



Social Innovators Programme (SIP)

2024 Success Stories

This report is a compilation of success stories submitted by the 2024 Fellows of the Social Innovators Programme. As part of the evaluation process, fellows were invited to share their experiences, highlighting specific examples of the programme's impact on their personal and organizational growth. The views expressed in these stories are those of the fellows and do not necessarily represent the official views, opinions, or endorsements of LEAP Africa or its project partners.

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Sairis Lucia Bugeraha

Founder, Pugu Hills Eco-Cultural Tourism, Tanzania

My name is Sairis Lucia Bugeraha, and I am the founder and coordinator of Pugu Hills Eco-Cultural Tourism, based in Tanzania. Our mission is to promote sustainable tourism that blends environmental conservation, cultural preservation, and economic empowerment for youth and women in Kisarawe District. Through our programs, we aim to provide meaningful travel experiences while addressing challenges such as poverty, gender inequality, and environmental degradation.

The Challenge/Gap

Before joining the Social Innovators Programme (SIP) 2024, my venture faced several challenges:

Financial Constraints: Limited access to funding made it difficult to expand our operations and implement innovative programs like eco-lodges and permaculture tourism.

Market Access: We struggled to effectively market our services to a broader audience and differentiate ourselves from mainstream tourism operators.

Organizational Gaps: Our internal processes and governance structure needed streamlining to support sustainable growth.

Knowledge Gaps: I lacked skills in strategic marketing, fundraising, and leadership, which were crucial for scaling our impact.

SIP's Role

The SIP program provided transformative support that addressed these challenges head-on:

Capacity Building: SIP's training sessions enhanced my understanding of organizational management, governance, and sustainability. I learned how to build systems that would position Pugu Hills Eco-Cultural Tourism for long-term success.

Mentorship and Networking: Through the program, I connected with mentors who guided me in developing marketing strategies, refining our business model, and expanding our reach. The networking opportunities allowed me to collaborate with other innovators across Africa.



Knowledge and Skills Development: SIP's curriculum equipped me with practical tools for strategic marketing, stakeholder engagement, and leadership. I gained confidence in fundraising and storytelling to attract partners and investors.

Access to Funding: The program exposed me to potential funding opportunities and prepared me to pitch our innovative programs to donors and investors.

Impact and Results

Participating in SIP has yielded remarkable results for my enterprise and community:

Business Growth: We successfully expanded our offerings, including launching permaculture farming initiatives and eco-tourism packages that have attracted more visitors. Our revenue increased by 40% in the last six months, and we've formed partnerships with local and international organizations.

Social Impact: Over 200 youth and women in Kisarawe District have benefited from employment, training, and income opportunities. Additionally, our conservation efforts have restored significant portions of degraded forest land.

Personal Development: As a leader, I have grown tremendously. My ability to strategize, inspire my team, and manage projects has improved, making me a more effective advocate for sustainable tourism.

Key Learnings and Success Factors

The key factors contributing to my success include:

The mentorship and practical training provided by SIP, which helped me refine our approach. My resilience in navigating challenges and commitment to our mission of sustainable development. The support from a growing network of like-minded social innovators who continue to inspire and collaborate with me.

Future Plans

Looking ahead, I plan to:

- **Scale our operations** by establishing an eco-lodge and butterfly garden, which will further our conservation and economic goals.
- **Expand our reach** to other regions in Tanzania, offering culturally immersive and eco-conscious travel experiences.
- **Mentor emerging social entrepreneurs** in Tanzania to contribute to a thriving ecosystem of innovation.

Testimonial

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The Social Innovators Programme has been a game-changer for me and Pugu Hills Eco-Cultural Tourism. It not only provided the tools and mentorship I needed to overcome challenges but also instilled in me the confidence to lead with purpose. I am grateful for the opportunity to grow and contribute to sustainable development in Tanzania. I encourage every aspiring social innovator to seize this opportunity—it will transform your vision into impact.

Raphael Asiba

Co-Founder, Solakilimo Solutions Limited, Kenya

Solakilimo provides reliable and efficient solar powered cold storage and logistic solutions to smallholder farmers in East Africa. Solakilimo enables farmers address food spoilages and energy poverty simultaneously. We empower farmers to preserve their produce, access better markets, and improve their income all while promoting sustainable and resilient agricultural practices.

The Challenge/Gap

Business model- As an early-stage company refining our business model and product offerings was a great challenge. Working in informal regions with limited revenues was making it difficult to charge and sell our products and services.

Team and management- We had a mix up in roles and most of the time some team members got overworked.

SIP's Role

Refined business model and market segments- Through SIP specialised sessions we have been able to identify the most appropriate business model. We

have also segmented the market and it has enabled us to charge depending on the income levels of different segments.

Team efficiency- We have been able to define roles and each team member works in a given line and we have reduced burn outs and conflicts.

Impact and Results

Scaling- Alongside serving fish farmers and traders, we are now serving 100 dairy farmers who use our solar freezers to preserve and transport products.

Partnership- We partnered with Ecobora and Power Africa in advancing productive use of energy appliances and serving at least 30 women groups. **Clean water bodies-** We began collecting and recycling plastic waste from water bodies used in part of solar freezers manufacturing. We have so far recycled 30,000kgs which has created clean water bodies and increased economic activities for these communities.



Key Learnings and Success Factors

Market segmentation- Different segments have different characteristics and income levels. One revenue model will not work across all segments.

