



AFRICAN INNOVATION FOUNDATION

# drumROLL

QUARTERLY BEAT OF THE AFRICAN INNOVATION FOUNDATION

Issue 1, October 2015

At the African Innovation Foundation (AIF) we are committed to strengthening and building the innovation ecosystem in Africa through multi-disciplinary approaches, be it health, governance, agriculture, technology or community development. In doing so, we want to realise our goal of catalysing the innovation spirit across the continent.

So...join hands with us as we share quarterly updates and news on what's drumming in the innovation sphere across Africa and beyond, as well as sharing trends and developments on the African innovation frontier in line with our mandate - to Engage... Inspire... and Transform.

In this first issue, AIF Managing Director shares some insight on why we should view innovation with a wider lens beyond technology in our lead article, describing how social innovations can positively impact the development agenda.

Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA) celebrates its five-year milestone, seen in the recent launch of our "Made in Africa" campaign for 2016. Undoubtedly the leading innovation event on the African calendar, IPA has grown from strength to strength, leaving an indelible mark in Africa's innovation-for-positive-change story. Read more inside!

Access to law and governance for all Africans is the credo for the African Law Library (ALL) an innovation online program offering rich legal resource and material with a repository of close to 100 000 articles. Meet the new team members and learn about the e-library's expanding country portfolio and new champion developments.

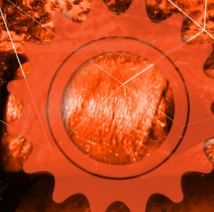
The Social Impact Program for Angola (SIPA) has grown rapidly since its establishment in 2013 with more than 12 projects in 18 provinces of Angola, covering health and nutrition, education, water and energy, and rural empowerment. Here's some insight into how we're innovating for societal change!

AIF Board member and leading African entrepreneur of the SoleRebels shoe brand, Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu, drums up quick answers to our Q&A. Check out her advice for how African women can make innovative strides across the continent ... sure footsteps to follow in!

Find out more about us:  
[www.africaninnovation.org](http://www.africaninnovation.org)  
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AfricanInnovationFoundation/>  
Twitter: @AfrinnovFdn

-Aulora Stally, AIF Communications Manager





## CATALYZING THE INNOVATION SPIRIT IN AFRICA – OUR FOCUS ON SOCIAL INNOVATIONS

*-Elodie de Warlincourt, AIF Managing Director*

Currently, we are seeing much attention on innovation as a driver of economic growth and sustainable development. Technology is also recognized as a strong anchor of innovation.

One of AIF's main concerns is how innovation can flourish in Africa. In addition, we are also questioning which ecosystems are best succeeding in supporting their innovators. We certainly don't want to rank countries or cities, but are interested in sharing a few ideas, some good examples and, most importantly, encourage regular interaction between key actors of these ecosystems.

AIF is also focusing on social innovation, which we understand as innovations with a more specific objective - to impact society positively. Social innovations rely on innovators understanding needs and problems of a community and finding innovative, adapted and scalable ways to solve them. Technology can be an innovation enabler, but very often at the core are people, participation and partnerships: people must benefit from the innovations; participation is critical in mapping the issues and drafting solutions; and partnerships are necessary across different organisations to support implementation by national and local governments, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), universities and schools.

One interesting question for AIF is whether social innovations can really be shared across markets and countries. Would a database of existing solutions in public health enable local communities to better understand their options, then design and adapt solutions? Does a database of this sort really differ from that of health experts doing this work?

Could such a tool ensure that health experts think beyond their own schemes, ideas and approaches, and include local communities, local authorities, other health experts, and possibly non-health experts in IT, transport/logistics, education, and/or any other area in their solution design process?

In the context of its social impact program, AIF is working on how best to nourish the inspiration process. Ideation on possible solutions, we notice, often goes very fast... in fact - too fast! However, ideas nourished by solid stretches of inspiration are critical for successful solution design.

Another aspect we are clearly noticing is the need to shift our focus from strategic planning to more experimentation, more testing and replicating activities that are working well.

One clear lesson is that solutions to social issues require a broad range of skills. We can effectively support social problem-solvers and entrepreneurs by giving them access to a space that allows them to work (test, model, prototype), meet a community of people with varied skills (IT, finance, design, pro-type, manufacturing) and shared interests.

Research, fact-finding, sharing of experiences, experimenting, and feedback loops based on more evidence are the sort of inspirations that can make sustainable social innovations.

Finally, solid social innovations require major effort on the metrics focused on one single core aspect: what is the impact therefore that we want to create?

