



Powered by Amref Health Africa

# Our innovative six!

October 2018



**“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

Amref Health Africa has been in the business of bringing lasting health to communities for over 60 years. We recognise that this is what makes the partnership between Amref Health Africa and our innovative entrepreneurs unique.

We envision ourselves as a bridge between the innovators and the community. Our goal is to ensure that our knowledge, resources, and networks keep our innovation partners relevant to the needs of the public, and that their solutions continue to resonate within the cultural context of the communities they serve. More importantly, we ensure that their solutions are genuine solutions – not just theoretical ones.

This is what excites us about Innovate for Life: we can have a real impact on local communities, while learning new methods of innovating, designing and operating from our entrepreneurial partners. We consider this part of our evolving DNA as we aim to do things differently, bring unparalleled change, and build a foundation for long-lasting solutions.



# Baby Grubz

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Seun Sangoleye

Frustrated by the limited options for baby food and formula in her home country of Nigeria, Seun Sangoleye approached her dilemma with a problem solving mindset. She wanted options for her young infant, but they had to be nutritious, wholesome, and affordable. With that in mind, Sangoleye began crafting mixtures in her kitchen, tapping important resources such as a free UNICEF-funded online course in nutrition and the skills of a computer scientist. Less than eight months after weaning her baby, Sangoleye quit her job and started Baby Grubz, which has evolved from supplying frozen foods to dehydrated foods that can be reconstituted to make stews, cereals, porridge, muffins or fufu.

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**'I created the products for a low-income market, but quickly found out that our products appeal across the board. People are hungry for local, homemade products for their babies.'**

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The products have found markets across different income segments in Nigeria as the company offers nutritious baby food aligned to local tastes. Continued interest and awareness in Baby Grubz are driven by a rapidly growing free online platform, Natural Delicious Food for my Baby, that connects nearly 200,000 young mothers to nutritional advice, baby weaning methods, and Baby Grubz suppliers. The company uses a tiered wholesale distribution system that increases efficiency and provides opportunities for local sellers, often low-income women, to become part of their value chain. Its model offers an all-around win for mothers, babies, and the market.

In Kenya, a country that suffers from a lack of trained health workers and a high (youth) unemployment rate, Ujuzi Fursa offers a double win. Founded in 2017 by a husband and wife team, Jinit and Urvi Shah, who describe their start up as a training company that offers opportunities for employment. The couple identified a market gap where hospice and end-of-life care had become too costly as it was often provided by highly-skilled health workers. Ujuzi Fursa built a curriculum that does not require multiple years of training but still meets the needs of terminally ill and elderly patients. Focused on empathy and delivered through online resources, the caregivers' curriculum has been endorsed by Kenya's National Industrial Training Authority. Although adapted for Kenya, the course was originally developed and certified in Singapore, a country that has a significant elderly population and high standards of caregiving.

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**'We seek to transition post-hospital patients towards independence, and provide terminally ill patients and their families dignified care.'**

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Students enrol for a 28-day training course followed by a 24-day hospital internship and, finally, a two-week assessment period for a successful certification. Ujuzi Fursa then pairs graduates with patients who require home-based care. Since its inception, over 90 students have been trained and provided with a job placement that pays more than twice the Kenyan minimum wage. Some go on to deliver services independently, while others are placed on Ujuzi Fursa's interactive client-rated assignment platform.



## Ujuzi Fursa

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Jinit and Urvi Shah



# Joelex

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Joel Ssimbwa

Joel Ssimbwa's mission is to bring dignity and safety back as a basic human right in his home town of Kampala, Uganda. Working as a community advocacy volunteer in Kampala's informal settlements, Ssimbwa became aware of the challenges that disproportionately affect women and girls in need of sanitation services at night. Accommodations in the slums do not have indoor plumbing and women searching for a toilet to use at night can become targets of criminal activity. Fearing for their safety, many women choose to openly defecate in the alleys surrounding their homes, which exacerbates diseases such as cholera.

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**'Can you imagine having to consider the possibility of sexual assault just because you need to use the bathroom at night?'**

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In 2016, Ssimbwa set up Joelex, a company dedicated to installing accessible high-quality water and sanitation facilities in the slums. Each unit has four toilets, two showers, and multiple handwashing and water collection points. Two units that serve 1,000 clients a day for a \$0.15 daily access fee have now been installed. Joelex is now moving to a subscription model to make it easier for clients to access these services. To expand its offering, Joelex is also building a mobile prototype for its sanitation unit. Each facility is set up to include lights and clean water – a simple intervention that brings services, hygiene, and safety to thousands living in informal settlements. Joelex is patenting the fabricated public water, sanitation, and showering facilities while also partnering with financial institutions in Kenya and Uganda.



# Wastinnova

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Stuart Nyakatswau

The company's unusual name is an amalgamation of the words 'waste' and 'innovation', conceptualised by its Zimbabwean founder, Stuart Nyakatswau. These two elements are at the heart of this company which is dedicated to solving the overwhelming challenge of medical waste disposal by using innovative techniques. As a recent graduate in medical laboratory science, Nyakatswau learned that the regulatory authorities did not have a regulatory framework to guide and ensure the proper disposal of medical waste. Nyakatswau was at first shocked, and then intrigued. It was the beginning of his quest to learn as much as he could about the issue, using skills that he had learned as a member of Zimbabwe's Junior Chamber International.

