



EMPOWERING AFRICAN YOUTH IN INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

WIPO EYIC
PROJECT 2025



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1. Introduction

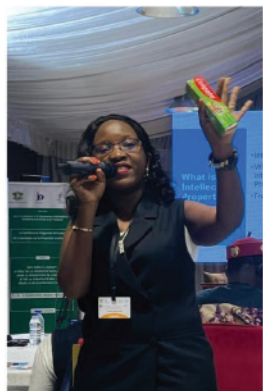
As part of its continued commitment to strengthening intellectual property (IP) capacity-building and leveraging Africa's comparative advantage, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), with support from the Funds-In-Trust Japan Industrial Property Global (FIT/Japan IP Global) and in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), and the Organisation Africaine de la Propriété Intellectuelle (OAPI), convened the Regional Youth Conference on Intellectual Property for Africa.

Hosted by the Government of Côte d'Ivoire in Abidjan in October 2024, the conference brought together over 100 young entrepreneurs, creators, and innovators from 45 African countries. The event focused on equipping participants with the knowledge and tools to use IP to enhance the value of their products, strengthen brand competitiveness, and drive sustainable business growth.

At the conclusion of the conference, participants presented their business ideas to a panel of experts and resource persons assembled by WIPO. Insights gathered from the post-conference participant survey, combined with recommendations from the expert panel, informed the selection of 50 outstanding youths to participate in the EMPOWERING YOUTH INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY (EYIC) Coaching and Mentoring Project for young entrepreneurs, creators, and innovators in Africa (hereafter referred to as the WIPO EYIC Project). The project was implemented from May to November 2025.

This paper provides an overview of the program. A list of participants is provided in the annex.





2. THE PROGRAM

2.1 OVERVIEW

The WIPO EYIC Program was officially launched during a WIPO webinar in May 2025. To deliver high-quality coaching and mentorship support, six mentors were appointed by WIPO, five Intellectual Property (IP) consultants and one branding expert. Each mentor was assigned nine participants for a structured six-month mentorship period.

The allocation of participants to mentors was guided by three key considerations:

- Geographical location of participants
- Language alignment between participants and mentors
- Equitable distribution of workload across mentors

All mentors, with the exception of one, had previously served as resource persons during the Regional Conference on Intellectual Property for Women in Agribusiness. Table 1 provides an overview of the mentors and the geographical distribution of their assigned participants.

Table 1. Mentors and distribution of participants

| MENTOR | LOCATION OF MENTORS | LOCATION OF PARTICIPANTS |
|------------------------------|---------------------|---|
| Rose Mboyo | Kenya | Kenya, United Republic of Tanzania |
| Lillian Nantume Mubiru | Uganda | Ghana, Lesotho, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia |
| Armelle Mvondo Tala Fouda | Cameroon | Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Mauritius, Niger, Senegal |
| Hassane Kaffa | Niger | Benin, Cameroon, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon |
| Tinodiwa Zambe Makoni | Switzerland | All Participants |
| David Jeng | The Gambia | Nigeria, The Gambia |

2.2 OBJECTIVES

The WIPO EYIC Coaching and Mentoring Project was established to build strong foundations for youth led innovation and enterprise development across Africa. The project was guided by the following five objectives:

- 1. Strengthen IP Knowledge and Practical Application**
Equip young entrepreneurs with the skills to identify, protect, manage and commercialize their intellectual property assets, enabling them to make strategic and informed decisions that increase the value of their innovations.
- 2. Integrate IP into Business and Market Growth Strategies**
Support participants in embedding IP considerations into product development, branding and market expansion strategies to improve competitiveness, value addition and long term sustainability.

3. **Deliver Tailored Mentorship and Sector Specific Guidance**
Provide personalized coaching from experienced IP and branding professionals, offering practical and context driven support that aligns with each participant's business model, sector and growth trajectory.
4. **Promote Innovation and Value Addition in Priority Sectors**
Empower entrepreneurs, especially those in agribusiness, the creative economy and emerging technologies, to use IP as a tool for product differentiation, quality enhancement and stronger market positioning.
5. **Strengthen Regional IP Ecosystems and Youth Participation**
Contribute to the development of resilient national and regional IP systems by nurturing a cohort of young innovators who can effectively engage with IP institutions, support cross border collaboration and drive Africa's innovation agenda.

2.3 EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The WIPO EYIC Coaching and Mentoring Project was expected to generate meaningful and lasting results for participating entrepreneurs. The five expected outcomes were:

1. **Improved Business Performance and Transformation**
Participants would apply the skills and guidance received to strengthen their business operations, improve product quality, refine their brand identity and adopt practical IP driven strategies that support growth, sustainability and long term competitiveness.
2. **Concrete Demonstrations of Effective IP Use in Enterprise Development**
Entrepreneurs would produce clear and practical examples of how intellectual property can be identified, protected and strategically applied to create value, differentiate products, increase competitiveness and support market expansion. Building a strong IP systems that will support long term business growth.
3. **Stronger and More Competitive Business Models**
Through mentorship and structured learning, participants would integrate IP into their business models and market strategies, resulting in improved branding, better product positioning, increased customer confidence and enhanced readiness for partnerships and investment.
4. **Documented Success Stories for Continental and Global Inspiration**
The project would generate compelling success stories that highlight the achievements of young African innovators. These stories would serve as powerful tools to inspire and inform other entrepreneurs across Africa and beyond.
5. **Greater Engagement with National and Regional IP Systems**
Participants would become more active users of national and regional IP services, including trademark registration, design filings and advisory support, thereby contributing to stronger IP ecosystems and improved youth participation in Africa's innovation landscape and build a network of IP Champions.

2.4 INTERVENTIONS

As part of the project design, participants completed an IP gap analysis survey to establish the current state of their businesses. The survey, developed by WIPO with support from the mentors, collected information on participants' understanding and use of intellectual property, the nature of their businesses and the challenges they faced. Prior to distribution, mentors explained the purpose and structure of the survey to ensure shared understanding and to facilitate timely completion and submission.

The mentors analyzed the completed surveys and discussed the findings directly with participants. This allowed them to:

- understand the business activities of each participant
- clarify and refine the purpose of each business
- define the characteristics of products that may constitute IP assets and could be protected and commercialized using relevant IP tools
- identify challenges related to product development, production and packaging
- determine the marketing channels and promotional tools used, including social media
- identify customer segments and the challenges of meeting demand and expanding markets
- assess the level of IP awareness, knowledge and understanding within each business
- identify the needs and challenges related to investment, financing and business growth

Based on the program terms of reference, the gap analysis findings and follow up discussions, mentors prepared individual work plans for each participant. These plans were delivered through individual and group sessions, held at least three times per month. The sessions focused on strengthening IP awareness and protection, improving contractual arrangements, developing Business Model Canvas and business plans, enhancing branding and packaging, addressing financing needs and supporting market engagement. In some cases, direct support was provided for product development.

The mentoring sessions addressed the following thematic areas:

- fundamentals of intellectual property concepts
- identification of IP assets and the IP tools that can be used to protect them under relevant national and regional laws
- development of IP based business strategies
- contractual arrangements, including nondisclosure agreements and IP provisions for employees and subcontractors
- application of the Business Model Canvas as part of developing a comprehensive business plan
- brand development, brand management and promotion
- market access and marketing strategies
- access to finance and investment readiness
- the responsible use of artificial intelligence in relation to IP
- international and regional IP systems and protocols
- IP asset identification
- IP valuation and management

The mentoring sessions were mostly undertaken using Teams and Zoom platforms. In some cases (generally where there were Internet connectivity issues), WhatsApp messaging, voice notes and telephone calls were used. There were a few face-to-face engagements when participants were in the same country as the mentor. The program also comprised country visits by mentors.

WIPO, working with the mentors, designed a post-program survey for participants to assess the program's effectiveness. Of the original 50 participants, and five dropped out during the program. A cohort of 45 completed the program, and 45 responses (100 per cent) were received.

During the program, the branding support component delivered substantial and tangible results for participating entrepreneurs. A total of 33 complete brand identities were developed, alongside 2 additional brand consultancy engagements for businesses requiring more advanced strategic support. The design process generated 151 logo concepts, with final selections delivered in trademark-ready formats including PNG, JPG, SVG, EPS and PDF. Each entrepreneur received a full set of brand guidelines, supported by visual mockups to illustrate real-world application across packaging, social media, labels and marketing materials.

To ensure clarity and alignment, the branding consultant conducted a comprehensive Brand Discovery Webinar, issued structured design briefs and hosted 18 consultation meetings, both individual and group based, to refine design direction. Participants were actively engaged throughout multiple iterative review cycles, enabling them to provide feedback and request amendments as their brand identities evolved.

At the conclusion of the process, every entrepreneur received a complete package of final deliverables and practical recommendations for brand deployment, supported by a Brand Guide outlining best practices for consistent implementation across digital and physical platforms. This structured and collaborative approach greatly strengthened the visual identity, market presence and long-term brand positioning of the participating enterprises.

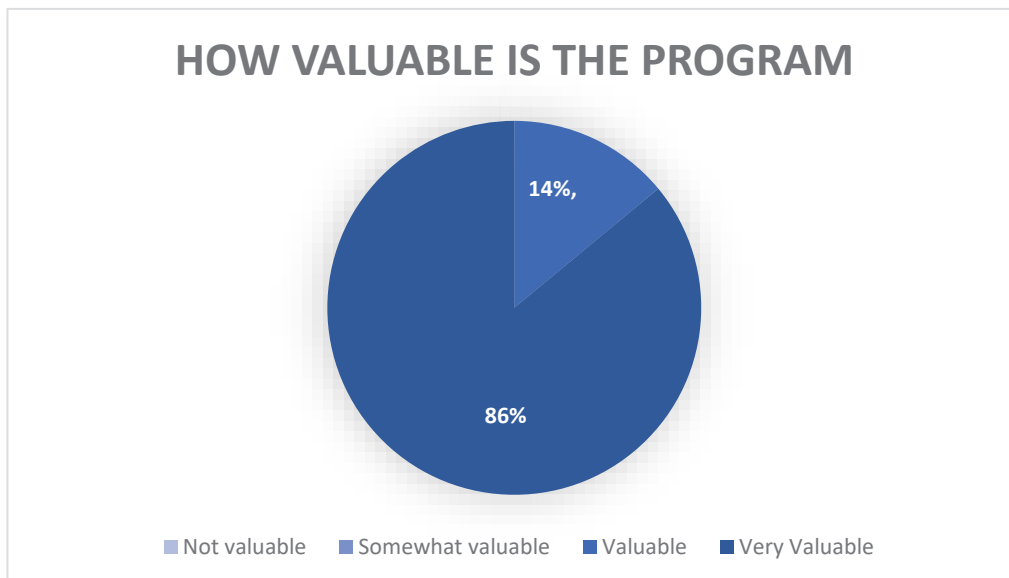


3. OUTCOMES

3.1 PARTICIPANT EVALUATION AND IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

Of the 45 participants who responded to the post-program survey, %86 reported that they found the program very valuable, while %11.6 rated it as valuable. This reflects an exceptionally high level of satisfaction and confirms the relevance and effectiveness of the coaching and mentoring model.

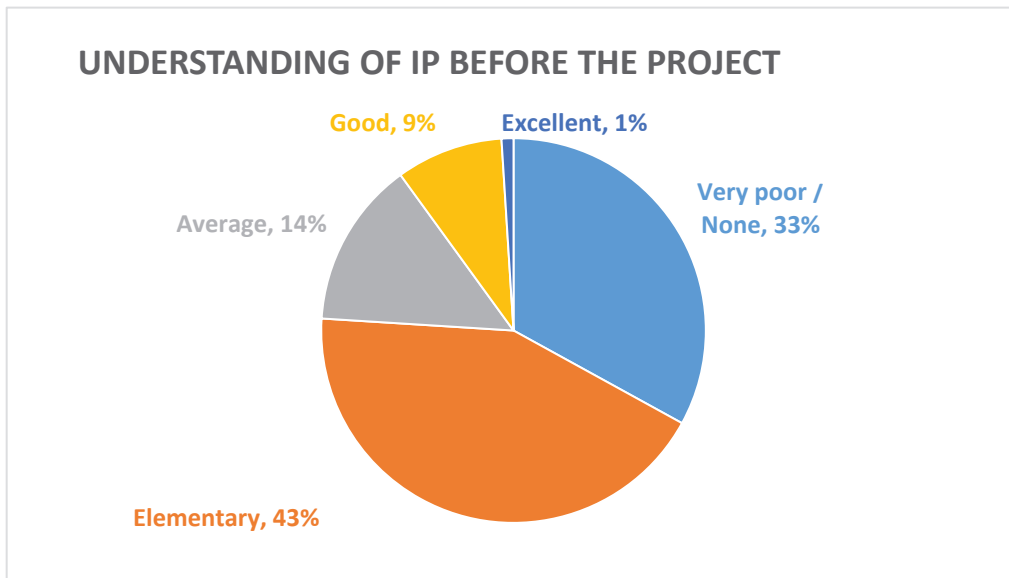
FIGURE 1: HOW VALUABLE WERE THE TRAINING, COACHING AND MENTORING SESSION



Respondents entered the program with varied levels of understanding of intellectual property and business development tools. %90 of the participants reported poor to average IP knowledge prior to joining the program (see figure 2). Through structured coaching, personalized mentorship and practical exercises, these gaps were significantly reduced. Participants demonstrated a marked improvement in their ability to understand and apply IP concepts in real business contexts.