Adaptability- We have been able to adapt and overcome different business challenges as a team. There is increased team work and role sharing.

Innovation- We have been able to iterate and produce different versions of the solar freezers depending on the produce preserved and transported. We are also incorporating technology to develop a fresh produce market place which will enable customers access better priced markets.

Future Plans

Scaling solar freezers and cold units access- We will market and provide services across the lake Victoria basin in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Marketplace development- We are working on developing a fresh produce marketplace for customers.

Logistics development- We will develop the 3rd party platform where customers can request for cold transport services from owners of the vehicles.

Rural solar kiosks- We will increase the number to ensure at least 50 are set up annually where households and businesses can access solar lights and clean cooking appliances.

Testimonial

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The SIP fellowship program has been a pivot in our growth journey. The wonderful networks created, SIP buddy matching and the amazing guests for the specialized sessions created and brought renewed energy and strength to focus on our goals. The mentorship program provides a learning experience from mentors who have gone through the same venture building experiences. You realize you are the only one who faces the various enterprise challenges and that keeps the spirit alive.

“Some years you win, some years you build character”- Steve Jobs

Adaeze Akpagbula

Co-Founder, Farmspeak Technology Ltd., Nigeria

Adaeze Ruth Akpagbula, co-founder and COO of Farmspeak Technology is a distinguished innovator with a profound commitment to agriculture, environmental sustainability, education, and digital technologies. With over 5 years of experience pioneering technological advancements and enhancing the well-being of underserved communities, she co-founded Farmspeak Technology. Adaeze spearheads the company's growth strategy and product development initiatives, overseeing all facets of revenue generation and market expansion. She holds a BSc (Hons) in Agricultural and Environmental Engineering from the esteemed University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Farmspeak Technology is an agritech company transforming livestock farming in Africa. Our mission is to empower smallholder farmers with innovative, climate-smart technologies that boost productivity, sustainability, and resilience in the face of climate change. Founded to address food security, climate challenges, and youth unemployment, we leverage digital tools to modernise traditional livestock farming, making it more efficient and sustainable.

Starting off with the poultry industry, our approach integrates cutting-edge solutions, environmental stewardship, and community empowerment into every facet of our operations. Our AI-powered poultry management app enables poultry farmers diagnose and manage diseases in real time, get access to veterinary services, receive daily climate advisories, vaccination alerts, and early warnings for potential issues. This empowers poultry farmers make informed decisions that improve poultry welfare, optimise productivity, and boost profitability.

We also specialise in precision livestock farming, utilising IoT sensors to monitor animal health, control environmental conditions, and manage resources like water, fuel, and feed. At Farmspeak, we are not just saving livestock—we're transforming lives, fostering economic growth, and driving a sustainable future for agriculture across Africa.

The Challenge/Gap

Before joining the SIP programme, we faced a significant challenge in balancing our social impact with financial sustainability. While our mission has



always been to improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers through technology, we struggled to merge this social impact with the need for profitability as a business. The tension between maintaining affordable solutions for farmers and generating sufficient revenue for long-term sustainability was a key issue. Additionally, we faced challenges in developing a business model that would allow us to scale while still delivering on our social mission, creating the necessary resources to invest back into the business for growth.

SIP's Role

The SIP programme played a crucial role in helping us navigate the delicate balance between social impact and profitability. Through the capacity-building workshops, we gained a deeper understanding of how to create a sustainable business model that supports both financial goals and social missions. Additionally, the mentorship we received helped us develop a clearer vision for how to scale our operations without compromising our impact on farmers.

Impact and Results

Since participating in SIP, we have made significant strides in aligning our social impact with business growth. We've seen a 40% increase in customer adoption especially with the newly launched AI farm management app. This growth has been accompanied by a 30% improvement in revenue, demonstrating that our business model is becoming more sustainable. Through our solutions, we've reduced poultry mortality rates to as low as 10%, saved over 840,000 tonnes of CO2 from traditional farming processes, and increased farm productivity, directly benefiting farmers' income by up to 63.7%

The experience has not only strengthened our financial foundation but also helped us establish stronger partnerships, enabling us to scale further. On a personal level, the programme has helped me grow as a leader, enhancing my strategic thinking, problem-solving, and fundraising skills. I have become more confident in my ability to navigate the complexities of the agricultural technology sector.

Testimonial

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Stay true to your mission, but remain open to learning and adapting. The path of a social entrepreneur is filled with challenges, but every obstacle is an opportunity to innovate, grow, and make a deeper impact. Remember, persistence and purpose are your greatest assets.

The SIP programme has been transformative for both me and Farmspeak. It has provided us with the skills, resources, and networks to strengthen our business while staying committed to our mission. I would encourage any entrepreneur who wants to scale their impact while ensuring financial sustainability to take part in this programme.

Key Learnings and Success Factors

One of the most valuable lessons from SIP was learning to create a business model that prioritises sustainability while maintaining our focus on social impact. The programme's emphasis on strategic thinking and financial management helped us make informed decisions that balanced growth with the need to remain mission-driven. Furthermore, the mentorship and networking opportunities provided by SIP were invaluable in refining our approach to fundraising and scaling. Our ability to adapt our approach based on the feedback and insights we received was a key factor in our success.