Our Social Impact Program in Angola (SIPA) focusses on social innovations and has a new website. Check out [www.sipangola.org](http://www.sipangola.org) which will be launched shortly and learn more about how we are supporting community empowerment in Angola.

## ACCESS TO all FROM ALL

### MEET THE ALL CORE TEAM

A year ago, the African Law Library (ALL) our online platform on African law and governance entered its second phase of growth after a technical disconnection from its implementing partner, and full integration within the portfolio of African-focused initiatives under the AIF. It is also a year since Ms Sophie Bussmann-Kemdjo took over as Program Director for ALL, with new team members joining the program as follows:

#### Eloïse Herman-Ouedraogo, Office Manager

A French national with family ties in Burkina Faso, Eloïse is responsible for program coordination and administration.

#### Shella Hurree, Online Librarian

A Mauritian national, Shella is responsible for building the collection of the digital facet of the online library

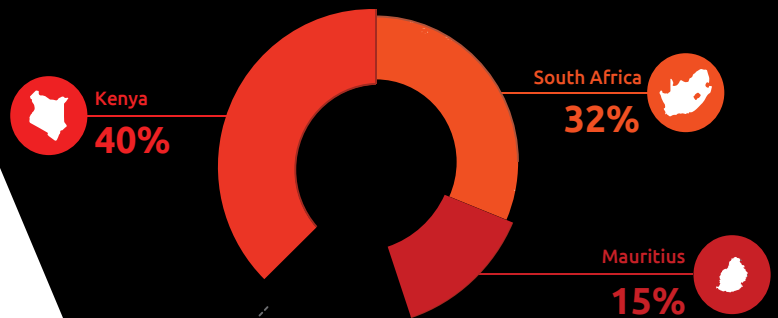
#### Linda Salay, Legal Officer

Linda is originally from Congo-Kinshasa. Her role is to ensure the efficient gathering and posting of all relevant legal content on the ALL Platform, through legal research and partnership development.

ALL Senior Librarian, **John Miller**, retired in October 2015, while the mandate of ALL Senior Legal Adviser, **Dr Patrick Lessène**, ends at the end of 2015.

### AVAILABLE HOLDINGS AND REGISTERED USERS

Close to 100 000 legal documents including books, reference entries, journal articles, and special collections are publicly available in the redesigned digital library. To date, 32% of documents are on South Africa, 40% on Kenya, 13% on Mauritius and there is an increasing volume from Togo.



### WHAT'S DRUMMING... ?

Outreach trips are planned in the coming months for partnership development. Priority countries include Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda and Ghana. AIF will also be represented at the Annual meeting of Law via the Internet (LVI) and the Free Access to Law Movement (FALM) to be held on 9-11 November 2015 in Sidney, Australia.

Check out our revamped website, [www.africanlawlib.net](http://www.africanlawlib.net) and be a part of our social media circles on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/africanlawlibrary.net> and Twitter @AfricanLawLib

A partnership was recently signed with the Government of Rwanda for the promotion of Rwandese legal texts and law experts on the platform. Beyond data collection, strategic new partnerships with pan-African institutions such as the African Union (AU) will help AIF in broadening the ALL network in its efforts to champion free access to law and governance in Africa.

Online library engagement has increased to almost 18 000 registered users, 79% of them based in Africa and 21% located overseas.





## WELCOME TO IPA 2016: "MADE IN AFRICA" CAMPAIGN

After four successful Innovation Prize for Africa (IPA) editions hosted in Addis Ababa (2012), Cape Town (2013), Abuja (2014), and more recently in Skhirat, Morocco (2015), the 5th edition of the IPA was launched on August 3rd 2015 with the theme "Made in Africa". From its inception in 2011, IPA has been gaining strength and increased recognition each year. Today IPA is widely acknowledged for its role as a key mobilizer for African innovators.

Boasting the "Made in Africa" brand, IPA 2016 marks bold new steps towards mobilizing innovation enablers to join hands and ensure that African innovations make it to the markets. This is in harmony with the AIF mission that seeks to catalyse the innovation spirit across Africa, living up to its credo: by Africans for Africa.

