University. Together they set up Uthabiti – **an app based service that connects clients to doctors and pharmacies and delivers medication to their doorstep.**

“When people see Uthabiti, they see something they can rely on. In Swahili Uthabiti means reliable, legitimate.”

The beta version of the app was developed by fellow students, but with \$5000 prize money won during an Entrepreneurship Boot Camp, the Uthabiti team outsourced its software development to India and focused on recruiting clients in earnest. The Eldoret based team concentrates on delivering positive customer experience and growing its network through business partner development. With over 1500 deliveries in its first three months of operation, Uthabiti is now expanding its services to more doctors and pharmacies across Kenya.



Uthabiti

Towett Ngetich
<https://uthabiti.org/>

The Innovate for Life Fund

In May 2017, Amref Health Africa launched an ambitious initiative: The Innovate for Life Fund. **This Fund supports African entrepreneurs in the development of innovative, sustainable and scalable solutions for a healthy Africa.** The fund specifically focuses on the ‘missing middle’ – a growing community of entrepreneurs whose enterprises are too large for microcredit, but too small for traditional commercial investors. Via Amref these entrepreneurs will have access to detailed knowledge about healthcare in Africa and access to Amref’s extensive local and international network of stakeholders, donors and investors. Innovate for Life currently serves as an accelerator programme, but the objective is to grow into a private equity healthcare fund in four years’ time.

The accelerator programme

In September 2017, six entrepreneurs were selected out of 246 applications. The selections were conducted by a panel of African health stakeholders and African investors and entrepreneurs. During the accelerator programme, the six entrepreneurs will convene twice at Amref’s headquarters in Nairobi, undertaking an intensive programme consisting health and business workshops as well as field visits. While in their own country’s the entrepreneurs will receive coaching from both a health- and a business coach. After two months, three entrepreneurs will be selected to enter into a strategic relationship with Amref Health Africa and introduced to a network of investors. Innovate for Life is also working closely with the Grassroots Business Fund, an experienced impact investor with over 10 years of experience in Africa and Asia.





How you can help

To grow sustainable businesses, our entrepreneurs need the support of: local governments, international organizations, private sector partners, knowledge institutes, (impact) investors and NGO's. Let us know if you can help. Together we can help build a healthier Africa! Connect with us via:

info@innovate4lifefund.com, www.innovate4lifefund.com

About Amref Health Africa

Amref Health Africa (www.amref.org), the largest African-led international health organization on the continent, provides training and health services to over 35 countries in Africa. Founded in 1957 as the Flying Doctors of East Africa to bring critical health services to remote communities, Amref Health Africa now delivers preventative, community-based health care. With a focus on women and children, Amref Health Africa manages a full range of medical and public health programs tackling the most critical health challenges facing the continent: maternal and child care, HIV, TB, malaria, insufficient clean water and sanitation; as well as providing surgical and clinical outreach.

Thank you!

THE ELSEVIER FOUNDATION



May 2017, Launch of the Innovate for Life Fund in the presence of HRH Prince Constantijn of The Netherlands

“We believe strongly in Amref’s vision and the creative potential of Africa’s youth. With our longstanding commitment to improving global health, we recognise that the Innovate for Life Fund bridges a real gap - stimulating localised tech driven health solutions for and by Africans.”

Ylann Schemm, Director of the Elsevier Foundation and founding partner of Innovate for Life Fund.