Future Plans

Looking ahead, we plan to expand our solutions across Africa, targeting Kenya, Uganda, Egypt, Ghana and reach more livestock small-scale livestock farmers who can benefit from our technology. We recently launched the mobile version of our AI farm management app and hope to onboard 5000 farmers by 2025. We aim to integrate advanced AI and IoT technologies into our platforms to further enhance farm management beyond poultry farming to cover for aquaculture farmers and greenhouse growers.

As we scale, we plan to form at least 5 more strategic partnerships with investors, agricultural organisations, and government agencies to increase our reach and impact. In 2025, we are looking to open our pre-seed round and aim to raise at least \$250,000.

Nana Kofi Sarpong

Founder, Merdeo Foods, Ghana

Nana Kofi Sarpong, a recognized European Union Top Ten Circular Economy Business Fellow, a 40 under 40 AGYLE Leader, and a Royal Duke of Edinburgh Award recipient, is a determined leader and serial entrepreneur passionate about impacting and empowering lives.

As the Founder and CEO of Merdeo Foods he is providing a convenient and reliable access to fruits and vegetables by pooling farmers and urban vendors on one platform. Starting a restaurant business while juggling his studies at school, he faced constant increase in the prices of food which shut down his restaurant within two years. These challenges fueled his determination to create solutions that empower communities.

His commitment to mitigating food waste and ensuring zero hunger has been recognized by GIZ, Food and Agricultural Organization, Impact Hub etc. Merdeo has directly impacted over 300 smallholder farmers, improving their income sustainably.

The Challenge/Gap

Before joining the Social Innovators Program (SIP), our enterprise encountered significant challenges that hindered our growth and effectiveness:

1. Brand Positioning and Storytelling: We struggled to properly position our brand and effectively narrate our story to stakeholders, which impacted our ability to attract and secure adequate funding. This gap limited our visibility and credibility among potential investors and partners.

2. Impact Measurement and Growth Tracking: We lacked a structured and clear-cut approach to measuring our impact and growth. This made it difficult to assess how effectively we were empowering our beneficiaries, particularly our target farmer groups, and to showcase tangible results to stakeholders.



SIP's Role

The Social Innovators Program (SIP) has been instrumental in transforming our enterprise by addressing the key challenges we faced:

1. Bootcamp Sessions: SIP organized a bootcamp session where a facilitator provided a comprehensive review on measuring impact and crafting compelling stories. This session equipped us with actionable insights to narrate our brand's journey effectively, making it more relatable and engaging for stakeholders.

2. Impact Measurement Template: Through SIP, we gained access to a comprehensive template for tracking our impact metrics. This tool has enabled us to evaluate our progress more systematically while showcasing clear and measurable outcomes of our efforts.

3. Investor Readiness: SIP provided guidance on aligning our operations and metrics to meet investor expectations. This has significantly improved our preparedness to secure funding and scale our impact.

Impact and Results

Through our participation in the Social Innovators Program (SIP), Merdeo has experienced transformative growth, both in our enterprise and within the communities we serve. The support and resources provided by SIP have empowered us to achieve significant milestones that have advanced our mission and deepened our impact.

One of the most notable outcomes has been our ability to secure multiple grants. These funds have not only provided the financial backing necessary to scale our operations but have also affirmed the credibility of our venture to external stakeholders. With this support, we have taken Merdeo to the next level, enhancing our capacity to drive sustainable change.

The program's guidance also enabled us to expand our reach and impact within the agricultural sector. We have successfully onboarded an additional 200 local smallholder farmers, providing them with market access and capacity-building opportunities. This expansion is a testament to our commitment to empowering underserved communities and reducing crop wastage while boosting farmer incomes.

Testimonial

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To my fellow entrepreneurs, I offer this piece of advice: Believe in your vision and stay resilient. The journey of entrepreneurship is filled with challenges, but your passion and perseverance will be your greatest assets. Seek out supportive networks, and never underestimate the power of mentorship and education. Remember, every setback is an opportunity to learn and grow. Stay committed to your purpose, and success will follow. Keep pushing forward, and your dream will become a reality.

Through this experience, I've learned that the right support at the right time can truly make a world of difference. Social Innovators Program's impact on Merdeo is a testament to the power of believing in potential, fostering innovation, and nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit.

In addition to supporting farmers, SIP has directly influenced the growth of our internal team. We have created employment opportunities for two staff members — a Creative Director and a Warehouse Operations staff. These roles are not only essential for our day-to-day operations but also represent a commitment to fair employment practices and sustainable business growth.

Key Learnings and Success Factors

1. Celebrating Collective Growth: A key realization has been that success extends beyond individual achievements. The journey through SIP has highlighted the collective progress made by all participants. Regardless of who won the Grant Award, each venture's significant strides demonstrate the immense potential and hard work driving our initiatives. The focus remains on striving to be the best versions of our businesses, as this commitment is what ultimately defines success.

2. The Power of Branding: Branding emerged as a critical differentiator in the competitive entrepreneurial space. Through SIP, I learned the importance of presenting a cohesive and compelling business image. Strong branding not only attracts stakeholders but also establishes credibility and trust.

It's a key factor in distinguishing Merdeo from competitors and ensuring consistent visibility in the market.

3. Networking for Growth: Building and nurturing relationships proved essential for scaling ventures. SIP underscored the value of networking, emphasizing that impactful connections often open doors to transformative opportunities. Taking relationships seriously and fostering authentic interactions ensures access to critical information, partnerships, and resources that can propel growth.