IPA 2016 is calling for entries in the following thematic areas: Agriculture/agribusiness; Environment, Energy and Water; Health and

Wellbeing; Information Communication and Technologies (ICTs), and Manufacturing and Service Industry. Over and above the total amount of US\$150 000 split between three winners as seen in previous editions, IPA 2016 will offer unprecedented post-prize incentives to excite not only the winners – but all nominees and participants as follows:

- US\$ 5 000 kick up business boost to strengthen nominees' innovations
- Support to 10 young innovators under the age of 26
- Support to 10 women who demonstrate the best innovations
- An invitation to participate in a Design "Do-Tank" workshop that focuses on 5 to 10 best innovations that can be improved by a touch of designers in order to speed up the process to get to the market
- Media coverage and one-on-one interviews with leading media houses
- The chance to be an AIF innovation champion/ambassador for positive change in Africa

Post-prize actions demonstrate how IPA is more than a mere one-day event, but rather a platform to mobilize for African innovators and unlock potential. This year, more young and women innovators are encouraged to apply because young minds and women are key to African progress. Given that women tend to innovate for their communities, the more women innovators there are, the bigger the opportunity to address pressing challenges faced by African communities.

In its last four editions, IPA has shared with the world Africa's best innovations. Additionally, IPA winners are creating solutions to address African challenges; some of them are also providing world class innovations, positioning Africa as not just a consumer and importer of innovations - but as a Maker and exporter of innovations.

### MEET OUR IPA 2015 WINNERS

A line-up of African ingenuity, endorsing the Made in Africa brand!

#### Prof. Adnane Remmal (Morocco)

IPA 2015 **Grand Prize Winner**.

His innovation is a patented alternative to livestock anti-biotics, a natural formula to reduce the health hazard to cattle and humans, and prevents the transmission of multi-resistant germs and possible carcinogens through meat, eggs and milk to humans at no extra cost to farmers.

#### Alex Mwaura Muriu (Kenya)

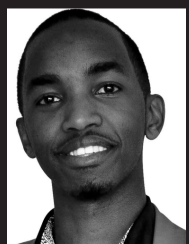
IPA 2015 **Second Prize Winner**.

His innovation, Farm Capital Africa, is a well-developed risk sharing agri-business funding model that draws in investors for a share of farming profits. This is a viable solution to address the inability of committed, small scale African "agri-preneurs" – who lack collateral and credit history to access traditional financing—from expanding their operations.

#### Prof. Lesley Erica Scott (South Africa)

IPA 2015 Winner of the **Special Prize** for Social Impact.

Her innovation, Smartspot TBcheck examines the accuracy of machines used to detect TB diagnosis. This machine has been designed to assess whether these machines are functioning optimally.



More details of the IPA 2016 competition can be found here: <http://innovationprizeforafrica.org/apply-now/>





## TRANSFORMING LIVES UNDER THE SOCIAL IMPACT PROGRAM FOR ANGOLA

Angola is going through a sudden transformation process. One recent factor, the drop in oil prices in international markets, makes economic diversification even more urgent. Importing goods that can easily be produced locally – with all the benefits for the Angolan economy and society – is becoming less of an option.

In this context, the Social Impact Program of Angola (SIPA) portfolio, made up of several projects that contribute to the diversification of the Angolan economy, is particularly relevant, given that its goal is to fast track social and economic development in Angola. The SIPA portfolio is diverse and includes projects to:

- support farmers' associations with skills building, management, production, new technology and crop varieties;
- support local entrepreneurs, important players to diversify rural economy, and rotating funds, schemes among others small businesses like bakeries, hairdressers, and small shops with difficulties in starting and surviving in rural areas.

The Bungo Integrated Development Project provides funding and coaching opportunities for this type of entrepreneur, in the management of a revolving fund.

SIPA is also involved in basic service projects, supporting the use of new methods and technologies in health, water and sanitation, and education. Mobile solutions are being used for health counselling and water services monitoring. In another project, eye surgery is alleviating blindness in low income communities – a procedure that this group of people would otherwise not have access to - in the provinces of Bie, Huambo. Huila/Benguela.

More recently, the AIF team got involved in a creative project where a degraded abandoned factory is being transformed into a center of creativity to improve businesses and services

