

# INNOVATE AFRICA FOUNDATION



# A NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDER

In 2011, I visited a village in Malawi. At dusk, the children would race up a hill to sit beneath an old tree, waiting for the village elder to tell stories passed down for generations. That evening, the man who'd invited me, now the elder himself, pulled out an iPad and pointed to the sky, toward a satellite his company had placed above the village. For the first time, those children could reach the rest of the world.

I have never forgotten the look on their faces. It's the closest I've come to seeing a dream come arrive in real time.

I often tell an old African folktale: an elephant mocks an ant for struggling under a heavy log, boasting of his own strength. The ant says nothing. She simply calls the others, and together they lift what the elephant could not carry alone. That's not a story about ants, it's a story about Africa. Here, strength was never going to come from any one of us doing it alone. It comes from what we build together.

That belief is why I started Innovate Africa Foundation in 2022. I spent 15+ years building products at Microsoft, Starbucks, CareerBuilder, and Merrill Corporation, and I carried one frustration with me: the talent I met everywhere I went across Africa never lacked ambition, they lacked a bridge to the opportunities that could turn that ambition into transformative change for the continent.

So we built four bridges:

- Inspire Africa Conference convenes the community together.
- Product Leadership Accelerator coaches the next generation of product leaders.
- Wicked Innovation Labs channels capital and resources to back founders solving Africa's hardest problems.
- WorkNigeria connects that talent to the jobs needing the expertise.

Over the past four years, we have reached more than 20 African countries, provided training to more than 1,000 product leaders, engaged with over 7,000 product practitioners, 5,000+ ventures and nearly 100 employer partners.

We're chasing something much bigger now: 100,000 product people equipped to solve Africa's hardest problems, and the 10 million lives that will be impacted by, by 2030. That satellite once looked like a dream too, until the day it was sitting there over the village. I think the same thing can happen here, if enough of us are audacious enough to commit to it.

This work is personal to me. It always has been. I hope, by the end of this letter, it starts to feel personal to you too.



**CHRISTIAN IDIODI**

Founder & Chairman,
Innovate Africa Foundation

WHO WE ARE

# AFRICA'S PRODUCT INNOVATION ECONOMY STARTS HERE.

**20+**
Countries

**7000+**
Individuals

**5000+**
Ventures



The Innovate Africa Foundation is a not-for-profit social enterprise building Africa's product innovation economy. We coach product talent, convene the community around them, invest in the ventures they build, and connect them to meaningful work.

Led by product practitioners who have built and scaled products at some of the world's most respected companies, we bring that standard of practice home and shape it around the realities of African markets, so that the continent's talent can build world-class products for Africa and compete anywhere in the world.

Since 2022, that work has reached over 20 African countries, touched the lives of over 7,000 product builders, and engaged 5000+ ventures building Africa's future.

# WHY WE EXIST

Africa is home to some of the world's most dynamic human capital, and we believe the answers to the continent's most pressing challenges lie in the hands of its people. Yet much of that talent remains locked out of full economic contribution, not for lack of ability, but for lack of the pathways, capital and connections that turn potential into impact.

As the World Bank's Digital Economy for Africa initiative and the African Union's Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020 to 2030) chart the course toward a thriving digital economy on the continent, the foundation is taking practical steps to power that vision through three areas of focus.

1.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Africa's working-age population is growing faster than anywhere else in the world, but a growing workforce only drives prosperity when it has the skills to build for its own markets and the opportunities to put those skills to use.

We raise product leaders and also develop the marketplace that links them with organizations seeking their expertise.

2.

## VENTURE BUILDING & SUCCESS

Many of Africa's most pressing problems are also its largest untapped markets.

We help founders turn hard problems into viable businesses, giving them the capital, resources and support to grow into ventures that create jobs and lasting value for the communities they serve.

3.

## ECOSYSTEM BUILDING

Isolated training without market linkage and ecosystem connection produces skilled talent with nowhere to go.