4. Impact Tracking and Measurement: SIP introduced tools and frameworks for measuring and tracking social impact. This capability has been instrumental in refining Merdeo's operations, enabling us to quantify the lives improved through our work with smallholder farmers, the time saved for urban vendors, and the climate benefits achieved by reducing food waste. These metrics not only validate our efforts but also enhance our ability to communicate value to stakeholders.

Future Plans

Our vision is to revolutionize agricultural supply chains and significantly scale our operations in the

coming year. We aim to increase our customer base from the current 30 to 300 by leveraging robust marketing strategies that focus on targeted outreach, customer engagement, and partnerships. These efforts will ensure greater visibility of our services while solidifying trust and satisfaction among our stakeholders.

To enhance our operational efficiency, we are investing in building a cold storage room at our warehouse. This facility will address challenges related to storage capacity and post-harvest losses, enabling us to manage larger quantities of fresh produce while ensuring quality preservation. While we have already raised \$20,000 in grants to kick-start this initiative, we plan to raise an additional \$200,000 in pre-seed funding by 2025 to complete the facility and scale our operations further.

Moreover, we will continue to actively pursue grant opportunities and forge strategic partnerships to supplement our fundraising efforts. These resources will allow us to expand our impact, benefiting more smallholder farmers and urban vendors while tackling food insecurity and reducing wastage.

Asiimire Justine

Founder, Power Wheels Electricals, Uganda

My name is Asiimire Justine, and I am the founder of Power Wheels Electricals a social enterprise based in Uganda committed to converting traditional motorcycles into electric vehicles. Our mission is to promote sustainable transportation solutions that benefit both the environment and our community.

The Challenge/Gap

Before joining the SIP fellowship, I was relatively new to management and naively, I underestimated the complexities involved in running a social enterprise. We faced numerous challenges including limited funding to expand our operations and a lack of awareness about the benefits of electric motorcycles. I also struggled with creating strategic partnerships and maintaining financial transparency which hindered our growth and operational efficiency.

SIP's Role

SIP played a crucial role in my development by providing the support I needed to grow into my management role. The program offered comprehensive workshops and mentorships

featuring dedicated support from my mentor, Jill Sawers. Her guidance was instrumental in helping me restructure our business strategic plan, giving me the tools and confidence to navigate leadership challenges. Through the workshops and Jill's mentorship, I learned how to effectively engage with partners and investors which allowed us to secure valuable collaborations, including a strategic partnership with EV-Share.

Impact and Results

Since joining, we successfully converted 17 motorcycles and expanded our fleet to a total of 71 electric motorcycles, transporting over 30,800 passengers and facilitating 2,130 battery swaps in just three months. Our efforts also resulted in a reduction of approximately 25 metric tons of CO2 emissions and positively impacted the environment and providing clean transportation alternatives for our community.



Key Learnings and Success Factors

A pivotal lesson I learned was the importance of mentorship and seeking guidance from experienced individuals. SIP's structured approach helped me recognize the value of strategic planning and effective communication with stakeholders. The mentorship from Jill was a cornerstone of my development enabling me to refine our business model and enhance service delivery to our clients.

Future Plans

Power Wheels Electricals aims to scale our operations further by establishing additional battery swapping stations throughout Kampala. We plan to enhance our marketing efforts to attract more riders and fleet operators and explore potential expansions into new areas.

Testimonial

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My advice to future fellows is to embrace every learning opportunity and actively seek feedback. Building a strong network during the fellowship is crucial as collaboration is key to overcoming challenges. The journey may be tough, but persistence and a clear vision will lead to meaningful change in your community.

AbdulBasit Bashir

Founder, Revnics Energy, Nigeria

I am AbdulBasit Bashir, a renewable energy enthusiast and the founder of Revnics Energy. Revnics Energy is a social enterprise dedicated to providing sustainable energy solutions through upcycling of electronic waste to create innovative solar energy products, helping household and small businesses with affordable energy solution.

The Challenge/Gap

Before joining SIP, Revnics Energy faced significant challenges in accessing markets, securing funding, and building a solid governance framework. We struggled to streamline our operations and establish impactful strategies to scale our enterprise and reach more communities.

SIP's Role

The SIP program provided invaluable guidance and resources that helped us overcome these challenges. Through sessions on market access strategies, financial management, and impact measurement, I learned to structure our business for growth. SIP also connected me with mentors and like-minded entrepreneurs who inspired innovative approaches and collaborations.

Impact and Results

Since participating in SIP, Revnics Energy has improved operational efficiency, secured new fundings, and expanded our customer base. Our solar-powered systems have reached over 100 households, and we've created jobs for 3 individuals, particularly women that will be managing e-waste collection center. The program's lessons on governance and branding have helped establish trust and credibility with stakeholders.



Key Learnings and Success Factors

The most valuable lesson was the importance of aligning strategies with our mission and continuously measuring our impact. Factors such as strong partnerships, clear branding, and community engagement have been instrumental to our success.

Future Plans

We plan to launch solar kiosk as community energy hubs, expand e-waste collection centers, and introduce digital platforms for customer engagement. Additionally, we aim to establish training programs to empower more women and youth in renewable energy and recycling.

Testimonial

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SIP has been a transformative journey for me and my enterprise. To future fellows: embrace the opportunity to learn, network, and innovate. With dedication and the right support, your vision can become a reality. I'm deeply grateful to my mentor and the SIP community for their invaluable support.