By the end of the program, participants had acquired a wide range of practical skills. These included identifying and categorizing IP assets within their enterprises, creating brands, names and logos suitable for trademark protection, developing a Business Model Canvas, preparing IP business strategies, improving marketing strategies, strengthening networking and collaboration, and designing IP-driven business strategies. These competencies contributed to enhanced business confidence, clearer strategic direction and improved readiness for market expansion and investment engagement.

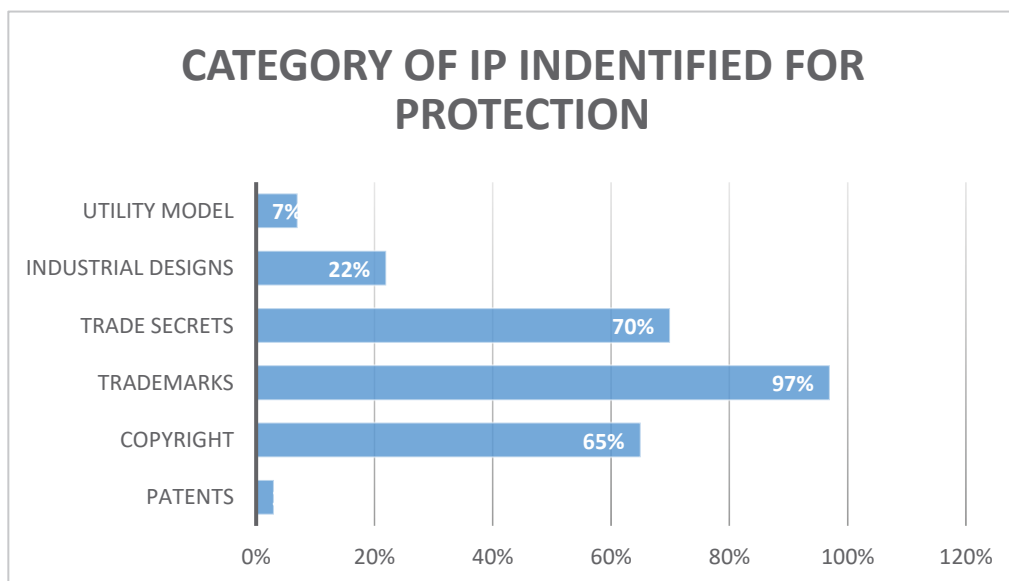
FIGURE 2: PARTICIPANT UNDERSTANDING AND USE OF IP BEFORE PROGRAM



The data reinforces the relevance of the EYIC initiative and its coaching model. With most participants beginning from a low baseline, the structured mentorship, practical exercises and tailored guidance offered by the program were crucial in strengthening their capacity to identify IP assets, protect their creations and integrate IP strategies into their business models. The graph therefore highlights not only the starting point of the cohort, but also the significant opportunity for transformation that the program successfully addressed.

All participants agreed that the sessions greatly enhanced their understanding of Intellectual Property and branding issues relevant to their businesses. Many noted that the training clarified how IP can support business growth and competitiveness. Through the project, they were able to identify the IP assets already embedded in their products and services. Several participants also developed new assets that now require formal protection to maximise their value.

FIGURE 3: CATEGORY OF IP IDENTIFIED FOR PROTECTION



The data shows that Trademarks are the most widely identified category of intellectual property for protection, with 97% of respondents selecting them. This is followed by Trade Secrets (70%) and Copyright (65%), indicating strong interest in safeguarding brand identity, confidential business information, and creative works.

Moderate attention is given to Industrial Designs (22%), while very few participants identified Utility Models (7%) or Patents (3%) for protection. This distribution suggests that most of the innovations or assets within the group are non-patentable or fall more under branding and operational IP, rather than technical inventions.

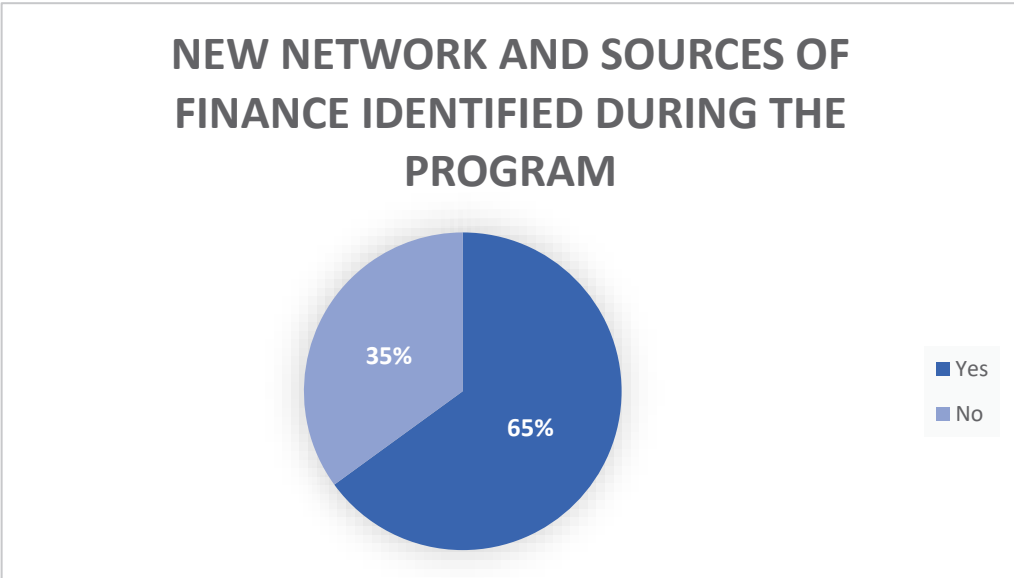
FIGURE 4: BUSINESSES THAT REGISTERED THEIR TRADEMARK DURING THE PROGRAM



Out of the businesses surveyed, %78 (34 participants) reported that they have registered their trademarks, demonstrating strong commitment to securing their brand identities. The remaining %22 have not yet completed the registration process. Most of those who did not register indicated that limited financial resources were the primary barrier, highlighting the need for continued support and affordable pathways to formal IP protection.

The results show that %65 of participants identified new networks or sources of finance during the program, demonstrating that the initiative significantly strengthened their access to potential partners, funders, and opportunities. Meanwhile, %35 of participants did not identify new financial networks, indicating that while the program was impactful for most, there is room to further enhance targeted financial linkage support for some groups.

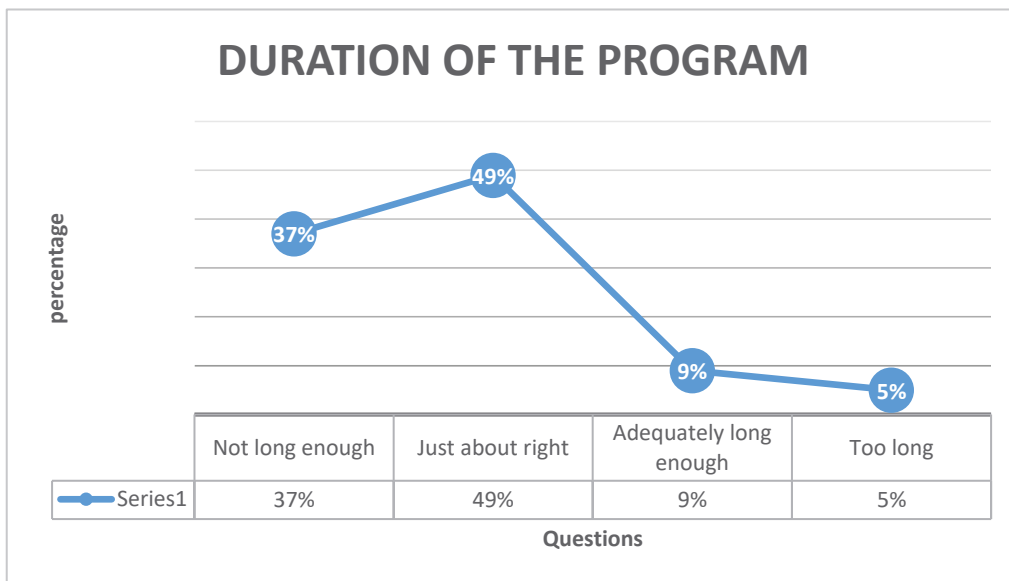
FIGURE 5: NEW NETWORK AND SOURCES OF FINANCE IDENTIFIED DURING THE PROGRAM



Participants reported gaining access to several types of useful networks throughout the program. The most commonly identified network was skills development and training (%81), highlighting the program's strong contribution to capacity-building and professional growth. This was followed by market access (%40), which reflects improved connections to customers, partners, and distribution channels.

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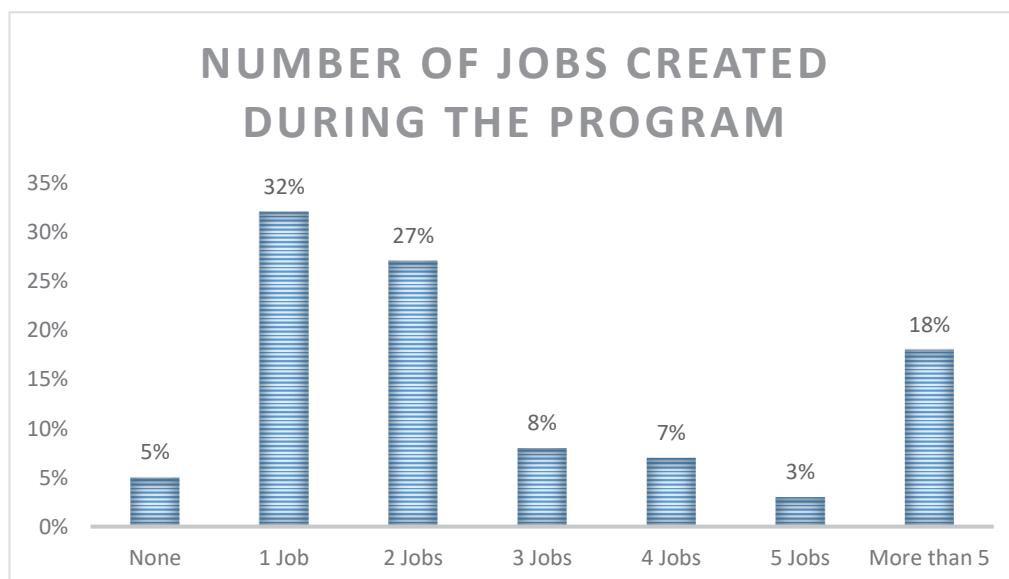
FIGURE 6: DURATION OF THE PROGRAM



Feedback on the program’s duration shows that %49 of participants felt the program was “just about right,” indicating that the length was appropriate for nearly half of the respondents. Meanwhile, %37 believed it was “not long enough,” suggesting a desire for extended engagement, additional sessions, or more time to deepen understanding.

A smaller proportion, %9, felt the duration was “adequately long enough,” while only %5 considered it “too long.” Overall, the data shows strong satisfaction with the program length, with a notable share of participants preferring even more time to benefit from the activities and support offered.

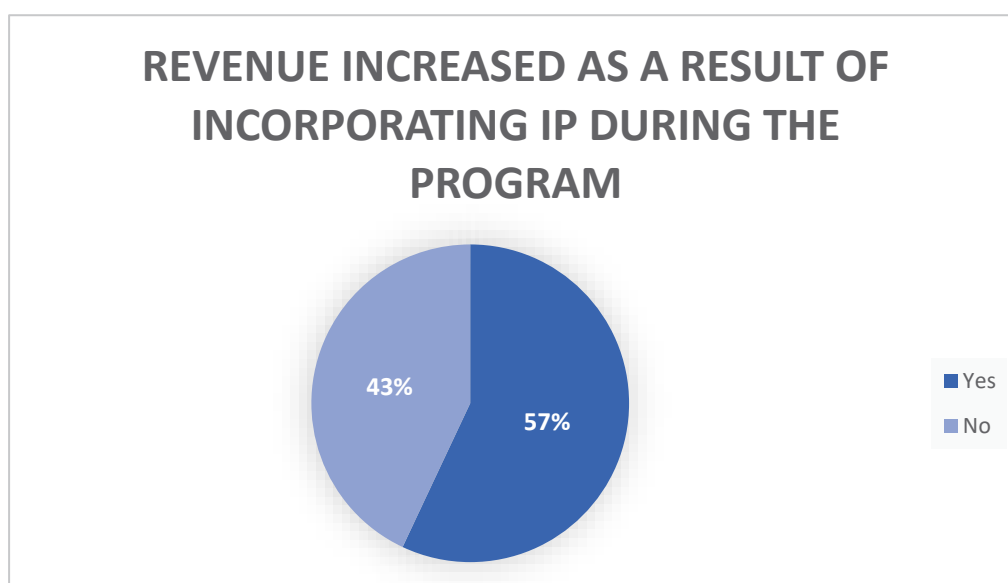
FIGURE 7: JOBS CREATED



The program demonstrated a strong contribution to employment generation among participating businesses. Out of the 45 participants, only %5 reported creating no new jobs, while the remaining %95 generated employment opportunities during the program period. The highest share, %32, created one job, followed by %27 who created two jobs. Additional expansion was recorded among those who created three jobs (%8), four jobs (%7), and five jobs (%3). Notably, %18 of participants created more than five jobs, reflecting significant business growth among several enterprises. Based on the distribution provided, the program is estimated to have supported the creation of more than 130 new jobs during the implementation period. This demonstrates the program's substantial contribution to economic activity and livelihood creation within the participating communities.