We bring builders, leaders and investors together through conferences, communities and networks, so that policy, capital and talent intersect to unlock systemic, long-term economic mobility.

# VISION

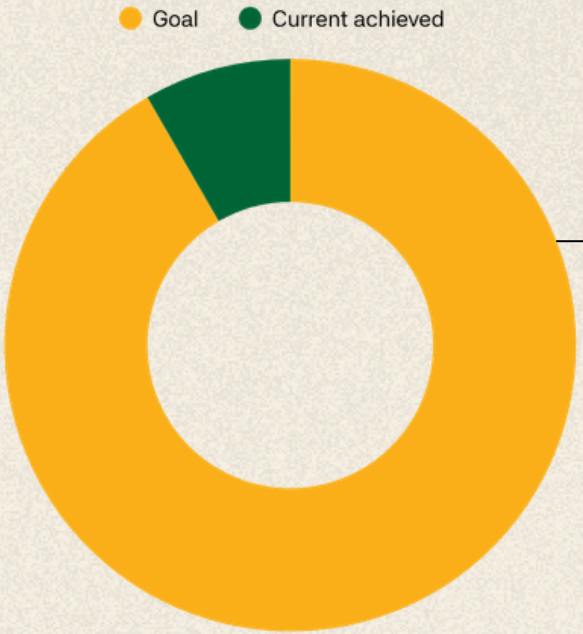
An Africa where homegrown solutions drive sustainable prosperity and global relevance.

# MISSION

To power homegrown talent through structured programs, resources, and networks to build sustainable solutions that solve Africa's most pressing challenges.



# WE'RE ON A CLOCK

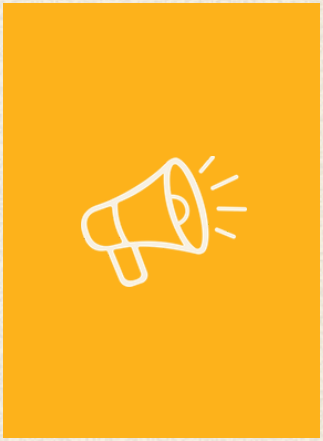



**10M**

LIVES IMPACTED BY 2030

# WE OPERATE ON THE 4 C'S

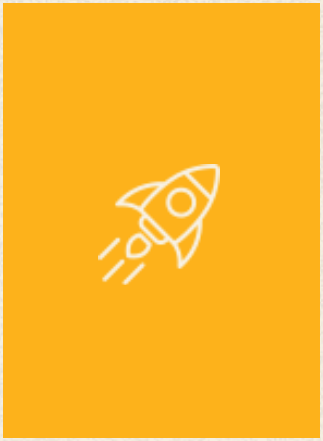
Bridging Africa's innovation gap requires a complete structural architecture. We execute this through a disciplined, end-to-end operating model built on four pillars.



## CONVENE



## COACH



## CAPITAL



## CONNECT

# CONVENE

CONVENING AFRICA'S
PRODUCT COMMUNITY

Research into Africa's tech ecosystems points to a clear pattern, which is that the people who build the fastest-growing companies are the ones connected to others who have already built at scale, whether by working alongside them, learning from them, or being backed by them.

Through our flagship Inspire Africa Conference and gatherings in cities across the continent, we bring the product community together so that experience, talent and capital can reach the people building what comes next.

**16+**
Countries represented

**1200+**
Product builders and leaders across Africa

**200+**
African Tech Founders & Product Leaders

**60+**
Global Speakers & Coaches

INSPIRE AFRICA CONFERENCE

---

**SVPG MASTERCLASS**

**EXPERT TALKS**

**HANDS-ON WORKSHOPS**

**PRODUCT SHOWCASE**

**MEETUPS AND SESSIONS**

# COACH

BUILDING AFRICA'S NEXT PRODUCT LEADERS

Investment in African tech now runs into billions of dollars every year, and more products are reaching Africa's markets than ever, yet recent years have shown how quickly imported playbooks break here.

We built PLA to equip emerging product professionals with the skills, experience, and leadership to build for these markets from the ground up, and to raise the standard of product excellence across the continent.