Abdulai Barrie

Founder, Salone Agro Market, Sierra Leone

I am Abdulai Barrie, the Founder and CEO of Salone Agro Market, a social enterprise dedicated to revolutionizing the agricultural sector in Sierra Leone. Our platform connects farmers directly with buyers and suppliers, ensuring fair trade, reducing post-harvest losses, and increasing farmers' income. By leveraging technology, we provide real-time pricing, demand trends, and market analytics, empowering smallholder farmers and fostering sustainable agricultural development.

The Challenge/Gap

Before joining SIP, Salone Agro Market faced significant challenges, including limited financial management, inadequate operational structure, and the lack of a robust marketing strategy to scale our impact. Additionally, building trust among farmers and buyers in the digital marketplace was a hurdle, compounded by insufficient technical capacity within the team.

SIP's Role

SIP played a pivotal role in addressing these challenges by providing tailored training that enhanced our operational strategy. The program connected us with industry experts who guided us on refining our business model, improving our financial management, and creating a comprehensive marketing plan. SIP also facilitated access to a network of like-minded entrepreneurs, which enabled knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Impact and Results

Participating in SIP significantly transformed our enterprise. We successfully restructured our business model to accommodate scalability and inclusivity, which led to a 40% increase in farmer registrations and a 25% rise in transactions on our platform. Our partnerships with local organizations have expanded, boosting community trust and participation.



Key Learnings and Success Factors

The most valuable lesson from SIP was the importance of resilience and adaptability in navigating the entrepreneurial journey. By focusing on stakeholder engagement and leveraging data-driven insights, we managed to build trust and ensure alignment with community needs. Another critical factor in our success was prioritizing customer-centric solutions, which enhanced user experience on our platform.

Future Plans

Our vision is to scale Salone Agro Market nationally and expand our reach across West Africa. We plan to integrate advanced technologies such as AI-driven analytics for demand prediction and blockchain for supply chain transparency. Additionally, we aim to launch a farmer training program under Salgro X to promote sustainable farming practices and further empower rural communities.

Testimonial

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To future fellows, I encourage you to embrace every opportunity SIP offers—be open to learning, stay committed to your vision, and collaborate with peers and mentors. My favorite quote, *“True impact begins when you align your purpose with the needs of those you serve.”* SIP is not just a program; it’s a transformational journey that equips you to make a lasting difference

Amidu Dabban

Founder, PlastiBuild Creative Solutions Ltd., Nigeria

I am Amidu Mohammed Dabban, friends call me AmiduClimate. I am the founder and creative director at PlastiBuild Creative Solutions Limited, we are a climate conscious social enterprise that leverages innovative upcycling technologies, local artisanry and creativity to transform metropolitan wastes like scrap tires, fabric, plastic and electronic wastes into functional products such as Ecofeet footwear, Green Furnitures, Eco Interiors and more to tackle the waste management crisis in urban cities like lagos and promote eco-consumerism in Africa.

The Challenge/Gap

Before joining SIP, we had challenges around brand development and designing a feasible branding and marketing strategy for our product lines.

SIP's Role

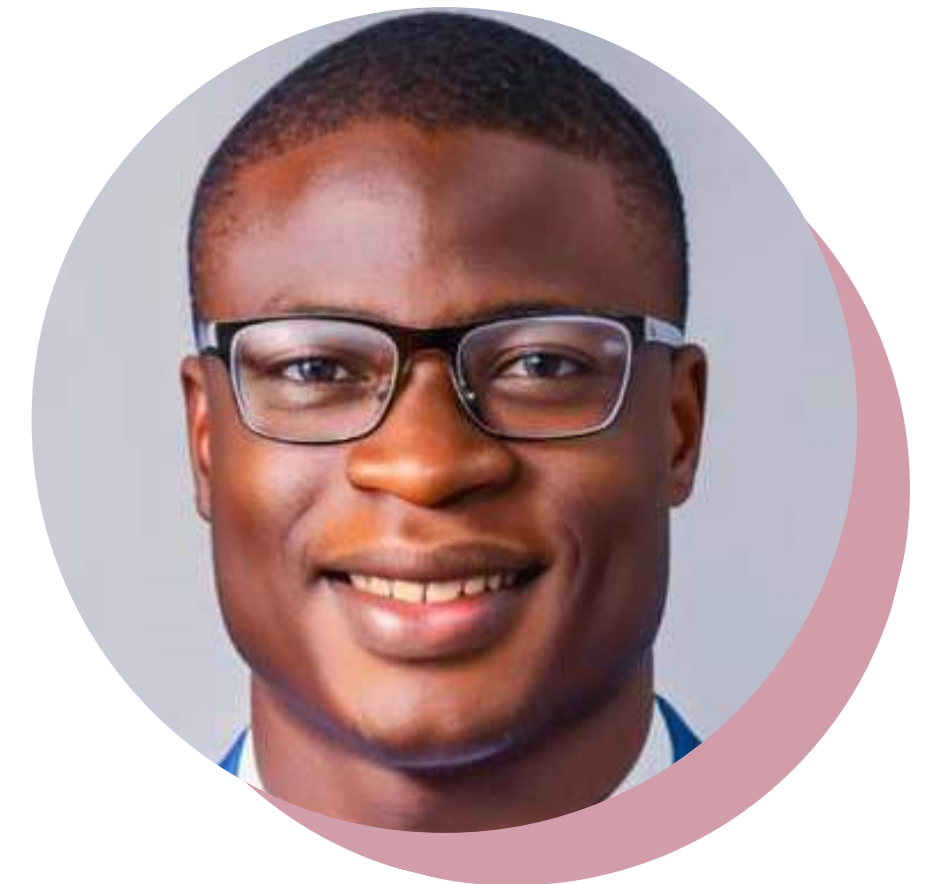
Masterclass sessions during the SIP FELLOWSHIP helped to provide more specific insights on building a sustainable brand development strategy.