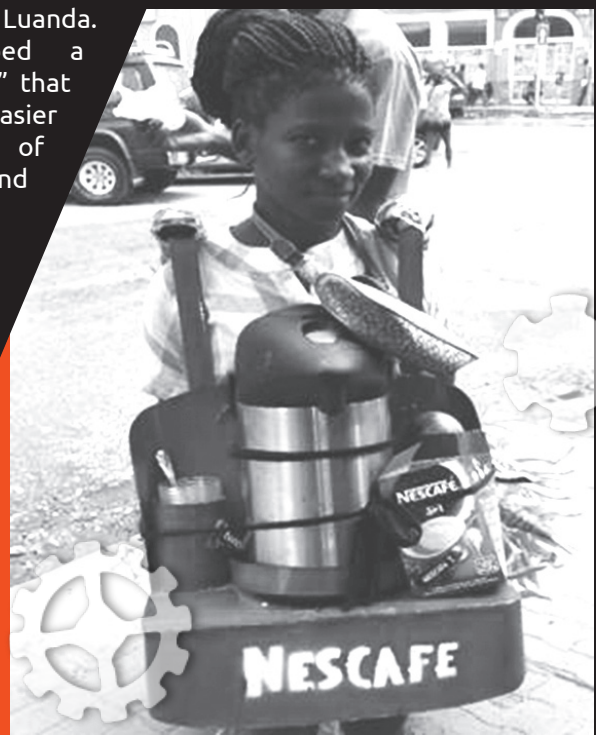
in the surrounds, as well as provide back up support to the other projects. Education with a focus on practical skills, public health and sanitation are the main components of this project.

### SHORT STORY

#### Street sales

Informal street sales is a demanding activity for those who have to walk (sometimes run...) all day under the sun amidst traffic. It guarantees the survival of many, but at great effort.

Authorities tend to look at street sales people as illegals that further contribute to traffic congestion and waste, making life more difficult. In the picture here, we captured a creative street seller and innovator in Luanda. She developed a "cafeteria suit" that allows for easier transportation of her products and goods.



## IN A DRUMBEAT...

We caught up recently with AIF Board member, Bethlehem Tilahun Alemu, founder of SoleRebels, the fastest growing innovative African footwear brand on the continent ...

**Q: What 3 words would you use to describe innovation in Africa?**

Creative. Resourceful. Unique

**Q: What inspired you to innovate in the footwear business?**

I began soleRebels for two main reasons: Firstly, we had lots of talented people in my community, especially artisan talents, and there were little to no job opportunities for these people. That struck me as both an immense tragedy but also an immense opportunity. In addition to artisan talent, there is an abundance of natural resources in Ethiopia from which to craft awesome footwear – everything from free range leathers to organic cottons, jute and Abyssinian hemp - a perfect platform just waiting for something big to happen. So I knew if we could leverage these talents in the correct format, the response from

the market would be incredible. We selected footwear as the platform and away we went . . .

On top of this, I kept hearing over and over again, the phrase “poverty alleviation” in the wider context of Ethiopia and specifically with regards to the community where I grew up. As I entered college and started working to support myself and my brothers, it became clear that poverty alleviation is a myth. What became crystal clear is that prosperity creation is the sole route to the elimination of poverty. And to create sustained prosperity you have to create something truly world class. So that’s what started to really crystallize my thinking.

**Q: Women are a powerful force for change in Africa. What advice would you share with aspiring young African women entrepreneurs?**



I would say have a clear vision of what you want to achieve and the path to get there, then work hard, and then work extra hard because ideas are great but execution of those ideas is everything. Seek advice and counsel from diverse places - don't just stick to one “voice” or source for input. And never ever be deterred no matter the obstacle or the setback. Setbacks and obstacles are a natural part of life. It is how you overcome the obstacles and setbacks that will make you a great person no matter what endeavour you choose to follow.

### THE ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT BEHIND BETHLEHEM

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 2011 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chosen by the World Economic Forum as a Young Global Leader</li><li>• Won a prestigious Legatum Africa Award for Entrepreneurship</li></ul>   |
| 2012 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Included on Forbes ‘100 Most Powerful’ and profiled as a “Woman to Watch</li><li>• Named by Business Insider as one of “Africa’s Top 5 Female Entrepreneurs</li><li>• Chosen as NYC Venture Fellow by Mayor Bloomberg</li><li>• Chosen as one of Arise Magazine’s “100 Dynamic Women,” who are shaping modern Africa</li></ul>  |
| 2013 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listed as #62 in Fast Company’s “100 Most Creative People in Business 2013</li><li>• Counsellor at that year’s One Young World Summit</li><li>• Listed as one of Madame Figaro’s “15 Most Powerful African Women</li><li>• Chosen to join the advisory board of the Green Industry Platform, convened by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the UN Environment Program</li><li>• Chosen by readers of The Guardian as one of “Africa’s Top Women Achievers”</li></ul> |
| 2014 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Named one of CNN’s “12 Female Entrepreneurs Who Changed the Way We Do Business”</li></ul>   |

For more information on Bethlehem, check out: <http://www.solerebels.com/pages/bethlehem-tilahun-alemu>