**300+**

Product professionals upskilled

**02**

Cohorts of 40+ participants annually

**16+**

countries represented

**68+**

World-class Indigenous and Global experts

PLA PRODUCT LEADERSHIP ACCELERATOR

INSPIRE AFRICA CONFERENCE

---

**12–WEEK INTENSIVE TRAINING**

**LIVE CLASSES**

**1:1 MENTORSHIP**

**CAPSTONE PROJECT**

**PEER LEARNING**

**CERTIFICATE ISSUANCE**

# CAPITAL

INVESTING IN AFRICA'S
GREATEST OPPORTUNITIES

The same problems that hold communities back, from unreliable energy to fragile food systems, represent some of the largest untapped markets on the continent.

Innovate Africa's fund deploys catalytic capital to entrepreneurs working on these problems. Through Wicked Innovation Labs, its experimentation engine, entrepreneurs move from ambition to evidence, testing assumptions and strengthening their ventures before and after investment.

Innovate Africa Fund

iINNOVATE AFRICA FUND

Wicked Innovation Labs

WICKED INNOVATION LABS

**1500+**
Builders convened

**02**
Hackathons with 568+ and 20 finalist

**17**
Countries reached

**127+**
Ventures Received Structured Support

**06**
Portfolio Companies

**03**
Founders' Townhalls

---

**CATALYTIC CAPITAL**

**PRODUCT STRATEGY**

**VENTURE MENTORSHIP**

**PROBLEM FRAMING**

**TECHNICAL GUIDANCE**

**INVESTOR READINESS**

# CONNECT

BUILDING AFRICA'S MARKETPLACE FOR EXCEPTIONAL PRODUCT TALENT

Africa's youth population is expected to double by 2050, yet talent on its own does not make a market.

Through WorkNigeria, we are creating a marketplace that bridges Africa's expanding pool of product talent with the organizations that require it. Our platform not only empowers both talent and enterprises but also ensures that Africa's workforce contributes actively towards building a thriving product economy.

**200+**

Job placements

**83+**

Enterprise Partners

**148K**

Talent Pipeline

WORKNIGERIA

---

**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**ACTIVE TALENT MATCHING**

**CAREER READINESS & UPSKILLING**

**CAREER FAIRS**

HOW WE SUSTAIN OUR WORK

# OUR EARNINGS ARE INVESTED IN AFRICA'S TALENT

As a not-for-profit social enterprise, we ensure that every income stretches further to create opportunities for people who might otherwise lack access to programs, opportunities or the ecosystem required to enable them to participate and contribute to Africa's innovation economy.

01

## EARN

Earnings generated from corporate sponsorships, enterprise coaching, and paid participation in our initiatives enables us to implement programs that directly support Africa's most promising talent.

02

## REINVEST

Scholarships and subsidies of up to 100% along with sponsored placements are made available for talented individuals who might not otherwise have access to these programs and opportunities.

03

## AMPLIFY

Partner and donor funding extends that reach beyond what the model can fund alone, opening more doors across the continent.

# BUILT TOGETHER

The work of building Africa's product innovation economy is not ours alone. It belongs to every partner, donor, and institution that shares our belief in what Africa is capable of.



# OUR IMPACT IN NUMBERS

Since 2022, our work has reached across the continent and into the lives of the people building Africa's future.