Impact and Results

After the fellowship I have been able to design and develop a comprehensive branding and marketing strategy for PlastiBuild which is a 12 months timeline project to be delivered in 2 phases of 6 months each. This will definitely help to reposition our brand in the sustainability market in Nigeria and Africa.

Key Learnings and Success Factors

The sessions on branding and marketing, product improvement and technology integration has greatly helped in making our product better improved and our brand better positioned for not just competition but collaboration.



Future Plans

As we enter 2025, we are set to implement our expansion plan, which is primarily to establish the first PlastiBuild Waste Upcycling hub which will be a community based co-creation center for not just waste collection but rather will feature a design studio where functional products will be designed, developed and launched by local artisans, craftsmen and women within the community, providing a decent and sustainable source of income, encouraging responsible production and consumption and a stable supply of sustainable products for our target market. These products would be handcrafted primarily, with the use of assistive machineries and equipments to ensure maximum quality products delivery.

Testimonial

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BE BOLD, BE PRAGMATIC, BE AUDACIOUS!

Mago Hasfa

Founder, Read to Learn Foundation, Uganda

My name is Mago Hasfa, a literacy specialist and social entrepreneur from Uganda. I am the founder of the Read to Learn Foundation, a women-led nonprofit dedicated to improving foundational literacy among underserved communities. Our mission is to ensure that every child has access to quality education through grassroots literacy programs, in-school book clubs, and sustainable production hubs that recycle waste into educational materials.

The Challenge/Gap

Before joining SIP, my enterprise faced several challenges:

1. Financial Constraints: Limited funding restricted the scalability of our programs and sustainability model, particularly the Book Drive Store..

2. Operational Gaps: Weak governance structures and inefficiencies in program delivery hindered our ability to expand impact.

3. Knowledge Gaps: I lacked expertise in impact investment readiness, strategic partnerships, and scaling social enterprises..

4. Visibility and Market Access: Expanding the reach of our AI-powered SOMA Reading App and literacy tools required strategic guidance and stronger networks.

SIP's Role

SIP played a pivotal role in addressing these challenges and accelerating the growth of the Read to Learn Foundation:

1. Capacity Building: Enhanced my leadership and strategic planning skills, enabling me to refine operational structures and improve team performance.

2. Mentorship and Networking:

- Connected me with mentors who provided invaluable guidance on scaling operations and preparing for impact investment.



- Networking opportunities at the 7th Annual Convening for Impact Investment opened discussions with three organizations:
 - i) Development of the SOMA App.
 - ii) Strategic guidance on setting up for impact investment.
 - iii) Authorship and publication of a book to amplify our work globally.

3. Financial Support and Recognition: Winning the Seyi Bickersteth Award (one million Naira) reinforced our credibility and allowed us to invest in expanding financial and accountability systems.

Impact and Results

- **Program Expansion:** Increased the reach of our literacy programs to impact over 3,800 children, 600 youth literacy champions, and 200 teachers since 2020.
- **Strengthened Systems:** The award money enabled us to upgrade financial systems and enhance operational transparency, building trust with current and future partners.
- **Increased Visibility:** Presenting at the convening raised the foundation’s profile, leading to strategic partnership discussions.

- **Environmental Impact:** Diverted 0.5 tons of waste annually from landfills, producing 1,000+ recycled educational tools for underserved communities.

Key Learnings and Success Factors

- **Strategic Leadership:** The importance of setting clear goals and fostering teamwork for program success.
- **Resilience and Adaptability:** The ability to pivot in response to challenges and feedback.
- **Mentorship is Key:** Guidance from SIP mentors provided clarity on navigating growth challenges and entering new markets.
- **Innovation:** Integrating AI (SOMA App) and sustainability models (Book Drive Store) has ensured long-term relevance and impact.

Future Plans

- **Scaling Programs:** Expand the Literacy Champions Fellowship to East Africa and roll out the SOMA App across multiple countries by 2025.
- **Impact Investment Readiness:** Strengthen financial and governance systems to secure larger-scale funding.
- **Global Reach:** Publish an impactful book and grow partnerships to amplify advocacy and literacy solutions globally.

Testimonial

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The SIP Fellowship has been a game-changer for both me and the Read to Learn Foundation. The mentorship, training, and networking opportunities provided the tools to scale our impact and position us for long-term success. My advice to future fellows: embrace every learning opportunity, stay resilient, and trust in the process. SIP will transform your vision into actionable, sustainable impact.

Agnes Onyekwere

Founder, Project MEND, Nigeria

My name is Agnes, and I am the founder of Project MEND, a social enterprise committed to empowering young women in low-income communities by equipping them with vocational bagmaking skills and entrepreneurial training. We also create high-quality school bags and souvenir pouches to generate sustainable income for the women and fund our impact activities.

The Challenge/Gap

Before joining the Social Innovators Program (SIP), our biggest challenges included:

- Lack of structured guidance to scale our operations and optimize our impact.
- Limited access to resources and networks that could support our growth.
- A need for stronger organizational systems to enhance our production efficiency and sustainability.

