

INNOVATE FOR LIFE

An increasing number of African countries combine young populations with political stability, economic growth and robust internet infrastructure—ideal conditions for creating new markets and piquing investor interest. But the challenges for health entrepreneurs include highly regulated healthcare systems, ongoing health challenges, burgeoning populations and investor biases towards energy and agriculture. Innovative for Life (I4L), Amref Health Africa’s health tech accelerator targets this gap by bringing 60 years of healthcare knowledge and deep local and international networks offering dedicated support to entrepreneurs to accelerate Africa’s progress.

I4L was launched in May 2017 and focuses on the “missing middle”: enterprises too large for microcredit, but too small for traditional commercial investors. They combine knowledge-sharing and in-person mentorship with expertise, networks, access to funding and business coaching from an experienced fund management organization. In 2019, after a 2-cohort cycle, they redesigned I4L with help from Accenture Development Partnerships and Metta, a Kenyan entrepreneur community, to focus on creating strong strategic partnerships between the entrepreneurs and Amref country platforms, and moving to demand-driven innovations within designated Amref countries.



Beneficiary group

Top 6 in 2018-19: 2 female and 4 male entrepreneurs

Location

The 2018-2019 cohort: Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Kenya
The 2020 cohort: focus on Kenya and Ethiopia.

Budget

\$50,000

Primary outcome

Creating shared-value partnerships between global innovators and Amref programs through a demand-driven innovation program that accelerates promising health solutions for the African market.

Goals

- *For health innovators:* Improved regional and technical soundness, improved capacity to scale in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), strengthened strategic partnerships, expansion of health enterprises in SSA
- *For Amref:* Increased innovation capacity, strengthened in SSA, increased access to funding for programs, improved efficacy of programs

Milestones

35 applications received

- Final intensive week held in March in Rwanda, in combination with Amref’s Health Agenda International Conference (AHAIC)
- Main round of selection by a business panel from Amref Enterprises, Grassroots Business Fund, Accenture, The Dutch Development Bank FMO, Flint Atlantic etc.

Level of evidence

Level 1	Quasi-experimental
Level 2	Pre-post or cross-sectional
Level 3	Point-in-time study
Level 4	Performance metrics/stats
Level 5	Anecdotal evidence

The impact measured includes the innovator’s level of business readiness for a partnership, the strength of leadership skills for impact and social change, and strength of business and presentation skills. Other indicators include the level of alignment between a health problem and a health solution, the number of MoUs signed between innovators and Amref, the amount of funding catalyzed, and the percentage of funding obtained from sustainable sources. The data sources to be used to measure impact are questionnaires, evaluation forms, project documentation.

Future plans

- Developing at least one shared-value partnership between an enterprise and Amref.
- Leveraging networks built with other enterprise support organizations, donors, and health programming partners.
- Continuing to engage I4L program alumni.
- Measuring long-term outcomes and impact areas.
- Supporting thought leadership on accelerating innovators for health impact in SSA.



“ African health entrepreneurs must create disruptive innovations that are targeted to the bottom of the pyramid to create any lasting positive change in the continent. ”



Oluwaseun Sangoleye
FOUNDER & MOM-IN-CHIEF,
BABY GRUBZ



“ If Universal Health Coverage shall focus more on preventive and promotive health care, then cost reduction in curative health will be realized. ”



Paul Mugambi
COUNTRY LEAD - KENYA,
BAOBAB CIRCLE LTD

“We want to bring the entrepreneurs to meet the NGO people and create a nucleus of energy at the centre. That brings the innovation and creates something that outlives both, and becomes bigger than the two combined.”

— GITHINJI GITHAHI, Group CEO, Amref Health Africa.



“ Societies do flourish, thrive and prosper when people are in good health. Our task today is to advance UHC initiatives, first and foremost to ensure that both young and old have what they need to be healthy. ”



Stuart Nyakatswau
FOUNDER & CEO,
WASTINNOVA

2018-2019 TOP 3

- **Baby Grubz**, Nigeria. Social enterprise for healthy and affordable baby food.
- **Baobab Circle**, Kenya. Africa’s first, low cost diabetes and hypertension mobile app.
- **Wastinnova**, Nigeria. Sustainable methods to decrease biohazard waste disposal from healthcare research centers.