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**'There are 1153 facilities in Harare and 3303 in Zimbabwe that need this solution. So far, we are only working with 20. That's a market opportunity.'**

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In May 2017, Nyakatswau began providing waste transportation services to several facilities in Harare. But after having provided a solution for ensuring that waste would end in the right facility, he discovered a new issue: the insufficient capacity of the municipal incinerator to handle the amount of waste that was brought in. This is the true innovation of Wastinnova. Nyakatswau and his team have established a critical new system for the waste supply chain, while simultaneously investigating vermicomposting and biogas as options for waste management. Early trials have yielded promising results as the team moves towards the sustainability goal of zero incineration.



# Baobab Circle

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Paul Mugambi

'Health at the press of a button' is a suitable tagline for a system that enables users to get customised updates to track their health. Developed by entrepreneurs in Kenya and Zimbabwe, this app targets the growing number of men and women experiencing the rise of non-communicable diseases in Africa. The app is a product of Baobab Circle, an organisation committed to creating African health solutions for Africans.

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**'Diabetes is a silent killer. Many people are affected, and they don't even know it, which is why we built this tool.'**

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Afya Pap allows users to monitor their daily blood pressure levels and to customise their diets so that their diabetes or hypertension remains within ideal limits. In addition to the app, a self-monitoring blood analysis kit enables patients to check their blood sugar levels on their own terms and at their own convenience. Additionally, Afya Pap connects patients to doctors on an as-needed basis, ensuring that patients have access to quality care. While the platform is global, the information adapts to the location of each user. This configuration ranges from language settings, to food options, and doctors. Customised menus are tailored to food menus that are easily available in a user's given location. This innovative app has already been downloaded more than 10,000 times and is proving to form an invaluable bridge from chronic disease towards wellness.

A near-tragedy is at the origin of Tiny Hearts Technologies, a Nigerian firm dedicated to building lifesaving phototherapy units. Tiny Hearts' founder Virtue Oboro experienced first-hand the terror of her new-born battling neonatal jaundice in a hospital system with inadequate equipment and erratic electrical supplies. Oboro's baby survived, but she was deeply shaken by the experience. Fortunately, Oboro's product design skills kicked into high gear as she waited by her baby's side each day, and Tiny Hearts was born.

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**'An estimated 3 million babies die or face brain damage as a result of untreated jaundice. In our first two years Tiny Hearts has already saved 500 babies.'**

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Within a few months and in collaboration with a team of biomedical engineers and doctors, she designed the first of five prototypes for a mobile phototherapy unit that could run on solar power. Keenly attuned to the realities facing health facilities in her geography, Oboro was adamant about developing a unit that has an infallible power source and can be transported and shared among several facilities in need. Dubbed 'Crib A Glow' the phototherapy units have been used to provide critical care for over 500 babies. The team also works on a community level to share vital information concerning jaundice among new mothers and the facilities that serve them. Tiny Hearts units can be leased or purchased by facilities, so that the costs are no longer an obstacle.



## Tiny Hearts

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Virtue Oboro

# 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. Through Amref, these entrepreneurs have access to detailed knowledge about health care in Africa and can benefit from Amref’s extensive local and international network of stakeholders, donors, and investors. Innovate for Life currently serves as an accelerator programme, but our objective is to grow into a private equity health care fund in four years’ time.

## The accelerator programme

In September 2018, six entrepreneurs were selected from over 300 applications. The selections were conducted by a panel of African health stakeholders, investors and entrepreneurs. During the accelerator programme, the six entrepreneurs will convene twice at Amref’s headquarters in Nairobi, undertaking an intensive programme of health and business workshops as well as field visits. While in their own countries the entrepreneurs will receive coaching from both a health and business coach. After two months, three entrepreneurs will be invited to establish a strategic relationship with Amref Health Africa and be 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, as well as the Elsevier Foundation, a founding partner.





## 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](mailto:info@innovate4lifefund.com), [www.innovate4lifefund.com](http://www.innovate4lifefund.com)

## About Amref Health Africa

About Amref Health Africa [[www.amref.org](http://www.amref.org)] Amref Health Africa, the largest African-led international organisation on the continent, reaches more than 11 million people each year through 150 health-focused projects across 35 countries. Founded in Kenya in 1957 as the Flying Doctors of East Africa, Amref Health Africa's strategic pillars focus the organization's work around human resources for health, innovative health services and solutions, and investments in health. Our partnerships with communities in Africa to create lasting health change are at the heart of all we do.

# Thank you!

THE ELSEVIER FOUNDATION



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

**“The Innovate for Life Fund has proven how critical an African health tech accelerator is, bridging a very real gap between brilliant ideas and investors in Africa. The 2018 cohort of entrepreneurs will further stimulate tech-driven health solutions for and by Africans.”**

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