**20+**
African countries represented across ecosystems

**72**
PLA graduates

**04**
Portfolio companies

**138+**
African tech founders supported

**1,060+**
Scholarship Recipients across our Programs

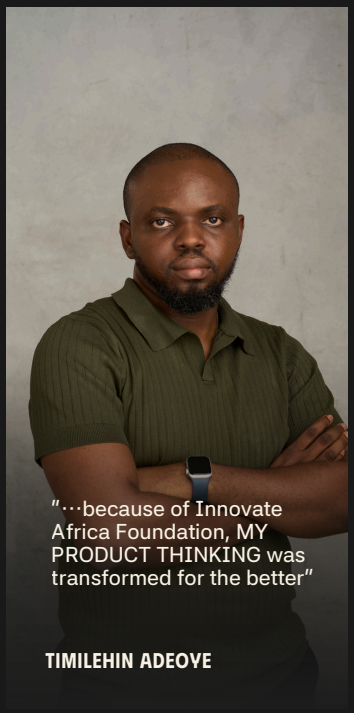
**148K+**
Talent Pipeline

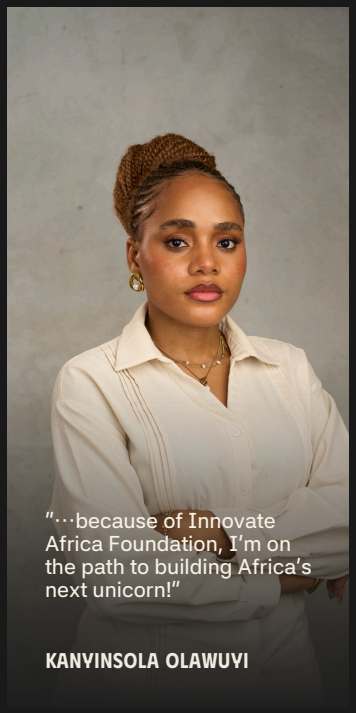
**93%**
Program Net Promoters Score

**10,000+**
Program applications received, demonstrating high demand for upskilling, through our workshops, masterclasses, virtual sessions and more.

# STORIES OF OUR IMPACT

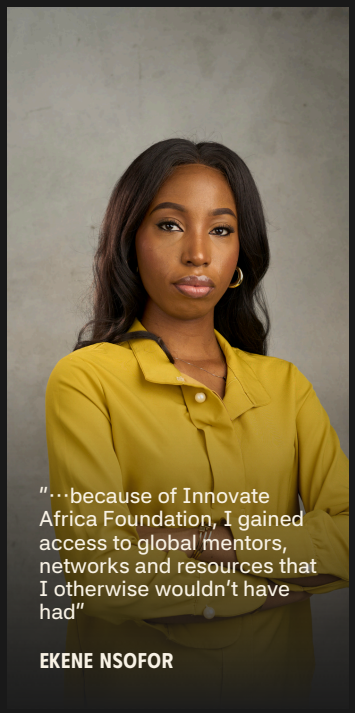
Real change begins with people. Here is how our beneficiaries turned program training, mentorship, and support into measurable impact and sustainable success.









# BECOME PART OF WHAT WE'RE BUILDING.

Every initiative starts with investment, expertise, and belief in what Africa is capable of.
Here's how you can be part of it.

## FUND THE FUTURE

Every initiative starts with an investment. Whether you're making a personal contribution or funding change through your organisation, your support helps create the conditions for innovation to thrive across Africa.

DONATE NOW

## SHARE YOUR EXPERTISE

Your knowledge and experience can shape the next generation of product leaders. Mentor emerging talent through coaching, workshops, speaking engagements, or one-on-one guidance.

BECOME A MENTOR

## SUPPORT A PROGRAM

Our initiatives are designed to equip young talent with the knowledge, networks, and opportunities to help them grow.
We seek partners who are aligned with our mission to collaborate with us.

EXPRESS INTEREST

## PARTNER WITH US

Back our builders with tech infrastructure, tools and resources.
Fulfill your organisation's corporate social responsibility (CSR) goals or co-launch impactful initiatives.

LET'S DISCUSS




# LET'S BUILD TOGETHER

www.innovateafricafoundation.org

info@innovateafricafoundation.org


MOST VALUABLE PRODUCT MANAGER

INNOVATE AFRICA
— FOUNDATION —

Building Africa's Product Innovation Economy

## CONVENE

INSPIRE AFRICA CONFERENCE

## COACH

PLA PRODUCT LEADERSHIP ACCELERATOR

## CAPITAL

Wicked Innovation Labs

## CONNECT

worknigeria