An overwhelming %95 of participants agreed that the topics covered during the program were highly relevant to their personal and business goals. This strong level of alignment demonstrates that the curriculum effectively addressed the real needs, priorities, and challenges faced by the participants, ensuring that the knowledge and skills gained could be directly applied to advance their entrepreneurial and innovation objectives.

FIGURE 8: REVENUES INCREASED AS A RESULT OF INCORPORATING IP INTO YOUR BUSINESS/ DURING THE PROGRAMME



The data indicates that %57 of participants experienced an increase in revenue as a direct result of incorporating intellectual property (IP) strategies during the program. This demonstrates that more than half of the businesses were able to translate strengthened IP management into tangible financial gains.

Meanwhile, %43 did not report a revenue increase within the program period. This suggests that although the IP integration was valuable, some businesses may require additional time, market development, or further support before revenue impacts become visible.

3.2 PARTICIPANT IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF THE PROJECT

All responding participants reported that the program and mentor had a significant impact on their personal and professional growth. Below are selected testimonials in response to the post-program survey:

✔ "I successfully registered my brand transitioning it from Afro Bliss to Triafro a name that embodies our commitment to authenticity, quality and cultural pride. The improvements have boosted my confidence allowing me to connect more deeply with my customers and build trust in my brand. I have more customers now." **Kayaga Patricia**

✔ "This EYIC program has been transformational for both my personal growth as an entrepreneur and Innobid's strategic development. The comprehensive approach to IP education has equipped me with knowledge that I consider essential for any serious technology entrepreneur in today's competitive landscape." **Eliud Luutsa**

✔ "Both my partners and I have become more aware of intellectual property and its importance. TBR Capitol has began protecting its potential IP Assets. I now know the importance of having a consistent trademark and aim to ensure that my business is IP inclusive. Previously, my pitching was below par but during the coaching sessions I have been able to improve on my pitching and how I present my business to investors." **TRACY MILDRED ODUOR**





“During the coaching and mentoring period, I achieved several important milestones in strengthening the IP foundation of my venture. I gained a deeper understanding of IP protection strategies, including trademarks, branding, and safeguarding innovative processes and refined our value proposition, making our offerings more competitive. I successfully developed a clearer roadmap for protecting our unique tree-tagging system and nursery innovations, while also enhancing documentation for potential future filings. The program helped me refine our brand identity, improve our market positioning, and integrate IP considerations into our long-term business strategy. Overall, the period significantly increased my capacity to manage, protect, and leverage IP assets for sustainability and growth. We are currently pursuing a partnership with the National Environment Agency through the Go-Green Gambia Initiative. This collaboration aims to strengthen our restoration efforts, expand tree planting/growing activities, and enhance environmental along the urban roads. The partnership also opens pathways for future funding and technical support to scale our impact.” **Samba Faye**



“Through the support I have my Trademark registered, developed a New brand and logo designed. Also Secured a contract worth USD000 55 with The World Food Programme and also a Partnerships with Vodacom Lesotho to expand our product reach.” **Qoane Mothibeli**

“Developed and registered my first trademark, Kaymosh, now officially in the publication stage. Understood and applied strategies for brand protection and commercialization, strengthening the future of my business. Before the mentorship, my work was known only through word of mouth. Today, my business has a clear identity under the brand Kaymosh, backed by a registered trademark and consistent branding. This has made my services look more professional and trustworthy. My mobile salon has transitioned from a basic house-call service to a strategically structured beauty enterprise with defined products, plans, and long-term growth direction. I moved beyond offering services only now I am developing the Kaymosh Herbal Hair Food and the Kaymosh Herbal Strength Complex™, expanding my income streams and increasing the value of my business. Clients now take my business more seriously because, I have a registered trademark, I communicate like a brand owner, I have professionally developed product concepts. This shift has increased client confidence and loyalty. Using tools learned in the mentorship like the Business Model Canvas and value proposition techniques, I now plan better, understand my customer segments, and make informed business decisions. My messaging has improved significantly. I now communicate the value of Kaymosh clearly, professionally, and confidently, especially on digital platforms. As both an entrepreneur and a public officer, I now apply IP practically: protecting my brand, identifying IP embedded in my products, this makes my business more competitive and future-ready. The greatest improvement is personal and professional transformation. I now believe in my business, in my brand, and in the potential of Kaymosh to grow beyond mobile services into a recognized beauty line. this mentorship program has significantly deepened my practical understanding of IP beyond legal theory, adding immense value to my daily work. It has boosted my confidence in advising and supporting local entrepreneurs and innovators, equipping me with real-world insights that I can share with others. Through mentorship, I now document processes, maintain product development notes, monitor business performance, and set targets, all signs of a more mature enterprise and I have a partnership with Basotho Enterprise Development Corporation (BEDCO) Kaymosh is now on a path that can attract retail stores, beauty supply outlets, donor support, partnerships. All because the business is well-defined, protected, and scalable.” **Shoeshoe Shoaepane**



“During the EMPOWERING YOUNG ENTREPRENEUR IN INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY coaching and mentorship period. I was able to work on my trademark from designing my logo and working on its registrations and it's on the gazetting level. My business has been able to improve on its products and it has managed to attract customers.” **Esther Nakiryowa**

“My knowledge of IP drastically increased and I now how important and beneficial IP is in my business.” **Iruke Ruth Amarachi**



“I was able to develop IP strategy with my mentor. rebranded my logo , and registered my trademark. Through the program coaching and mentorship I was able to rebrand my logo and branding materials (Packaging). Which attracted ITC and the ready Salone project that support my participation at the Africa Tech Festival in Cape Town South Africa.” **Abubakarr Ibrahim Ndopaie**

“Je prévois de déposer officiellement ma marque et de faire signer des contrats de cession de droits aux personnes ayant réalisé les logos”. **Diara NDIAYE**



“During the mentoring period, NadreliE experienced a period of significant growth and transformation. The business made a progressive transition to glass and bamboo containers, reflecting a stronger commitment to sustainability and premium quality. The production atelier in Bingerville was improved and standardised, with the introduction of internal procedures that strengthened efficiency and consistency.

At the same time, the brand’s visual identity was refined, leading to a clearer and more premium market positioning. The mentoring support also helped formalise important aspects of business governance. NadreliE implemented nondisclosure agreements and began establishing a confidential management system for formulations and copyrighted materials, reinforcing protection of its creative and technical assets. The company expanded its international shipments and started negotiations with DHL and FedEx to reduce shipping costs for customers in Europe and North America.



Its visual communication also became more professional, supported by the work of photographers and videographers who produced high quality videos, photos and product tests. Internally, the business strengthened its organisation, improved planning and established a more structured workflow across daily operations. This resulted in greater clarity and confidence in managing the brand and production processes. NadreliE is currently advancing discussions with DHL and FedEx to secure more favourable international shipping arrangements and is exploring potential distribution partnerships to support future growth.” **Casthelie Legre**





“Grâce au mentora j’ai pu savoir beaucoup sur la propriété intellectuelle. Comment enregistrer ma marque et j’ai pu avoir une brand pro pour TayaCare. Oui mon business a une belle marque les gens me le disent et me félicite. Oui je veux un financement. Une Grant pour mon business pour pourvoir faire la communication.” **Gustave Chabilakoum**



“Durant la période de coaching et de mentorat, nous avons renforcé les fondements de notre innovation en matière de propriété intellectuelle et clarifié le potentiel commercial de notre solution. De ce fait, nous avons pu susciter l’intérêt de financeurs et de partenaires potentiels. Parmi les principales réalisations. Élaboration d’une stratégie claire de protection de la propriété intellectuelle pour notre marque, notre plateforme numérique et la conception de notre produit. Enregistrement de notre marque et documentation de nos secrets commerciaux.

Amélioration de nos supports de présentation mettant en valeur la valeur commerciale de la propriété intellectuelle. Mise en relation avec des investisseurs et des réseaux d’entrepreneuriat grâce aux événements WIPO EYIC. Identification d’opportunités de subventions soutenant l’innovation, les technologies propres et les modèles économiques basés sur la propriété intellectuelle.

Ces actions ont considérablement renforcé notre crédibilité et notre préparation aux futures levées de fonds. Au cours de ce programme, j’ai constaté plusieurs améliorations significatives au sein de mon entreprise. Premièrement, ma compréhension de la propriété intellectuelle et du branding s’est considérablement affinée, me permettant d’identifier et de protéger mes principaux actifs de PI de manière plus stratégique. Deuxièmement, les séances de coaching ont contribué à affiner mon modèle économique et à renforcer ma proposition de valeur, améliorant ainsi la manière dont je présente l’entreprise à mes partenaires et investisseurs. Troisièmement, j’ai accédé à de nouveaux réseaux qui ont ouvert des perspectives de collaboration, de visibilité sur le marché et de financement potentiel. Globalement, le programme a permis une meilleure structuration, un branding plus fort et une confiance accrue dans le développement de l’entreprise. Au cours du programme, GreenBox a enregistré plusieurs améliorations significatives. Premièrement, nous avons approfondi notre compréhension de la propriété intellectuelle et identifié des actifs spécifiques au sein de notre technologie de chaîne du froid et de notre plateforme numérique qui nécessitent une protection. Deuxièmement, nous avons affiné notre proposition de valeur grâce au Business Model Canvas, ce qui nous a permis de clarifier nos segments de clientèle, notre modèle de revenus et notre stratégie de croissance à long terme. Nous avons également amélioré notre image de marque et nos supports de communication, rendant notre présentation plus convaincante et mieux adaptée aux investisseurs. Enfin, le mentorat nous a aidés à rationaliser nos processus opérationnels et à élaborer une feuille de route plus claire pour le déploiement de nos produits et notre expansion sur le marché.” **Divin KOUBATOUKA**



“Comprehending the significance of intellectual property within a business context stands as one of the most remarkable accomplishments my organization has achieved. The reimagining of our logo and the initiation of trademark registration have substantially enhanced our professional image, resulting in a more polished and sophisticated brand identity.” **Michael Kahuthia**



“We are currently Building a new recycling facility to process 300Tons/Month.” **Phebe Ilesanmi**



“Since the start of EYIC coaching and mentoring program, we are already working to make a strength company by structuring a clear Intellectual Property strategy, identifying and prioritizing our key IP assets across BumXpress, Sangal Money and ZikoPay, and initiating the formal trademark registration process for our flagship brand. We also improved internal IP awareness, enhanced brand consistency and digital identity, and try to establish stronger internal processes for protecting our code, designs and confidential information. Additionally, the mentoring sessions helped refine our business model, align our documentation with international standards, and shape a scalable regional expansion strategy, greatly improving our readiness for future partnerships and investment opportunities.

During the program, our business recorded tangible improvements in both structure and strategy. We developed a clearer understanding of our intellectual property assets and how we can initiate a formal trademark registration process for our flagship brand. We are now trying to strength, step by step, our internal IP management practices by introducing confidentiality measures, enhancing brand consistency across our platforms, and refining the documentation of our technical and operational processes. The coaching sessions also helped us sharpen our business model, improve our value proposition, and better align our products (BumXpress, Sangal Money, ZikoPay) with regional expansion opportunities. Overall, the program has contributed to making our company more organized, compliant, and investment-ready, and we intend to continue along this path.” **Marc-Aurèle KOUETCHE TALLA**

4. MEET THE MENTEES: SELECTED IMPACT STORIES

Empowering Influence: How Coach ACE is Protecting and Profiting from Intellectual Property

Founded in Nigeria, Coach ACE (A. Chibundu Ebenezer) is a globally recognized thought leader, brand strategist, and business developer dedicated to empowering Influencers, Producers, Multipliers, Thinkers, and Innovators to live out their divine design with clarity, authority, and profitability.

As the creator of “Influence the Journey with Coach ACE” and author of powerful works such as Brand Strategy Blueprint, Brand Positioning, Action Code, Native Branding, Brain to Wallet, and The Closing, Coach ACE has built a rich legacy of intellectual and creative capital.

Through his flagship training and mentorship platform, INFLUENCE CAMPUS, he equips aspiring and established leaders to translate talent into skill, skill into competence, competence into expertise, and expertise into authority, creating a new generation of highly profitable influencers.

Before taking part in the WIPO Entrepreneurship and Youth Innovation Challenge (EYIC) training, Coach ACE faced challenges common among emerging African creators, imitation of his content, unlicensed replication of his frameworks, and limited awareness of how intellectual property (IP) could safeguard his creative assets and brand identity.

