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The 1st Kofi Annan Award for Innovation in Africa was awarded to Social Entrepreneurs

Federal Chancellery awards three winners—startups from Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe each receive € 250,000 in grants, international visibility and long-term mentoring.

Under the aegis of Austrian Federal Chancellor Karl Nehammer and with the participation of members of the high-level jury as well as national and international guests, Chancellery Minister Karoline Edtstadler and Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg presented the Award for the first time to three African social entrepreneurs on July 11, 2022, in the festive halls of the Austrian Academy of Sciences. While jury members Elhadj As Sy, Antonella Mei-Pochtler, Valerie Amos, Bogolo J. Kenewendo, Yacine Diop Djibo and Kojo Annan attended the event in person, Prof. Muhammad Yunus was present via video message.

[To the photo service of the Federal Chancellery](#)

Innovative, digital innovations in response to global challenges

With its focus on the rapid digitization on the African continent, the Award aims to contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goal "Good Health and Wellbeing" (SDG3). It challenges more traditional developmental approaches and focuses on innovative, disruptive, and entrepreneurial approaches to overcome global challenges. In 2002, Kofi Annan (1938-2018), Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and namesake of the Award, said: *"It is my aspiration that health finally will be seen not as a blessing to be wished for but as a human right to be fought for"*.

In his video message, Karl Nehammer stated: *"With the Kofi Annan Award, the Federal Chancellery not only supports innovative start-ups from Africa with 250,000 euros each but also helps them gain center stage. In this way, we are giving them the chance to network with experienced companies and to drive their projects and ideas forward even more effectively. It is a true pleasure and honor to be the patron of this great initiative. I wish the winners all the best and much success in their future endeavors. My thanks also go to all those involved in the organization and implementation."*

"It is important that we continue raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Kofi Annan Award is a particularly important initiative for this. The 330 applications submitted show that there are numerous innovative, sustainable and creative ideas to implement the UN Agenda 2030. Above all, they also demonstrate the great entrepreneurial potential on the African continent that has

to be made use of," said Federal Minister Karoline Edtstadler, who is responsible for SDG coordination.

Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg declared: *"Once again, war is raging in Europe. The shock waves going with it are also leaving deep scars on the African continent. Much of the progress we have made together in recent years in the areas of development and health care is in danger of being wiped out. To make matters worse, the Russian blockade of food exports could develop into a humanitarian crisis, particularly in North African states. The projects awarded today counter Putin's cynicism with creative and innovative solutions."*

Closing bottlenecks and gaps in care on the African continent with digital innovations

More than 330 applications from 38 African countries have demonstrated Africa's enormous entrepreneurial potential in the healthcare sector. Necessity and a lack of infrastructure are the mother of invention. With modern, digital solutions that, in the absence of established structures, are completely geared to the needs of people and doctors, companies are closing bottlenecks and gaps in care on the African continent. *"Innovation and technology can do so much good in the world, and together we can solve the world's biggest challenges,"* said Bernhard Kowatsch, head of the partner organization World Food Programme Innovation Accelerator. Representatives of the Kofi Annan Award Support Network and the other partner organizations, the Kofi Annan Foundation and the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), were also present.

Artificial intelligence (AI) in particular is improving healthcare services and diagnostics, while digitization is advancing telemedicine and electronic health records. In 2020, 9% of a total of USD 2.4 billion in investments on the African continent were flowing into the health sector, only exceeded by Fintech and Cleantech investments. Digital health is the perfect terrain for so-called "reverse innovations": low-cost, easy-to-use healthcare ideas developed by stakeholders—the communities of patients and physicians—at the point of care. The following three African companies eventually won the high-level jury over:

- [Flare](#): Ninety-five percent or 1.2 billion people in Africa lack access to 911/112 services. Via their digital platform, Flare is able to coordinate ambulance services within minutes.
- myPaddi by [MOBicure](#): Approximately two-thirds of all people infected with HIV/AIDS live in sub-Saharan Africa. The discreet counseling network provides help and aims to increase the sexual health of young people.
- [Vaxiglobal](#): Millions of people in Africa are not vaccinated because they either do not have or have lost their vaccination record. The online solution offers security with biometric data and aims to facilitate broadly effective vaccination campaigns.

A cloud-based platform: Kenyan emergency service coordinates help within minutes

With its cloud-based solution, Award winner [Flare Emergency Response](#) takes remedial action. Right after contact is made, the 35-member team coordinates a rescue service within minutes. The startup has integrated hundreds of clinics and hospitals into its digital platform and closed a gap in primary healthcare. One million people are already using the 24/7 app. Since its inception in 2016, Flare has saved more than 10,000 acute patients, and thanks to Flare's network, 4,000 babies have entered the world with optimal hospital care. In the next few years, the team with a female share of over 50% plans to work with governments and the private sector to expand its digital emergency service to another five African countries, thereby saving millions of lives.

App for young people in Nigeria: Discreet access to sexual and reproductive health

Award winner myPaddi by [MOBicure](#) provides young people discreet access to sexual and reproductive health services. Their website and mobile app give support in the events of sexual violence, teenage pregnancies and HIV-infections. myPaddi offers anonymous one-on-one sessions with doctors and professional counselors, the possibility of communal exchange as well as sexual health products in their online marketplace. Currently, 130,000 people from 16 African countries are using the app.

Founded in 2015 and listed as one of the top 30 health innovations in Africa, the company also provides high-quality access to medical professionals for doctors, NGOs or international institutions. By means of a chatbot as well as new e-centers in rural areas, myPaddi wants to reach out to even more people in the future.

Using biometric data: Digital vaccination records from Zimbabwe to counter vaccine wastage

[Vaxiglobal](#), the Award winner from Zimbabwe, uses contactless biometric scans to minimize waste of vaccination resources, improve data quality with open standards and enable the expansion of immunization campaigns in African countries. Their solution makes use of mobile phones to scan patients' faces and create digital certificates in a cloud. Currently, around 320,000 people are registered; and during the COVID-19 pandemic, Vaxiglobal managed to verify 1.1 mio. vaccination doses in the course of a pilot campaign.

Since its inception in 2019, Vaxiglobal has built relationships with the Ministries of Health in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Global interconnectedness: How the war in Ukraine is causing famine in Africa

The war in Ukraine clearly demonstrates the interconnectedness between Europe and Africa. A global hunger crisis is looming "*that we cannot afford,*" explains David Beasley, jury member and director of the World Food Programme (WFP). Several countries in Africa are struggling with rising food insecurity, and new waves of migration are on the horizon. This year, the Austrian Development Cooperation is making more funds available for humanitarian aid than ever before. Particular attention is being paid to the food crisis.

Factsheet, timeline, photos, infographics and videos about the Kofi Annan Award for Innovation in Africa are available in the Media Corner of the website.

Further inquiry

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