SIP's Role

SIP provided transformational support that empowered both me and Project MEND:

- Access to expert mentorship, which guided me in refining our business model and pitch.
- Training sessions that enhanced my leadership skills and helped us design scalable structures for the enterprise.
- A supportive network of like-minded fellows and industry professionals who inspired collaboration and growth.

Impact and Results

Since participating in SIP, Project MEND has achieved the following milestones:

- Increased financial accountability and structure on my team
- Received the Humanitarian of Africa Award
- Expanded our market reach through e-commerce platforms like Jumia and Selar, resulting in higher sales and visibility.



Strengthened organizational systems, enabling us to track impact, scale effectively, and build sustainable partnerships.

Key Learnings and Success Factors

The most valuable lessons I gained from SIP include:

- **The importance of collaboration:** Leveraging partnerships amplifies impact and opens new opportunities.
- **Data-driven decision-making:** Monitoring and evaluating impact ensures that resources are used effectively.
- **Resilience and adaptability:** Staying committed to the vision, even in the face of challenges, drives long-term success.

Future Plans

The future of Project MEND is focused on growth and sustainability:

- Launching MEND 2.0, which includes scaling our production capacity and introducing new product lines.
- Expanding our impact to empower more women, aiming to train 5000 women over the next five years.
- Strengthening our revenue streams by entering the corporate souvenir market and securing bulk school bag contracts.

Testimonial

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SIP has been an invaluable part of my journey as a social innovator. I started off not taking a lot of things seriously, like my finances but now I am on my way to positioning my organization for higher funding opportunities. To prospective fellows, this is one of the best decisions you can make for your social enterprise.

Christian Adoh

Co-Founder, BIO PLANET TMC Ltd, Benin

I'm Christian Adoh, from Benin Republic. Holder of Tropical Agricultural Studies Diploma, and senior technician in Environmental Management. I'm Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer at BIO PLANET TMC Ltd, where I lead initiatives that produce quality granulated organic fertilizer from recycled biodegradable waste, supporting over 18,000 small-scale farmers across Pobè, Benin, for farmlands restoration and increased crop yields.

The Challenge/Gap

Insufficient production capacity. The demand for our organic fertilizer is growing rapidly, and we are struggling to meet it with our designed production strategy. The production machineries we have are not sufficiently efficient for large-scale production, limiting our ability to produce enough to satisfy all our customers. We also faced challenges in financial management in the social enterprise model.

SIP's Role

Technical training in operations efficiency from LEAP Africa improved our production strategy, allowing us to produce more with available resources. Specialized sessions on financial management also helped our enterprise reach huge milestones in organic fertilizer distribution and social impact with effective resources allocation.

Impact and Results

Participating in SIP was a game changer for our social enterprise. BIO PLANET TMC Ltd collected and recycled over 18 tons of biodegradable waste, as part of its eco-friendly fertilizer production, offering cleaner air to over 4,000 inhabitants of Pobè, Benin, reducing carbon emissions up to 3,000kg and diseases related to environmental pollution by waste (malaria, cholera...). We also reached over 100 women and indigenous small-scale farmers with our quality granulated organic fertilizer.



Key Learnings and Success Factors

- Motivation and drive are essential fuels for achievement;
- Develop an intense appetite and craving for excellence in social entrepreneurship;
- Build a strong relationship with your business beneficiaries and ensure they are involved in decision-making processes;
- Transparency and networking are the keys to unlock doors for further opportunities.

Future Plans

Five years from now, we envision our business positively impacting the lives of over 1,000,000 marginalized women and indigenous people across West Africa, transforming over 50,000 hectares of their farmland into fertile, sustainable agricultural hubs. Our goal is not just to be recognized for innovation and quality but also as pioneers in promoting justice, diversity, and inclusion within the agricultural industry. Through groundbreaking initiatives and strategic partnerships, we will set new standards in environmental stewardship and community empowerment, establishing a legacy of sustainable prosperity and global influence, while creating over 1,000 green jobs for youths.

Testimonial

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Keep believing in your social work, and collaborating with peers driven by the same vision and motivation.

Omotayo Sule

Founder, Supremarts LTD, Nigeria

Akeem Omotayo Sule, an Agritech expert from Nigeria, looking to remedy the impact of climate change and excessive use of chemicals through locally made technologies that optimize irrigation and control pests to drive all-year-round farming. Drip irrigation is desired in Africa but costly. Farmers can cover the purchase, but running it for a full season exceeds the benefit. Enter SUPREMARTS: IrriWater, a Nigerian innovation with a completed prototype, tested in 7 places. It saves 45-91% water, equals \$1.690 annual savings for an average Nigerian farmer earning \$1.456/yr. IrriWater is less expensive and more effective using our traditional systems. We'll explore commercial sector demand and assess farmer quality of life after harvest cycle. Having work experience developing innovating solution for Coca-cola, FCMB Lagos coworking space (HubOne), PassionIncubator, Leadspace and various other while gathering experience in entrepreneurship.

The Challenge/Gap

The primary challenges we've been faced with before the SIP program were, in the broader context, we seek to understand user demand, feasibility, and the wide-reaching social impact. Key questions include:

- **Demand:** What is the actual demand for the IrriWater system?
- **Financial Accountability:** How do we separate and document every activity in the company especially monetary involvements.
- **Feasibility:** How much effort is required on our part to install IrriWater on the ground?
- **Social Impact:** What is the overall social impact, encompassing water conservation, higher revenue, and improved quality of life.