The EYIC training provided clarity, mentorship, and direction on intellectual property management, branding, and commercialization. It revealed how strategic IP protection is not only a legal safeguard but a business growth enabler that builds trust, value, and long-term sustainability.

“Your ideas are your intellectual seed. IP protection is how you ensure your harvest.” Coach ACE

With insights gained through WIPO’s EYIC program, Coach ACE began formalizing his IP framework by: Trademarking his personal brand name “Coach ACE”. Filing IP protection for his corporate brand, including INFLUENCE CAMPUS and The Voice Template System. Securing copyright for his books, courses, frameworks, and digital resources. Establishing confidentiality and brand licensing structures for collaborations and partnerships.

This solid IP foundation turned his creative portfolio into a structured, defensible, and scalable ecosystem that drives profitability and authenticity. With his intellectual property secured, Coach ACE has scaled his impact across Africa and beyond: His INFLUENCE CAMPUS continues to attract professionals, entrepreneurs, and innovators seeking profitable transformation.

His models and frameworks are now used by businesses, NGOs, and government parastatals to build sustainable systems and communication strategies. His Influence the Journey platform has become a global hub for leadership development and creative entrepreneurship. IP protection gave him the confidence to share his ideas openly, form partnerships, and expand globally without fear of imitation or dilution of his identity.

Coach ACE's story illustrates how intellectual property transforms creativity into sustainable enterprise. His journey from brand builder to IP-driven influencer showcases a replicable path for African entrepreneurs seeking to monetize their originality.

Beyond personal growth, he's now investing in training young creators on intellectual property literacy and profitable brand building, ensuring that Africa's next generation of innovators are not only inspired but protected. His next ambition is to establish a Digital Influence Studio, a space where African thought leaders can create, protect, and project their brilliance globally.

One of the books published by Coach Ace



One of the books published by Coach Ace

Seekees: Celebrating African Identity Through Creative Fashion

Tamunosiki Wariboko founded Seekees in 2020, shortly after learning the art of shoemaking during the post COVID period. What began as a small venture known as Seekees Footies has evolved into a vibrant fashion brand that celebrates African identity through elegant and handcrafted designs. The early focus on bespoke footwear helped the brand build a loyal customer base, but as its offerings expanded to include clothing accessories, beaded attires and the refurbishment of footwear, it became clear that a stronger and more unified brand identity was needed.

Participation in the WIPO Entrepreneurship and Youth Innovation Challenge marked a turning point for the business. Through the program, Tamunosiki received mentorship in intellectual property management, branding and strategic business development. This exposure deepened his understanding of how to identify and protect the creative assets that give Seekees its competitive edge, from trademarks and industrial designs to fashion sketches and digital content.

Guided by WIPO mentors, the business transitioned from Seekees Footies to Seekees, a name that reflected its broader vision. A new visual identity followed, including a professionally designed logo and the introduction of the brand tagline, Handmade to Stand Out. Tamunosiki credits the mentors, instructors, logo designer and legal advisor for helping him shape a brand that is both authentic and future ready.

The EYIC program also provided a broader learning experience, connecting him with peers from different countries and exposing him to discussions on innovation, creativity and the evolving role of technology. One insight that stood out was the importance of protecting creative ideas, especially in an era where artificial intelligence offers both opportunities and risks. This awareness reinforced the need for strong IP strategies and careful management of creative content. Today, Seekees is preparing for its next phase of growth. Plans are underway to establish a modern production facility that will manufacture high quality leather goods, including shoes, handbags and accessories. The long term vision is to position Seekees as a leading fashion label in Nigeria, across Africa and beyond, representing the best of African creativity and craftsmanship. Reflecting on the journey, Tamunosiki notes:

I am grateful for this journey and cannot wait to see what the future holds for Seekees. Thank you to everyone who has supported us, and here is to many more milestones.

Products from SEEKEES



Empowering Local Fashion: How Cherrylukz is Protecting Creativity through Intellectual Property

Founded in Abuja, Nigeria, Cherrylukz is a women's fashion brand bringing African culture to the global stage. Its founder, Chioma, built the label to celebrate African identity through elegant, handcrafted designs that express confidence and beauty.

From bespoke dresses to ready-to-wear outfits for special occasions, Cherrylukz is redefining how African women showcase their creativity.

Before joining the WIPO Entrepreneurship and Youth Innovation Challenge (EYIC), Chioma faced challenges familiar to many young African designers including imitation of her work, lack of brand differentiation, and limited awareness of how intellectual property could safeguard her designs.

Through the WIPO supported EYIC program, implemented with the Nigerian IP Office, Cherrylukz received mentorship on intellectual property management, branding, and business strategy. This helped her identify and protect her creative assets, from trademarks and designs to fashion sketches and digital content.

"IP is not just about protection it's about building a brand identity that customers can trust." Chioma, Founder of Cherrylukz

With guidance from WIPO experts and mentors, Cherrylukz successfully registered its trademark, securing legal protection for its name and logo. The brand also developed a clearer intellectual property strategy, incorporating copyright protection for collections and confidentiality practices for its unique design processes.

Understanding intellectual property gave Chioma confidence to expand and showcase her work without fear of imitation.

Since embracing intellectual property, Cherrylukz has experienced notable business growth. The brand has opened new retail outlets in Abuja, and major cities across Nigeria, increased its online sales through e-commerce platforms, and is exploring export opportunities across West Africa. Its growing visibility has attracted collaborations with stylists, influencers, and cultural brands that value authenticity and originality.

Beyond business, Cherrylukz is investing in women's empowerment by training young designers in sustainable garment production, ensuring the next generation of African creatives is equipped with the right skills and mindset.

Cherrylukz' journey shows how intellectual property can transform creativity into opportunity. By protecting innovation, small and medium-sized enterprises can strengthen their competitiveness, unlock new markets, and build lasting brands. With a strong intellectual property foundation, Chioma's next ambition is to launch a digital fashion studio to showcase African creativity to global audiences.



Chioma and WIPO Staff and Consultant during the field visit

Innovating for Public Health: How Dorothy is Using IP to Build Sustainable Health Solutions

Dorothy Ohia, is an early-career African researcher with a PhD in Environmental Health Sciences, with an emerging MedTech and innovation-driven brand focused on co-designing affordable mosquito control solutions for use in Nigeria and India. At the heart of her brand is a technology developed to prevent diseases such as malaria and dengue while promoting healthy indoor environments in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

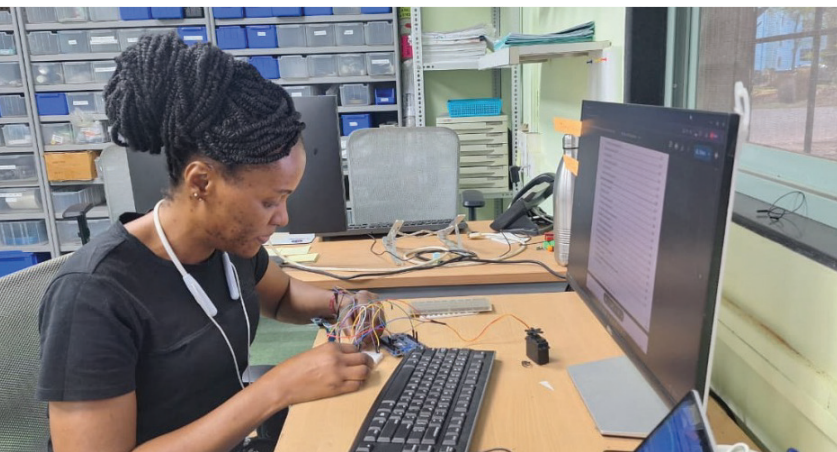
Before joining the WIPO Entrepreneurship and Youth Innovation Challenge (EYIC), Dorothy's research focused on mosquito-borne diseases and environmental health. She saw a recurring challenge a gap between public health needs and locally relevant innovations.

Through the EYIC program, she received mentorship on intellectual property strategy, branding, and commercialization, which is helping shape brand's identity as a purpose-driven company linking biomedical innovation with practical health impact.

"The EYIC program gave me the clarity to see how intellectual property is not just a legal tool, but a strategy for impact and sustainability." Dr. Dorothy Ohia

With expert guidance, the team is understanding the IP process for the close to MVP product. The mentorship programme has also helped the team led by Dorothy to audit align its IP and business strategies, ensuring protection while positioning the brand for opportunities for scale-up in India and Nigeria.

Since participating in the EYIC, Dorothy is now motivated to take the leap into the future with plans to move into commercialization and scaling for broader applications in the public health space. Looking ahead, Dorothy plans to use the knowledge gained to further strengthen her engagements for girl-child STEM mentorship in Nigeria and Africa.



Dorothy working in her research lab



Garden City Cuisine – A Story of Culinary Passion Strengthened Through Intellectual Property

Garden City Cuisine (GCC) emerged in March 2025 in the city of Abuja, born from a simple but powerful passion for good food and genuine hospitality. What began as a small idea has grown into a vibrant online kitchen that delivers healthy, home-made meals to hundreds of customers. Today, GCC is known for satisfying cravings, creating memorable food experiences, and bringing a sense of joy and warmth to people through every plate served.

The enterprise is led by its founder, Faith Mecherotu Nwonwu, a young lawyer from Port Harcourt popularly called The Garden City. Her love for cooking and the excitement she felt whenever she created something new in the kitchen inspired her to convert a small personal space into a functional cloud kitchen. She envisioned a place where authentic recipes, quality ingredients, and exceptional service would come together to create unforgettable dining moments.

Operating entirely as a cloud kitchen, GCC receives most of its orders through WhatsApp contacts, referrals, and social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok. Every meal is prepared fresh, carefully packaged, and delivered through reliable logistics partners who ensure customers receive their orders swiftly and in perfect condition. Whether it is a quick lunch, a family meal, or catering for a special gathering, GCC has embraced a service philosophy that turns every bite into a celebration.

As a young and evolving enterprise, GCC continues to navigate the realities faced by many small and medium-sized businesses. Growth brings opportunities but also challenges, especially in the areas of brand protection, recipe confidentiality, and the preservation of unique creative identity. Before joining the WIPO Entrepreneurship and Youth Innovation Challenge (EYIC), Faith constantly worried about the vulnerability of her trade secrets, the originality of her recipes, and the risk of others copying her brand identity.

The EYIC program marked a turning point in her entrepreneurial journey. Throughout six months of training and mentorship, she gained clarity on how intellectual property supports business growth, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability. Concepts that once felt distant such as trade secrets, trademarks, copyright, and non-disclosure practices became powerful tools she could use to protect and strengthen her enterprise.

This new understanding brought renewed confidence. Faith now knows how to safeguard her recipes, brand name, food content descriptions, packaging approach, and digital presence. More importantly, the trademark for Garden City Cuisine is now being prepared for registration, ensuring that her brand identity is formally protected as her business grows.

Faith expresses profound gratitude to WIPO and the EYIC team for the knowledge, support, and structured guidance she received. She acknowledges that the transformation her business has experienced within six months would not have been possible without the program's mentorship framework.

Garden City Cuisine is evolving into more than a cloud kitchen. It is becoming a structured, IP-conscious, and strategically positioned food enterprise ready to scale. With its strengthened foundation, GCC is poised to expand its reach, innovate further, and continue bringing the joy of good food to customers across Nigeria and beyond.



Chef Faith during the visit of WIPO Consultant

Empowering Climate Innovation: How Trashcoin is Using Intellectual Property to Transform Africa's Informal Waste Economy

Founded in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, Trashcoin Limited is an eco-fintech startup leveraging technology to re imagine how Africa manages its waste. Through a digital platform that rewards users for recycling, Trashcoin transforms everyday waste, including plastic, paper, aluminium, and more, into traceable, tradeable digital assets and verified carbon credits.

Its mission is bold but clear: to formalise Africa's informal waste economy, empower underserved communities, and unlock the climate, economic, and digital value of waste.

Prior to joining the WIPO Entrepreneurship and Youth Innovation Challenge (EYIC), Trashcoin, like many African climate-tech startups, faced the challenge of protecting its proprietary technologies, brand identity, and impact-driven workflows in an environment where IP enforcement is limited.

As a platform built at the intersection of sustainability, fintech, and data innovation, Trashcoin recognised that a robust intellectual property strategy was essential to protect its mission and scale effectively.

"Waste is often dismissed as valueless, but our innovation proves it holds economic, environmental, and digital value and IP is what ensures that value is protected." -

Phebe Ilesanmi, Co-Founder & Chief Compliance Officer, Trashcoin Limited

With guidance from WIPO experts and mentors, Trashcoin Limited has successfully registered its trademark, securing legal protection for its name and logo. The brand also developed a clearer intellectual property strategy, incorporating copyright protection for collections and confidentiality practices for its unique design processes.

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Understanding intellectual property gave Phebe confidence to expand and showcase her work without fear of imitation.

Trashcoin has gained growing recognition across Africa's innovation and climate ecosystem:

- MTN Nigeria- Finalist in the 2025 MTN Cloud Accelerator TechCabal- Featured in "Startups on Our Radar" as a leader in Africa's circular economy
- GIZ develoPPP Ventures- Selected for capacity-building and market expansion support
- ITC (UN)- Finalist of the 2024 Youth Ecopreneur Award for climate innovation
- Meaningful Business 100 (MB100)- Named among the global top 100 impact entrepreneurs

These accolades underscore Trashcoin's dual value: as a climate-tech engine and as a community-first innovation with export potential and policy relevance.

Trashcoin is not just a product, it is a movement. Beyond business growth, the startup is investing in community empowerment, especially for female recyclers, grassroots agents, and climate-conscious youth.

Its workshops and campaigns demystify waste management, climate action, and intellectual property for marginalised populations, ensuring that Africa's circular economy grows with inclusion, dignity, and ownership.

Trashcoin's journey illustrates how intellectual property can empower grassroots innovation, strengthen competitiveness, and de-risk sustainability solutions for scale.

With a future-facing IP strategy and growing continental footprint, Trashcoin is proving that Africa's informal waste economy is not a problem to be solved, but a climate opportunity to be unlocked.



Driven by this vision, Phebe Ilesanmi's next ambition is to build a fully decentralised digital infrastructure that allows verified recycling companies to operate independently on the Trashcoin platform. This expansion will enable seamless material traceability, cross-border export readiness, and carbon credit certification, all while meeting growing global demand for ethically sourced, post-consumer recyclables.

Through smart contracts, blockchain-backed traceability, and export-grade sorting standards, this decentralised system will empower recyclers across Africa to plug into the global circular economy, turning local waste into borderless value.

"Africa doesn't lack innovation, it lacks platforms that trust and scale local ingenuity.

That's what we're building next."

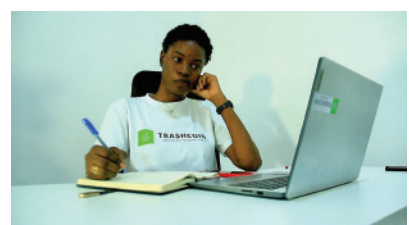
Phebe Ilesanmi, Co-Founder & Chief Compliance Officer, Trashcoin



The Trashcoin Pickup Logistics Team in action



A customer proudly displays his recycling earnings on the Trashcoin app alongside Phebe Ilesanmi, Co-Founder of Trashcoin



AJA: Strengthening Youth Empowerment Through Intellectual Property

The African Youth Awards (AJA), co-founded by Ms. Diara Ndiaye, is an ambitious pan-African initiative dedicated to identifying, celebrating, and supporting young talent across the continent. Created to respond to the pressing need for African youth to access opportunities that allow their creativity, innovation, and leadership to flourish, AJA has rapidly become a platform that elevates excellence in technology, health, culture, environment, and other high-impact fields.

Reflecting on her experience, Diara explains that the WIPO coaching program gave her a new understanding of the role of intellectual property in youth development. For her, the initiative revealed that the young winners of AJA are not only creative individuals but also holders of strategic assets that deserve protection and recognition. She describes this shift as a transformative moment that helped her rethink how the organization supports young innovators.

Before joining the WIPO EYIC Coaching and Mentorship Program, AJA faced several structural challenges. Intellectual property was not yet integrated into its operational framework. There was little awareness of IP concepts, no IP audit had been conducted, and the trademark created by an external consultant had not been formally transferred to the organization. AJA had not put in place any IP strategy, IP policies, or contractual provisions to manage image rights, safeguard content, or clarify ownership of creative assets. As a result, the initiative was exposed to serious risks, including the possibility of losing ownership of its trademark, financial exposure, brand dilution, and difficulties convincing investors and partners of its long-term sustainability.

Diara's participation in the WIPO program marked a turning point. Instead of supporting only the young awardees, she herself became a beneficiary of the coaching sessions. This allowed her to understand, in concrete terms, the intellectual property vulnerabilities within AJA and to recognize how strongly IP influences credibility, leadership, and continental expansion. The training equipped her with the capacity to identify trademarks, domain names, design rights, copyrights, confidential information, and partnership frameworks as strategic assets that require careful management.

Her understanding of IP deepened as she realized that the brand she created was not just a logo but an intangible asset with long-term value. Under guidance from the WIPO mentorship, she took steps to formalize the trademark registration process through OAPI and understood how to use the registered mark to strengthen AJA's credibility and support its expansion into other African countries. She also gained clarity on the importance of securing her domain name, improving contractual agreements, and developing an IP-driven approach to partnerships.

This shift also influenced the way AJA supports its award recipients. For the first time, intellectual property became part of the organization's empowerment package for young entrepreneurs. Diara recognized that many of them, just like her, were moving forward with creative concepts that remained unprotected. As she explains, the mentorship showed her that AJA's mission is not only to spotlight talent but to help young innovators navigate the path of IP ownership, protection, and commercialization.

The impact of this transformation became evident through several success stories. One notable example is Jangalma, a winner from the first edition of the AJA Awards. With support from the WIPO coaching program, the SME secured its brand, improved its contractual processes, and established a stronger footing for negotiations with investors during its expansion into Mauritania. This aligns with AJA's new commitment to help its laureates protect and maximize the value of their innovations.

AJA has also strengthened its digital and market positioning by expanding its domain protection and adopting more structured agreements with designers, collaborators, and strategic partners. This has allowed the organization to safeguard its identity and establish stronger barriers against imitation as it prepares for regional expansion.

Diara emphasizes that the WIPO EYIC experience helped her overcome the perception that intellectual property is complex or inaccessible. Her engagement with the program revealed that IP is a foundational element of sustainable entrepreneurship. Today, she is dedicated to promoting IP awareness among the young entrepreneurs within the AJA network and ensuring that each new edition of the awards integrates structured support on brand protection, creativity management, and innovation sustainability.

AJA continues to build on this new foundation, recognizing that the empowerment of African youth is stronger and more impactful when their ideas, brands, and creations are protected. As Diara proudly states, intellectual property is now at the heart of AJA's journey, shaping the future of its vision and the success of its laureates across the continent.



First edition of AJA (2024)



Field Mission after the coaching (2025)

AJA ceremony (2024)



AJA Coaching program after the first award ceremony

Jangalma – Strengthening Educational Innovation Through Intellectual Property

Jangalma is an EdTech platform that has been transforming access to education Co-Founded Moustapha Diop in Senegal since 2015. Created by a team of professionals passionate about learning and technology, the platform offers academic support, online courses, and personalized educational guidance. Its mission is rooted in a clear and powerful vision: to ensure that every student in Senegal, regardless of social background, has an equal opportunity to succeed.

The founders recognized early the challenges faced by students and families across Africa. Limited access to quality support, lack of structured learning tools, and unequal educational opportunities motivated the creation of a platform tailored to the needs of learners at different stages. Over the years, Jangalma has grown into a trusted digital learning space, supported by experienced educators who believe deeply in the transformative power of accessible education.

Before joining the WIPO Coaching and Mentorship Program, the company struggled to integrate intellectual property into its business strategy. While internal procedures were compliant with basic legal requirements, they were not aligned with the intellectual property framework applicable in the OAPI region. The company had already begun exploring international expansion without clearly defining ownership of rights. Its brand included a traditional-language slogan without formal protection, the trademark had not been registered, no IP policy existed, no IP audit had been conducted, and contractual arrangements did not include clauses safeguarding the company's creative and intangible assets. There was, more broadly, no established IP culture guiding decision-making.

These gaps exposed the enterprise to several strategic risks. Without clear ownership of its brand and creative output, Jangalma could lose the right to use its trademark or witness a dilution of its reputation. It faced potential financial vulnerability, uncertainty during investor negotiations, and the risk of losing confidential methodologies or educational materials. A weak IP structure could undermine the company's credibility, compromise its long-term competitiveness, and hinder its ability to build trust among partners, investors, students, and families.





The WIPO Coaching and Mentorship Program marked a turning point in the company's journey. Through structured sessions, hands-on exercises, and personalized guidance, Moustapha Diop developed a strong understanding of how intellectual property supports business strategy, market expansion, and long-term sustainability. He emphasizes this shift with a clear insight that became central to his leadership approach: "IP is at the heart of any type of business. It is at the beginning, the middle, and the end of business. It is thus important to align it with the business strategy."

Guided by this new understanding, Jangalma began strengthening its internal systems. Intellectual property clauses were integrated into employment contracts, and the company formalized an agreement with the author of its logo to ensure the complete transfer of rights. A comprehensive IP policy was adopted, bringing clarity to ownership, confidentiality, and the management of protected content across the organization.

The company also initiated its trademark registration process with OAPI. This represents a decisive step toward ensuring the sustainability of the brand and protecting its market identity. Once registration is completed, Jangalma will benefit from trademark protection across the 17 OAPI member states under the Bangui Agreement. This will significantly enhance its ability to expand into new markets while maintaining full control over its brand and educational offerings. It will also give the company a stronger credibility profile when engaging with investors, donors, and institutional partners.

To support upcoming collaborations and fundraising efforts, Jangalma developed a detailed fundraising checklist to secure negotiation processes and prepare strategic arguments with clarity. This preparation enables the company to anticipate negotiation scenarios, identify risk areas, reinforce confidentiality protocols, and adopt a more proactive stance when engaging with external stakeholders.

Through the WIPO Coaching and Mentorship Program, Jangalma has gained the tools, confidence, and strategic insights needed to pursue its expansion across Senegal and beyond. The company is now equipped with a solid intellectual property foundation that strengthens its leadership position in the EdTech ecosystem and ensures that its mission to democratize quality education remains protected as it grows.

GCAD – Strengthening Climate Innovation and Agricultural Impact Through Intellectual Property

Green Compost in Agriculture for Development (GCAD), led by its Chief Executive Officer Mr. Abubakarr Ibrahim Ndopaie, is a social enterprise based in Kenema City in Eastern Sierra Leone. Since 2021, the enterprise has been committed to transforming agriculture through sustainable environmental solutions. GCAD revitalizes soil health by converting organic waste into affordable and high-quality compost fertilizer, while supporting smallholder farmers to increase crop yields and strengthen food security. The company also recycles single-use plastics and PET bottles into eco-friendly products such as durable paving materials, contributing to a cleaner environment and advancing the circular economy in Sierra Leone.

Before joining the WIPO Coaching and Mentorship Program, GCAD faced several limitations that hindered its growth. Intellectual property awareness within the enterprise was low, and no IP audit had ever been carried out. The business name was incorporated into a lengthy logo that weakened brand identity. Packaging was insufficiently competitive, and the trademark created by an external consultant had not been formally transferred to the company. No intellectual property assets had been registered, and GCAD operated without IP policies or clauses in its contracts. The enterprise lacked a business plan, had no structured organizational framework and had limited digital and marketing strategies. These challenges were compounded by weak access to finance, limited networks, inadequate distribution channels and financial constraints that made expansion more difficult.

These gaps exposed GCAD to significant risks. Without strong intellectual property protection, the company could lose ownership of its brand, miss opportunities in competitive markets or struggle to build credibility with partners and investors. Weak branding could lead to dilution of the company's identity, and the absence of formal IP registration made it difficult to enforce rights or defend innovations. Without clarity over ownership and confidentiality, GCAD risked losing trade secrets and weakening the trust required to attract collaborators and customers.

The WIPO Coaching and Mentorship Program marked a turning point in the company's development. Through personalized guidance and structured capacity building, Mr. Abubakarr Ibrahim Ndopaie gained a deeper understanding of the importance of integrating intellectual property into business management. He learned that intellectual property is central to leadership, innovation and long-term value creation. He now emphasizes that IP must be considered at the beginning of the business journey, throughout daily operations and at every stage of expansion.

Through the program, GCAD underwent a complete rebranding process to ensure that its identity would be distinctive, memorable and suitable for legal protection. The company improved its packaging to align with its new brand identity and market positioning. Guided by the mentor, Abubakarr developed an intellectual property roadmap, adopted a formal IP policy and secured the transfer of rights to the company's logo. These steps laid the foundation for filing GCAD's trademark, a decisive move that expands its protection across all OAPI member states and strengthens its credibility as it prepares for international growth.

The coaching program also transformed GCAD's marketing and communication approach. The diagnostic revealed that the enterprise relied heavily on traditional channels, limiting its visibility and impact. With support, the company enhanced its digital presence by improving social media profiles, harmonizing its visual identity and developing communication campaigns tailored to specific platforms. This shift positioned GCAD to reach broader audiences, attract new partners and engage customers more effectively.

In preparation for future expansion and investment opportunities, the company also developed a comprehensive fundraising checklist. This strategic tool enables GCAD to anticipate negotiation points, evaluate potential risks, manage confidential information and strengthen its ability to navigate partnerships with confidence.

Looking ahead, Mr. Abubakarr Ibrahim Ndopaie aspires to share the knowledge he has gained by promoting intellectual property awareness among entrepreneurs in Sierra Leone. He envisions a business environment where SMEs understand the value of protecting their creative and innovative assets from the very beginning.

Through the WIPO Coaching and Mentorship Program, GCAD has evolved into a more structured, confident and IP-driven enterprise. With a strengthened brand, a clearer strategic direction and an enhanced understanding of intellectual property, the company is better positioned to lead sustainable agriculture and environmental innovation across Sierra Leone and beyond.