SIP's Role

Some of the Insights gained through the SIP programme included:

- **Discipline:** we gained a lot in the aspect of discipline, to making sure all our activities are documented and feedbacks are giving to every member of staff in real-time.
- **Financial constraints** are a major barrier, leading us to explore partnerships for farmer microloans. We developed strategy document that helped us scale our business.

Impact and Results

While in the SIP event, we put into practice every session immediately testing everything we've learnt and highlighted are, To solve these gaps, we employed a multi-layered approach:

- Engaged the support of our partners, the Leventis Foundation and NOAN, to evaluate IrriWater's social impact on farmers' lives.
- Conducted baseline surveys covering family size, income, spending, production, and education.
- Implemented an application to facilitate direct farmer-consumer sales, monitoring adoption and usage trends.

- Gather data on farmers' financial situations before the study and track their decisionmaking as IrriWater helps increase their revenue.
- Social surveys will assess changes in educational opportunities and debt management.
- We used an impact assessment equation considering income, crop sales, and school enrolment to index improvements from the end period of assessment to the initial point and analyze results.

Key Learnings and Success Factors

We understand from the SIP lessons that the practice of organic farming from Supremarts requires extra efforts, capital, commitments, more resources, more attention and mostly less yields than other farming types. We learnt the strategy of attacking these barriers one-by-one by creating these solution all completed and all these are in order to close the gaps with other farming types and make organic farming attractive again and convert others to organic farming again, while giving all farming a fair share to expand their operations using this solutions. By using these built technologies, we can have a. healthier ways of farming again b. increasing farm yield and quality c. harmlessly protect farmers' crop d. optimize

use of water and resources e. optimise associated organic crops f. protecting the environment, product and health of people.

Future Plans

We applied for different applications; we won the Welcome2Africa Innovation Company 2024, Unsung Heroes Innovation Statrup in Africa and we are in the process of entering a partnership with the Katsina State Government for mass production of our Pest Control Device to help their rice farmers after multiple loss due to birds.

Our theory of change posits that by reducing water wastage, enabling year-round farming, cutting water-related costs, and facilitating crop selling, 90% of farmers can escape poverty. We are committed to changing lives, especially for women and children in poverty, by empowering farmers through efficient resource management.

Femi Owoeye

Co-Founder, Trash Monger, Nigeria

My name is Femi Owoeye, co-founder of Trash Monger Company, a sustainability enterprise transforming waste into sustainable raw materials through recycling. We leverage technology, including mobile apps, electric vehicles, and renewable energy hubs, to create dignified work opportunities for women and youth in underserved communities. Our mission is to revolutionize waste management while fostering social and environmental impact.

The Challenge/Gap

Before joining the Social Innovators Program (SIP), Trash Monger faced significant challenges:

- **Communicating Our Impact:** Effectively showcasing the value and outcomes of our work.
- **Limited Network:** Accessing a community of like-minded individuals to support our growth.
- **Organizational Structure:** Establishing systems and processes to scale sustainably.

SIP's Role

SIP played a pivotal role in transforming me and Trash Monger.

- **Networking:** Connecting me with a community of innovative young leaders who opened doors to new possibilities.
- **Capacity Building:** Tailored training sessions addressed personal and organizational gaps, equipping us with the tools to develop strategic solutions.
- **Mentorship:** Expert guidance reshaped our mission, evolving us from a recycling business to a sustainability-focused social enterprise.
- **Organizational Development:** We established a stronger structure, from team alignment to procedural efficiency, ensuring scalable operations.



Impact and Results

Since joining SIP, Trash Monger has achieved remarkable milestones:

- **Documentary Launch:** Our first documentary highlights the transformative impact of our recycling efforts.
- **Awards:** Winner of the Youth Hub Africa Innovators Lab award.
- **Partnership Growth:** Collaborations with ONADO to implement a recycling program at their Abuja office and a residential estate project.
- **Web App Development:** Revitalization of our web app for efficient waste collection and recycling.
- **Enhanced Culture:** Strengthened communication through weekly team meetings and engagement.
- **Organizational Structure:** Implemented systems for financial accountability and operational efficiency.

Key Learnings and Success Factors

- **Strategic Communication:** Leveraging storytelling through videos and visuals has amplified our message and impact.
- **Technology Adoption:** Developing innovative solutions, such as redeveloping our web app and integrating electric vehicles.
- **Collaboration:** Utilizing networks to share resources and expertise has accelerated our progress.

Future Plans

The future of Trash Monger focuses on scaling our impact and ensuring sustainability:

- **Mobile App Deployment:** Enhancing efficiency and expanding our reach through technology.
- **Export Revenue:** Growing revenue by exporting recycled materials.
- **Innovative Products:** Creating final household products from unusable waste.
- **Renewable Energy Hubs:** Establishing 20 hubs managed by women, impacting at least 6,000 beneficiaries.

Testimonial

“

SIP marked a turning point in my entrepreneurial journey. It empowered me to communicate our story, connect with strategic partners, and envision greater possibilities for Trash Monger. The program has significantly increased both my visibility and that of our enterprise. To prospective fellows, SIP will undoubtedly be one of the most impactful programs you'll undertake—one that shapes not just your enterprise but also your entrepreneurial outlook.

This journey is just the beginning, and I am excited for the future of Trash Monger!

LEAP AFRICA

AWARDS

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