Previous Packaging



NEW PACKAGING



STUDENTZ – Strengthening Career Empowerment Through an Intellectual Property–Driven Ecosystem

STUDENTZ is an innovative academic and career guidance ecosystem created by Patrick Ngounou, whose mission is to support students and young people as they discover their passions, explore future careers and secure opportunities for their first professional experiences. At the center of this ecosystem is a dynamic mobile application that enables users to connect with mentors and guidance counsellors, access educational resources, explore scholarship and job opportunities and navigate more than six hundred possible careers across Africa and beyond.

The STUDENTZ ecosystem extends well beyond its digital platform. It includes university directories, a career magazine, thematic career fairs and a growing network of educators, counsellors and institutions committed to helping young people make informed academic and professional decisions. When Patrick joined the WIPO Africa Division Coaching Program, he wanted to strengthen his business structure, clarify ownership of his concept and understand how to protect the intangible assets that define his brand. The coaching experience marked a transformational shift for him and for the company.

Before entering the program, STUDENTZ faced several challenges common among early-stage African tech enterprises. Patrick had limited knowledge of intellectual property and was unsure how to identify which of his assets needed protection. The brand had been created by an external consultant without a formal transfer of rights, and no IP assets had been registered. Contracts and collaboration agreements did not include intellectual property clauses, and the company lacked an IP policy, IP roadmap or any structured approach to asset management.

The business strategy did not incorporate intellectual property, the name “Student’s Mag” used previously caused confusion by suggesting a media company, and the business model did not reflect the potential of its IP assets. Organizational structures were unclear, ownership of the concept had not been formally defined, and digital communication remained weak. As a result, STUDENTZ operated with several strategic risks including the possibility of losing its trademark, weakening its competitive advantage, diluting the brand’s value or facing difficulties when proving ownership of rights. Partnerships and investor discussions were also affected by this lack of clarity, exposing the enterprise to financial and reputational risks.

Patrick explains that although he had heard about intellectual property, he did not know where to begin. He could not identify which IP assets mattered most for his business, did not understand how IP aligned with his company’s goals and lacked the financial means to start formal registrations. Like many SMEs, he did not fully appreciate the risks posed by operating with unprotected assets, which left him worried that his concept could easily be copied or reproduced.

The WIPO Coaching Program shifted this trajectory. Through the sessions, Patrick gained a deeper understanding of the full breadth of intellectual property rights relevant to the company, from trademarks and copyright to trade secrets and confidentiality. He discovered that IP is not just about registering a logo but about understanding the strategic value of every intangible asset that strengthens competitiveness and long-term growth. The coaching experience helped him gain confidence in identifying IP risks and opportunities, and in integrating intellectual property into the overall business strategy.

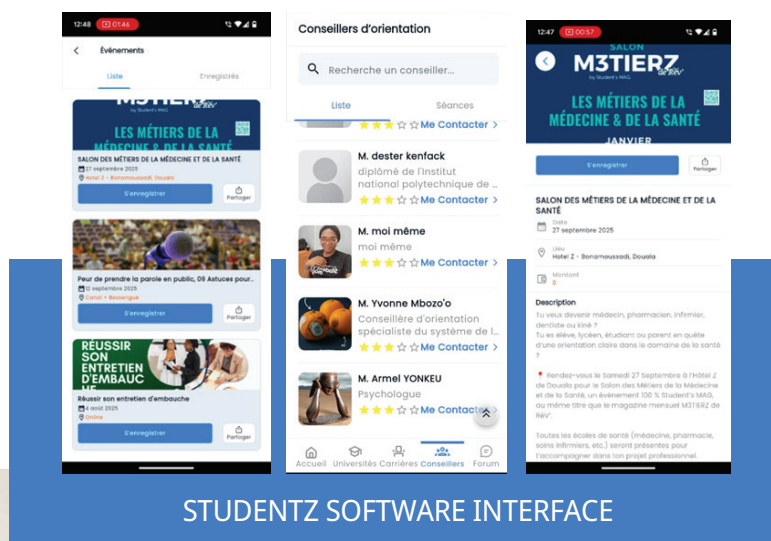
One of the first major transformations involved refreshing the brand. With the guidance of the coach, Patrick recognized that the name “Student’s Mag” did not represent the company’s mission. The rebranding exercise led to the adoption of a more distinctive and meaningful identity under the name STUDENTZ. This shift was accompanied by a clearer visual identity and a stronger message that aligns with the company’s objectives in academic guidance, career development and youth empowerment.

In addition to rebranding, Patrick was supported through the process of trademark registration. He also learned how to use blockchain and copyright tools to date and secure his software, ensuring that the digital core of the business is protected. An internal intellectual property policy was developed and adopted to guide the management of STUDENTZ's growing portfolio of assets. Clear contractual frameworks were introduced to govern relationships with graphic designers, mentors, partner institutions and collaborators, bringing transparency and security into the company's operations.

The program also highlighted the need to strengthen digital communication. A digital roadmap was developed to improve online visibility, refine the company's presence on social media and align messaging with the newly refreshed brand. This has significantly improved engagement and strategic communication with the target audience.

To prepare for fundraising and collaboration opportunities, a comprehensive fundraising checklist was created. This enables STUDENTZ to anticipate negotiation needs, prepare strategic arguments, identify potential risks and manage confidential information effectively. As interest emerged from potential representatives in Togo and France, Patrick also received guidance on using the Madrid System to reduce costs associated with international trademark registration and to structure global expansion. He explored business models such as licensing and franchising that would enable STUDENTZ to scale across borders through trusted third parties.

By integrating intellectual property into its business strategy, STUDENTZ is now better positioned to expand confidently within OAPI member countries while supporting more young people in discovering their passions, choosing meaningful careers and accessing the opportunities that shape their futures. The company has emerged from the coaching journey with stronger foundations, a clearer vision and a renewed sense of purpose anchored in the strategic use of intellectual property.



STUDENTZ SOFTWARE INTERFACE



Luba Hub – Building an Innovation Ecosystem Strengthened by Intellectual Property

Luba Hub is an innovation and entrepreneurship incubator based in the Democratic Republic of Congo, created to support youth, start-ups and small businesses as they build meaningful and sustainable ventures. Led by Co-founder Batubenga Leonard, the hub promotes entrepreneurial spirit, fosters innovation and strengthens the capacities of young entrepreneurs in order to contribute to the long-term economic development of the DRC. Through training, incubation and mentorship programmes, Luba Hub helps young innovators transform ideas into viable enterprises while nurturing a collaborative ecosystem that connects public institutions, private sector partners and academic actors.

Before joining the WIPO Africa Division Coaching and Mentorship Program, Luba Hub had limited familiarity with intellectual property. The team struggled to identify which assets required protection and found it challenging to secure, manage and promote intellectual property both within their organization and among the entrepreneurs they supported. Several operational gaps were identified during the initial assessment. The rights to the brand and logo, created by an external consultant, had not been transferred to the organization. No intellectual property rights had been registered and no IP clauses appeared in contracts or partnership agreements.

Intellectual property was not integrated into the company's business strategy and there was no internal IP roadmap, no organizational chart and no clear ownership structure for the concept itself. Digital communication was weak and the company had not yet developed an IP culture that could guide its processes or decision-making. These gaps created significant risks for the incubator. Without formal protection of the brand, Luba Hub risked losing the right to use its own name despite already having a visible presence in three major cities. The lack of confidentiality agreements exposed the hub's methodologies, training materials and collaborative work to potential misuse. The absence of internal IP procedures made it difficult to support incubatees effectively or to prepare them to protect their innovations. These weaknesses also undermined the hub's ability to convince partners and investors of its long-term value and opened the door to potential disputes or litigation.

The WIPO Coaching Program catalyzed a major shift for the organization. Through the tailored guidance of the program, Batubenga Leonard and his team gained a much deeper understanding of the strategic and operational relevance of intellectual property. Several topics were particularly transformative. The team learned the importance of brand protection and the steps required to register the Luba Hub name. They explored how to structure confidentiality and collaboration agreements to protect educational content, methodologies and interactions with partners, coaches and consultants. They also gained clarity on how intellectual property could be integrated into the incubator's programmes, enabling them to provide better support to entrepreneurs and raise awareness about the role of intellectual property in building competitive businesses.

One of the immediate outcomes was the drafting of a comprehensive intellectual property policy that clarifies responsibilities, outlines rights and establishes mechanisms for managing intangible assets within the Luba Hub ecosystem. This policy now guides daily operations, reinforces transparency and strengthens the hub's capacity to manage collaborations more effectively.

The program also helped Luba Hub commit to the process of registering its brand and visual identity. The team developed a stronger understanding of the steps involved in owning, controlling and protecting the assets that define their brand. Another key innovation involved integrating intellectual property modules into all support programmes. This ensures that young entrepreneurs are aware of how to protect their products, brands and innovations—and how these assets can contribute to long-term competitive advantage.

The coaching also opened Luba Hub's eyes to the potential of digital platforms. Prior to the program, the organization's digital communication was minimal. With guidance, they developed a tailored digital strategy to strengthen their outreach, expand their visibility and increase engagement with entrepreneurs and partners across the region.

To enhance readiness for future opportunities, the organization also adopted a fundraising checklist. This tool allows Luba Hub to anticipate negotiation points, map out risks, prepare strategic arguments and manage confidential information appropriately. It strengthens the hub's position when engaging with external parties and improves its ability to secure meaningful collaborations.



Looking to the future, Luba Hub is committed to promoting intellectual property awareness not only among its own cohort of entrepreneurs but also across the broader economic landscape in the DRC. The organization plans to gradually integrate dedicated IP support into its next cohort and intends to continue promoting the discipline among economic actors outside its immediate network. This commitment reflects a belief that intellectual property is an essential tool for competitiveness and sustainable development.

Through the WIPO Coaching and Mentorship Program, Luba Hub has developed stronger foundations, clearer structures and a more strategic approach to managing intangible assets. The organization is now better equipped to serve young innovators, protect its brand and contribute to the growth of a vibrant and resilient entrepreneurial ecosystem in the DRC.

HESE Vital Flour – Strengthening Nutrition and Community Impact Through Intellectual Property



With WIPO's guidance, HESE Vital Flour gained not just a

HESE Vital Flour is an agribusiness enterprise co-founded by Ms. Judith Ocholla, driven by a deep passion for improving nutrition and empowering rural communities across Kenya. The business was inspired by Judith's encounters with mothers who struggled daily to provide nutritious meals for their children. What began as an act of compassion gradually evolved into a promising enterprise combining nutrition, innovation and community empowerment. Today, HESE Vital Flour produces affordable, nutrient-rich flour blends that contribute directly to healthier families and more resilient livelihoods.

Before joining the WIPO Mentorship, Training and Coaching Program, the enterprise operated informally with low brand visibility, weak IP awareness and no formal business structure. HESE had no trademark, no IP policy and no standardized approach to branding or packaging. The flour was sold in plain plastic containers that lacked distinction in the market. Contracts did not include IP clauses, no IP audit had been conducted and Judith had limited exposure to IP valuation, financing or digital tools. The absence of a clear business direction also affected confidence when engaging with customers and potential partners.

The WIPO Coaching Program marked a turning point in HESE's transformation. Through a combination of training, mentorship and practical guidance, Judith gained a new understanding of intellectual property as a strategic business asset. She learned how IP could formalize her enterprise, strengthen market positioning and protect the brand she had worked so hard to build.

One of the most significant milestones was the formal registration of HESE Vital Flour as a trademark. This secured the rights to the brand name, the slogan and the visual identity including the logo "Pure Grain. Pure Energy. Pure You." The enterprise also redesigned its packaging to reflect purity, quality and the values of community empowerment. This industrial design upgrade became a major differentiator in the market and improved customer trust. In addition, Judith developed a structured three-year IP strategy and incorporated IP clauses into employment and partnership agreements, strengthening governance and ownership across the business.

The mentorship also introduced Judith to the Business Model Canvas, which provided a clearer operational structure and guided HESE's growth plan. Capacity-building sessions improved her understanding of branding, IP management and market access. Her pitching skills strengthened and she gained confidence when engaging with investors, vendors and distributors.

HESE's progress has been remarkable. The enterprise shifted from an informal venture to a structured, IP-driven agribusiness. Branding, packaging and market visibility improved significantly, giving HESE a competitive edge in the local market. Customers now associate the product with quality, HESE consistency and trust. Internal capacity for IP-based decision-making has increased and the business has initiated partnerships with farmer groups to build sustainable supply chains.

Judith reflects on her journey with gratitude. She explains that the program transformed her perception of competitiveness by helping her recognize the value of intangible assets such as her brand and packaging design. She notes that IP protection is not just a legal safeguard but a pathway to long-term business value and meaningful community impact.

HESE Vital Flour has embraced sustainability as a core part of its identity. More than two thousand families across Kisumu and Homa Bay Counties now benefit from improved nutrition. Each ten-kilogram bag of flour supports several children and contributes to the livelihoods of local farmers. The enterprise also creates opportunities for women and youth involved in processing, distribution and marketing. HESE is now recognized for trust, nutrition and community empowerment, with a growing reputation for strengthening food security at the grassroots level.

The field visit confirmed that HESE Vital Flour has transitioned into a strong, IP-anchored enterprise. The WIPO Mentorship Program enabled Judith to transform an initiative born from compassion into a structured, sustainable business that nourishes families and uplifts communities across Kenya. HESE stands as a powerful example of how embedding intellectual property into business strategy stimulates innovation, strengthens competitiveness and accelerates inclusive growth across Africa.

To sustain progress and scale its impact, HESE would benefit from continued mentorship on IP commercialization and licensing. Documenting the enterprise as a case study in women-led, IP-driven agribusiness would support peer learning across the region. Extending trademark and design protection across East Africa, along with facilitating access to agribusiness accelerators and impact investors, will position HESE for expansion. Strengthening production capacity, securing additional financing and scaling distribution channels will further enhance the enterprise's reach and influence.



Innobid – Leveraging Intellectual Property for Inclusive, AI-Driven Innovation

Innobid is an AI-powered e-procurement platform created by Eliud Luutsa to strengthen transparency, efficiency and inclusion in public procurement. Designed to address long-standing inefficiencies and barriers within procurement systems, the platform enables fair participation, improves access to bidding opportunities and enhances trust between institutions and the communities they serve. Through its digital intelligence, Innobid provides an equitable procurement environment for SMEs, civil society groups and marginalized actors who are often excluded from formal bidding processes.

Before joining the WIPO IP Mentorship Program, Innobid operated with several foundational gaps. Awareness of intellectual property was low and the company had never registered its trademark. Agreements with partners, employees and collaborators did not include IP clauses and no internal IP policies existed. The enterprise had not conducted an IP audit and the business model was not aligned with strategies for innovation, protection or commercialization. Although the platform's technology had strong potential, the absence of IP structures limited brand visibility, investor readiness and the ability to protect its innovations.

The mentorship program marked a significant turning point for the company. Eliud was introduced to the importance of intellectual property as a strategic asset that strengthens innovation, credibility and scalability. One of the first achievements was the submission of Innobid's trademark registration, accompanied by a refinement of the brand identity to create a clear and distinctive presence in the digital procurement ecosystem.

The company also integrated IP protection clauses into all employee, partner and investor agreements, clarifying ownership of innovations and safeguarding confidential information. Internal policies were developed to govern innovation processes, data use, and the protection and exploitation of intangible assets. An IP audit was conducted to identify existing intellectual property, assess opportunities for valuation and strengthen institutional knowledge of IP-driven growth.

Through mentorship, Innobid redesigned its business model to emphasize value creation anchored in intellectual property. The Business Model Canvas was developed and leadership capacity was strengthened. Eliud gained practical skills in pitching and improved his strategic thinking and investor readiness. This positioned the company for growth, sustainability and regional expansion.





The site visit further strengthened this understanding. It revealed that Innobid initially attempted to package two separate innovations as a single solution, which created confusion regarding the target market. Through discussion, the mentor advised separating the innovations so each could receive its own positioning, protection strategy and commercialization pathway. This clarity opened new opportunities for market segmentation and increased the likelihood of attracting investors.

The mentorship confirmed that Innobid has transitioned into an IP-anchored enterprise capable of delivering inclusive impact. The company's evolution demonstrates the transformative effect of structured intellectual property mentorship for young African innovators.

Going forward, Innobid would benefit from continued support in IP commercialization, particularly for the second innovation that was previously merged with the main platform. Strengthening connections with regional IP offices would facilitate multi-country trademark protection as the enterprise expands across Africa. Documenting Innobid as a best practice in inclusive innovation would contribute to broader knowledge sharing. Increasing capacity in IP valuation, digital enforcement and data protection compliance will further enhance readiness for partnerships and investment.

With its strengthened IP foundation, entrepreneurial discipline and technological vision, Innobid is now well positioned to scale regionally and contribute to a more transparent and inclusive procurement system for Africa.

Garden City Cuisine – A Story of Culinary Passion Strengthened Through Intellectual Property

Chemolex is a youth-led sustainability enterprise co-founded by Ms. Martina Sikawa, committed to combating plastic pollution through the recovery and recycling of river waste across Kenya. The company's work sits at the intersection of environmental protection, green innovation and youth empowerment. By transforming waste into biodegradable polymer products, Chemolex supports circular economy development while creating meaningful economic opportunities for marginalized groups. The enterprise now works with more than fifty community collection centers and employs over one hundred women and young people across Kenya.

Before joining the WIPO IP Mentorship Program, Chemolex operated without formal intellectual property structures. The company had not registered its trademark, had no IP audit and lacked internal IP policies to govern ownership, partnerships or commercialization. Despite its strong technological innovations, these gaps left Chemolex vulnerable to imitation, limited its ability to secure investment and hindered its potential to scale. The mentorship process offered the clarity and structure needed to transform its research-based innovations into protected, market-ready assets.

The field visit confirmed substantial improvements in both business management and innovation governance. The enterprise successfully conducted a full intellectual property audit, enabling it to identify key intangible assets and clarify ownership. Chemolex then developed a three-year IP strategy aligned with its business growth plan and formalized internal policies that guide the management of IP, partnerships and commercialization. Trademark registration for the "Chemolex" brand was submitted to the Kenya Industrial Property Institute, and the company initiated patent filings for its biodegradable polymers and waste recovery technologies. These steps created a solid protective foundation for its innovations.



The company further integrated intellectual property training into staff development, ensuring employees and partners understand the role of IP in innovation management, competitive positioning and long-term sustainability. Innovation management systems were formalized, and IP clauses were incorporated into all contracts. Chemolex now exemplifies how well-structured intellectual property frameworks can enhance competitiveness and environmental impact.

Reflecting on the mentorship journey, Ms. Martina Sikawa describes the experience as transformative. She explains that the WIPO program helped shift the enterprise's understanding of intellectual property from a purely technical concept to a vital business growth tool. Embedding IP into their operations gave Chemolex the confidence and strategic discipline to scale its innovations with greater protection and credibility. She emphasizes that integrating IP into their business model strengthened their innovation capacity and opened doors to regional and global competitiveness.

The field assessment concluded that Chemolex has undergone remarkable transformation. The mentorship program effectively bridged the gap between scientific innovation and IP-based enterprise development. Chemolex has emerged as a benchmark for youth-led, environmentally focused businesses across Africa, demonstrating that when innovation is protected and strategically managed, it can lead to meaningful social and environmental change.

Looking ahead, Chemolex would benefit from further support in international IP protection, technology licensing and commercialization. Strengthening connections with green innovation funds and impact investors will accelerate growth, while documenting Chemolex's journey as a case study will inspire replication across other African countries. Additional technical support will enable the enterprise to scale into new regions, and tailored financing mechanisms anchored in IP valuation will further enhance investor readiness.

Through its strengthened IP systems, strategic clarity and commitment to sustainability, Chemolex is well positioned to drive green innovation and inclusive growth across East Africa.





TBR Capitol: Turning Agricultural Waste into Wellness Through Intellectual Property

In Kenya's growing landscape of green innovation, TBR Capitol stands out as a powerful example of how youth-led enterprises can transform sustainability challenges into thriving business opportunities through the strategic use of intellectual property. Founded by Tracy Mildred Awuor, the enterprise converts agricultural waste—specifically banana stems discarded across rural farms into nutritious, health-enhancing beverages under the brand ONEMORE.

What many saw as waste, Tracy saw as potential. Her encounters with the huge volumes of unused banana stems in Kenyan farms inspired a bold idea: turn this overlooked resource into a wellness product that promotes healthy living, reduces waste and creates inclusive economic opportunities. This vision became the basis of TBR Capitol's mission to align agricultural innovation with sustainability, nutrition and youth empowerment.

Before joining the WIPO EYIC Mentorship and Coaching Program, TBR Capitol was driven by passion but constrained by several intellectual property and business challenges. The brand lacked consistency, appearing interchangeably as "1-More," "One More" and "ONEMORE," with no trademark registration to anchor its identity. Packaging and product design were not standardized or market-ready, diminishing customer appeal. Internal IP awareness was low, and the enterprise operated without IP policies, IP audits, confidentiality agreements or structured business plans. Limited access to finance, inadequate machinery and weak digital visibility further slowed its growth.

The WIPO mentorship, marked a turning point in the enterprise's evolution. Tracy was introduced to intellectual property not as a complex legal concept but as a strategic foundation for competitiveness, credibility and investment readiness. The mentorship supported her in filing a trademark application for the ONEMORE brand unifying the brand name and strengthening its market presence.

Beyond branding, the enterprise developed a comprehensive three-year IP strategy and introduced internal policies to govern ownership, confidentiality and commercialization of innovations. Packaging was redesigned to give the product a distinctive, professional and appealing visual identity. The unique banana-beverage formulation was formalized as a trade secret, securing a critical component of the company's competitiveness. A new business plan and business model canvas were created, and Tracy began integrating AI-driven tools to improve digital visibility and marketing performance.

These improvements transformed TBR Capitol from an informal startup into a structured enterprise with strong IP foundations. Tracy also grew significantly as a leader her pitching, communication and investor engagement skills improved, strengthening the enterprise's visibility and credibility. The slogan "Drink Life. Sustain Change." now reflects a brand identity rooted in wellness, environmental stewardship and social empowerment.

The field visit confirmed that TBR Capitol has made exceptional progress. By embedding intellectual property into every aspect of its operations, the company has strengthened its brand, enhanced trust among distributors and customers and improved its readiness for expansion. The enterprise's journey shows how agricultural waste can be transformed into profitable wellness products and how intellectual property mentorship can convert creativity into sustainable commercial success.

However, the path ahead still requires targeted support. TBR Capitol needs continued guidance on IP commercialization, valuation and international protection to prepare for regional expansion. Gaps remain in financing, digital capacity, export readiness and access to advanced machinery for scaling production. Strengthening connections with impact investors, green innovation funds and export-promotion networks will be essential to sustaining and expanding the company's impact.

TBR Capitol's story demonstrates the transformative power of intellectual property for young innovators in Africa. Through strategic mentorship, structured IP integration and business discipline, an idea that began with a single observation in a banana plantation has grown into a promising enterprise with the potential to influence nutrition, sustainability and community development across the region.



BLAC JOYAUX – African Elegance Redefined on the Global Stage



BLAC JOYAUX, founded on 6 June 2024 by the visionary young entrepreneur Manuela Kouadio, has quickly emerged as one of Côte d'Ivoire's most inspiring luxury brands. In less than a year, the brand has positioned itself as a symbol of modern African creativity, accessible luxury and bold elegance. What began as a passion to showcase African craftsmanship has grown into a thriving enterprise that speaks to the continent's artistic identity and global aspirations.

From the onset, BLAC JOYAUX distinguished itself through innovation, strategic partnerships and a commitment to excellence. The company collaborates closely with international suppliers and a specialized 3D designer based in China, enabling it to produce premium-quality handbags, jewelry and accessories. These products blend contemporary aesthetics with African cultural identity, reflecting a design philosophy rooted in pride, elegance and authenticity.

Digital transformation plays a central role in the brand's growth. BLAC JOYAUX has built a strong presence across online channels, including its website, Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and WhatsApp Business. These platforms have been instrumental in expanding visibility and strengthening engagement with global audiences. The brand is also finalizing a partnership with DHL for international distribution, and preparations are underway to launch on the Jumia platform to broaden regional access within West Africa. These strategic digital and logistical partnerships demonstrate the company's readiness to operate on a global scale.

To enhance brand visibility and community engagement, BLAC JOYAUX launched an Ambassador Program comprising artists, models and influencers from Africa, Europe and the United States. This network of ambassadors serves not only as brand advocates but also as a dynamic distribution and storytelling force. Their involvement amplifies the brand's identity, supports market expansion and reinforces BLAC JOYAUX's positioning as a luxury label shaped by African narratives and global aspirations.

Beyond its products and marketing strategy, BLAC JOYAUX represents a deeper story of resilience, ambition and cultural pride. As highlighted in the uploaded report, the brand symbolizes the determination of young African entrepreneurs to redefine luxury and elevate African creativity on the world stage.

Under the leadership of Manuela Kouadio, the brand continues to demonstrate that African luxury can compete confidently alongside renowned international names while staying grounded in the continent's cultural heritage.

What distinguishes BLAC JOYAUX is not only its aesthetic appeal but also its mission: to celebrate Africa's brilliance through contemporary design. The company's rapid rise showcases the potential of African youth to create globally relevant brands anchored in identity, innovation and excellence. BLAC JOYAUX is more than a fashion label. It is a modern African success story one that inspires entrepreneurs across the continent and demonstrates that when creativity meets strategy, African luxury can shine brightly on the global stage.

George Rout: Pioneering Intellectual Property Awareness in South Sudan

In a country where the intellectual property landscape is still in its early stages, George Rout has emerged as one of South Sudan's most promising youth innovators and IP advocates. His journey, captured during the WIPO Field Mission to Juba, reflects the power of mentorship, determination and the role of IP in unlocking youth-led entrepreneurship in fragile economies.

George's transformation began at the Regional IP Youth Conference in Abidjan, where he participated in the WIPO Africa Division Mentorship Program. It was during this programme that he was first introduced to the concept of intellectual property. Motivated by this new knowledge, he returned home determined to apply IP principles to a practical, scalable idea. His first step was simple but impactful. Supported by his mother, he began collecting used water bottles and producing liquid soap from home. It was a small beginning that marked the start of a more ambitious journey.

At the time, George operated under an informal name, "Incubation and Investment Solutions (BIS)," which was never registered. Despite this, he pushed forward, driven by a desire to contribute to economic development and innovation in South Sudan. The WIPO mentorship helped him transform this informal initiative into a formally registered enterprise known as Bentiu Innovation Solutions Ltd., complete with a logo created in preparation for trademark registration.

The field mission began with a planning meeting to prepare for documenting George's success story. This meeting enabled coordination of filming locations, the narrative structure of the video and the key milestones to be showcased. This was essential to ensure that the story of George's transformation would be captured authentically and effectively.

A major highlight of the field visit was witnessing the evolution of his product. Initially packaged in improvised containers, George's liquid soap has undergone a significant upgrade. The new packaging is professional, aesthetically appealing and consistent with market expectations. This improvement opened doors for his products to be sold in supermarkets, schools and various distribution points across Juba. The transformation in quality and presentation demonstrated the direct impact of the mentorship on his business confidence and market acceptance.

As part of the mission, a visit was conducted to one of George's outlets where the success story video was filmed. The video allowed him to reflect on his journey, articulate his vision and demonstrate the practical value of intellectual property in shaping his business growth. His confidence during the recording highlighted not only personal growth but also the clarity he has gained through the mentorship.

Beyond his business, George has embraced a broader mission. He now describes himself as the first WIPO ambassador in South Sudan, a title he carries with pride and responsibility. He has actively engaged the Ministries of Justice and Foreign Affairs, encouraging them to consider the creation of a national IP office. His advocacy efforts demonstrate a remarkable level of leadership for a young entrepreneur operating in one of Africa's most fragile environments.





The field visit concluded with a planning session focused on strengthening George's business strategy and reinforcing his role as a youth IP champion. South Sudan, still reliant on outdated Sudanese IP laws and facing significant political instability, has not yet ratified key international IP treaties. Yet through George's efforts and the insights gained from the WIPO mentorship programme, the foundations for a new intellectual property agenda are beginning to emerge.



The transformation observed in George Rout's journey demonstrates the profound impact of structured IP mentorship. His evolution from a young soap producer working from home to a national advocate for intellectual property illustrates the potential of empowering African youth with the knowledge and tools needed to innovate and inspire change. George's story may well become the starting point of South Sudan's modern IP narrative, proving that meaningful transformation often begins with one committed young mind.

5. MEET THE MENTORS



ROSE MBOYA

Rose Mboya is a distinguished intellectual property and innovation systems expert with more than 20 years of experience supporting governments, small and medium enterprises, innovators, universities and research institutions to strengthen innovation governance, commercialization pathways and enterprise competitiveness. She currently serves as the Head of Industrial Linkages, Policy and Intellectual Property at the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute, where she established the institution's first intellectual property office and has overseen the filing of more than 40 patents, utility models, trademarks and industrial designs. Her work has advanced national research commercialization and strengthened institutional technology capacity.

Rose holds a master degree in intellectual property and is pursuing a PhD in entrepreneurship. She has shaped Africa's intellectual property landscape through her role as a Kenyan delegate in the negotiations of the AfCFTA intellectual property rights protocol and has contributed to the development of national intellectual property strategies for Botswana, Liberia, Malawi, Sierra Leone and Lesotho.

Her continental footprint spans more than 30 African countries. As a WIPO external consultant and international trainer, she works with policymakers, regulatory agencies, academia, research institutions, small and medium enterprises and innovation hubs. Her approach integrates entrepreneurship, intellectual property and innovation management to support the transformation of research outputs into market ready products and services.

Rose has designed and delivered structured mentorship programs that help startups and research teams identify intellectual property assets, strengthen business models, secure trademarks, protect trade secrets and prepare for investment. She remains committed to equipping African institutions and innovators with the knowledge and tools needed to drive industrial development, sustainable growth and inclusive economic transformation.



David Jeng

David Jeng is an international expert with over 12 years of experience and a decade of impact across Africa. He has trained and supported more than 10,000 entrepreneurs in over 15 countries while consulting for global institutions including the World Intellectual Property Organization, the International Trade Centre, the United Nations Development Programme, the European Union and the World Bank. He earned a bachelor degree in marketing and finance from the University of The Gambia and completed a master degree in intellectual property at Africa University in Zimbabwe.

His further training includes advanced coursework in patent law and global public health at Harvard Law School, the European Patent Office Patent Drafting Program, certification as a Creative Intelligence Coach and qualification as a UNCTAD Empretec National Master Trainer.

David began his professional career with Startup Incubator Gambia as Business Support Coordinator, where he helped establish the country's first business incubation hub, designed accelerator programs and mentored startups. He later founded Bliss Executives, a management consultancy supporting small and medium enterprises through business development, investment facilitation, project financing and intellectual property management, and co founded the Gambia Disability Impact Trust Fund to expand access to finance for persons with disabilities.

Recognized as a thought leader in intellectual property and innovation policy, David served as an international IP expert for WIPO, leading the IP Accelerator for small and medium enterprises, training women entrepreneurs across Africa and contributing to the drafting of The Gambia's Intellectual Property Act of 2021. He is a member of the National Intellectual Property Council, Managing Director of Chapman Xpress Financial Services and serves on several national and continental boards including the Gambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Next Einstein Forum. He is also a Fellow of the Penn Center for Innovation at the University of Pennsylvania and a board member of the United States National Science Foundation Internet of Things for Precision Agriculture initiative.

Driven by a commitment to building a globally competitive African innovation ecosystem, David empowers entrepreneurs to harness intellectual property, digital transformation and finance to create scalable ventures and drive sustainable development across the continent.



Lilian Nantume Mubiru

Lilian Nantume Mubiru is a senior intellectual property and management specialist with more than 15 years of experience in high level leadership, women entrepreneurship development and community empowerment. She is the Founder and Managing Director of Grooming a Successful Woman with Intellectual Mind, an organization dedicated to advancing gender empowerment through the use of intellectual property for business growth. Lilian also serves as an intellectual property expert and consultant in women enterprise development and is a Director at Delly Investments Limited. She previously worked as the Licensing Manager at the Uganda Performing Right Society, where she supported rights management and collective administration.

Lilian played a key role in the implementation of the national project on intellectual property for branding, product development and commercialization for women entrepreneurs in Uganda, implemented by WIPO, the Uganda Registration Services Bureau and GSWIM from 2021 to 2023. Her leadership in this project contributed to improved understanding and use of intellectual property among women led enterprises across the country.

As an international consultant with the World Intellectual Property Organization under the Division for Africa, Lilian has supported small and medium enterprises in countries such as The Gambia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Lesotho, South Sudan, Zambia and Ghana. She has also served as a course trainer with the WIPO Academy, providing training to researchers, innovators and government officials on intellectual property driven industrial development.

Her commitment to empowerment and inclusive development has earned her recognition as a panelist at the Fourth Youth Business Forum organized by the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs in 2023. She is the recipient of the 2023 Virtuous Woman Award for her work in empowering women through GSWIM.



Tinodiwa Zambe Makoni

Tinodiwa Zambe Makoni is a seasoned creative consultant with 18 years of industry experience, specializing in logo design, conceptual development, design for print, two dimensional animation, character design, comic art, brand identity creation and storyboarding. He is the co founder of Comexposed, an innovative platform that connects Zimbabwean digital artists with the corporate sector. Through this platform, he promotes collaboration, capacity building and mentorship for emerging art entrepreneurs, contributing significantly to increased recognition of African digital arts.

Tinodiwa's creative impact extends beyond entrepreneurship. He pioneered the first Zimbabwean action comic book under Cross Caption Comix, a publication that achieved nationwide distribution. This groundbreaking work introduced iconic Zimbabwean superheroes, The Gift and Gundog, and played a major role in shaping the modern comic scene in Zimbabwe.

Driven by his passion for education, Tinodiwa has served as an animation lecturer. He holds a Bachelor of Animation degree from Griffith University in Australia. His leadership and commitment to positive change are reflected in his participation as a Mandela Washington Fellow under the Young African Leaders Initiative, as well as his role as a keynote speaker and panelist for the World Intellectual Property Organization. In these engagements, he shares insights on digital arts, creativity, innovation and the role of intellectual property.

Since 2010, Tinodiwa has also served as part of the executive team of LoriMak Africa, contributing to the organization's strategic direction and impact. His multifaceted journey reflects not only artistic excellence but also a deep commitment to empowering others and advancing the digital arts landscape in Africa.



Armelle Fouda Tala

Armelle Fouda Tala studied trade negotiation at ESSEC Business School and the University of Douala, and obtained a master degree in intellectual property management from the African Intellectual Property Organization Academy, a program delivered by WIPO in collaboration with the University of Yaounde I. She supports founders, brands and institutions in protecting and monetizing their innovations across the OAPI region.

As the co founder of Cabinet T and F and an accredited OAPI legal representative, she combines practical portfolio management in trademarks, patents, industrial designs and copyright with clear business first guidance. Her approach ensures that decisions are efficient, budgets are focused and IP rights translate into meaningful market outcomes.

Her experience covers a wide spectrum of IP services including advisory work, freedom to operate assessments, oppositions, commercialization strategies and cross border coordination with domestic and foreign counsel. Armelle also designs training programs and decision workflows that build IP literacy within organizations, helping teams act with greater confidence and clarity.

She supports clients across diverse sectors including agro industry, creative industries, technology, cosmetics, banking, education and oil and gas.

Armelle has been deeply engaged in IP awareness and education since 2018, dedicating herself to making intellectual property understandable and accessible to the general public. She writes educational content on a broad range of IP topics, organizes IP clinics and hosts an annual conference during World IP Day or African IP Day. She has served as an ambassador of the IP Business Academy of CEIPI for nearly two years and is an active member of the Association for the Promotion of Intellectual Property in Africa, where she remains fully committed to advancing the IP agenda across the continent.



Hassane Yacouba Kaffa

Mr Hassane Yacouba Kaffa is the Managing Director of Phenix IP, a firm that provides services in intellectual property, business law, strategic and operational management and digital finance. He brings extensive experience from both the public and private sectors, with a career that spans national institutions, regional organizations and multinational corporations.

Before founding Phenix IP, Mr Kaffa served at the Ministry of Communication, Youth, Sports and Culture in Niger, where he contributed to national cultural and communication programs. He later joined the African Intellectual Property Organization as the Head of Literary and Artistic Property and Distinctive Signs, where he oversaw the administration of copyright, related rights and the protection of trademarks and geographical indications across member states.

Mr Kaffa subsequently worked with Nestle as a Regional Intellectual Property Advisor, responsible for supporting operations in the Central, East and West African regions. His role involved guiding IP protection, enforcement and strategy across diverse markets and product categories.

In 2015, he left Nestle to establish Phenix IP. Under his leadership, the firm has provided advisory services to private companies and international organizations, delivering projects that focus on youth and women economic empowerment, the digitalization of financial products and access to energy. He has led major regional studies, including the harmonization of procedures for African regional industrial property organizations, as well as the development of National Intellectual Property Strategies for Niger, Côte d'Ivoire and, most recently, Gabon.

Mr Kaffa is recognized for his depth of expertise in intellectual property and his commitment to strengthening IP systems and economic opportunities across Africa.

6. CONCLUSION

The inaugural coaching and mentoring program had a significant and positive impact on the enterprises of young innovators, creators and entrepreneurs from 20 countries across Africa. All participants strengthened their understanding of intellectual property, acquired practical business skills and adopted good business practices that can be applied throughout the business life cycle. The program equipped them with the tools to formalize their operations, enhance productivity and make informed strategic decisions.

More importantly, the initiative empowered the youth to recognize and seize new opportunities. Participants reported increased revenues, job creation, expanded product ranges, improved branding and packaging, wider market access and stronger connections to funding networks. Their improved understanding of IP, and the ways IP tools can be integrated into business growth strategies, also boosted personal confidence and strengthened their ability to articulate their business vision and value.

Delivered on a pilot basis, this program confirms the viability and relevance of WIPO's Medium Term Strategic Plan (2026–2022), which promotes a vision where innovation and creativity from anywhere can thrive and be supported by intellectual property for the good of everyone. The MTSP provides a robust and forward-looking framework that underpins the success of this empowering program.

The impact stories shared by participants further highlight the transformative potential of targeted IP capacity building. The logical next step is to explore similar initiatives for other underserved stakeholder groups across Africa who could benefit from structured mentorship and IP-driven enterprise development. In a world where intellectual property is a catalyst for job creation, a driver of economic growth and a tool for addressing global challenges, the opportunities for expansion and deeper impact are limitless.

Looking ahead, the momentum created by this program provides a strong foundation for scaling the model through deeper collaboration with national IP offices, regional organizations, development partners and private sector actors. Strengthening institutional capacity, expanding digital resources and building long-term mentorship networks will ensure that more young innovators can benefit from tailored IP support. By investing in these systems, WIPO and its partners can unlock the full potential of Africa's creative and innovation economy and contribute meaningfully to sustainable development across the continent.

ANNEX PARTICIPANTS IN THE WIPO EYIC PROJECT

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