



Creativity

Meets

SUSTAINABILITY

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Editor's Note

— Chidinma Nwaukwa

What does it mean to be creative?


Creativity is said to be the very core of human nature. We are wired to draw from our imagination, experiences and/or environment to discover new ways to solve everyday problems. Creativity is about challenging oneself and drawing inspiration from even the most mundane places.

But as with every other phenomenon, creativity has a dual nature, and on the other side of the creativity coin lies sustainability, which has to do with how certain practices or policies may contribute to a better and stable quality of life for all. Both are essentially complementary to one another, in building and driving systematic changes across the world. When these two vital pillars work hand in hand, existing systems and resources are not just discarded for newer ones but rather, new and improved solutions are born out of already existing and available resources.

In this issue of TEF Circle, we explore the convergence of creativity and sustainability across various sectors of the economy which our alumni operate in. From fashion, to manufacturing, to agriculture, to art, some of our alumni share their experience with incorporating sustainable practices into their business model and how this has had a direct impact on their profitability as a business. They also share some of the initiatives that they have undergone to promote sustainability and climate consciousness within the communities they operate in.

As COP27 draws its curtains, Our Founder, Mr. Tony O.Elumelu CFR, reflects on climate justice, fairness, and equity for Africa in a recently co-published opinion editorial with David Miliband, President and CEO of the International Rescue Committee.

I hope that you enjoy this issue of TEF Circle, and more importantly I hope that it causes you to be conscious of the fact that all our activities have a direct impact on the environment, and as such we must all contribute our quota in preserving our planet.



In this issue of TEF Circle, we explore the convergence of creativity and sustainability across various sectors of the economy which our alumni operate in.

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FASHION

Creativity Meets Sustainability



Chioma Ogbudimkpa

REDBUTTON

How would you describe your entrepreneurship journey?

Until 2016, I never thought I'd venture into entrepreneurship. I had always dreamt of climbing through the ranks in the corporate world, heading regional business units. However, I saw an opportunity to go into fashion as a business after several years of doing it as a hobby. My time in the corporate environment provided the foundation for all the entrepreneurial skills I have today; from crafting strategy documents, to making presentations, building networks, customer engagement, project and people management, business process design, and so on. Thanks to these experiences and skills garnered, my entrepreneurship journey got off to a great start, with a network of people who started buying from me, including the skills needed to develop relevant documentation required for access funding and other growth opportunities. Entrepreneurship is not a walk in the park; I have dealt with a roller coaster of emotions resulting from one failed project to a series of rejections, from one successful event to another month of incredibly low sales, not to forget artisans who disappoint and ruin appointments, and the worst - late nights in production due to power outages during the day. The list goes on and on. If you do not have a fighting spirit, you will struggle to successfully build a start-up. Thankfully, I have accessed one of the best start-up support programs around the

world which has been tremendously instrumental to our growth, in terms of training, mentorship and funding, thanks to the Tony Elumelu Foundation. So, I'll say, resilience and determination help me stay grounded, character and excellence propel me to access all the support that I need.

Tell us a bit about your business?

Redbutton is a sustainability focused fashion company based in Lagos, Nigeria, that fuses eco-friendly materials, indigenous handcrafted fabrics, upcycled industrial and agro waste, to create premium apparel for professional women. We work with local artisans and other social enterprises who hand make the raw materials we use, including upcycled water hyacinth fiber, coconut shell buttons, hand dyed and woven fabrics, etc. Through this work we have empowered hundreds of women across rural communities in Nigeria who do this work and are able to sustain their families. Redbutton has been showcased across some of the biggest fashion platforms globally, including the launch of United Nations Alliance for Sustainable Fashion, Mercedes Benz Fashion Week, Vogue, Elle, Lagos Fashion Week, etc.

In what ways did the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme influence some of the sustainability practices that your business currently adopts?

The Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme has been an integral pillar of our successes as a business, so it is safe to say that all the support we have received from the Foundation has helped us to better grow in our sustainability efforts. More

directly, I brainstormed and collaborated within the TEF Alumni network, to create the sustainable materials we use in our production.

Can you share some of these sustainability practices being adopted by your business?

Most fashion businesses in this part of the world are somewhat sustainable; we are not known for the ills associated with excessive fashion production like child labour, exploitation, and industrial pollution. We are more into artisanal production, in limited quantities. At Redbutton, we have added other layers to our sustainability agenda which include the adoption of eco-friendly materials, leveraging a digital fashion exchange platform, and engaging in sustainable fashion advocacy.

How are you promoting sustainability and climate consciousness within the communities that your business operates in?

A few years ago, we began our sustainability advocacy by using social media to host online events, where we invited sustainable fashion experts and stakeholders from across the world to speak on topics around conscious fashion and how to build fashion businesses responsibly. So far, we have received hundreds of feedback from young fashion business owners who have no idea how to go about sustainable fashion, in testament of the impact of our events. To illustrate, Redbutton received the 2021 'Social Media for Good' award in the fashion and lifestyle category in recognition of our work in using social media for sustainable fashion advocacy. We are committed to spreading the sustainability consciousness, by influencing fashion designers to

adopt similar eco-friendly and sustainable materials as those that we use.

What significant milestones has your business recorded recently?

My journey to building the Redbutton brand has been very emotional, as I count every win, small or big as significant but I'll highlight four significant milestones.

- a. In 2021, we moved to our walk-in store/office (we had operated from my apartment since 2017, all the pieces we showcased at fashion shows and international exhibitions till 2021 were made in my living room). This move was critical, as we were changing our business model from bespoke to ready-to-wear and more than ready to move to a public space.
- b. In January 2022, we were selected for the Women Entrepreneurship 4 Africa (WE4A) program implemented by TEF and the Seedstars group and co-funded by the European Commission. By merit, we scaled through the accelerator program and were selected as a high growth founder for the Growth Program. Through this program, we received follow-on funding to develop and expand our new product. We hosted the European Commission delegates who visited us during the WE4A demo day and gave us some feedback, which we are now implementing to improve our pricing model and revenue.
- c. In line with our brand ethos and the need to scale our impact with technology, Redbutton is now building a new digital product, a no-inventory fashion exchange platform, to drive circular fashion in Nigeria (RedXchange.fashion). This idea

came during the WE4A Growth program, and as a result we received \$25,000 in credits from Amazon Web Services to cover some of the costs of building the platform.

d. In September 2022, we incorporated our company in the US, as part of our growth plans, to establish a US hub/office to manage our exports and distribution across America.

A word of advice to young entrepreneurs on the importance of taking a more deliberate approach towards sustainability

Sustainability is a journey of consciousness and mindfulness; you add more blocks to the impact you make as you take deliberate steps every day. Do not be quick to overhaul your operations into a supposed sustainable model and thereafter run into losses or more trouble. Take gradual steps and implement only a few ideas or processes at a time. This will help you see and monitor every detail of your transitioning better with clearer traceability. Again, sustainability practices are not the cheapest options, as it requires you to dedicate a significant amount of resources, therefore only transition one step at a time to better manage the higher threshold of investment. Finally, research is very key to understanding the sustainable practices that are required for your business, so I'll strongly recommend researching other organisations in your industry across the world and learn how they are incorporating sustainable practices.

It is important to note that the more deliberate steps you take towards sustainability, the more environmental and social impact you create, and the more compelling your business case will be

to access more support. Ultimately, you are building a legacy that will continue to impact the next generation.



Juliet Namujju

KIMULI FASHIONABILITY

How would you describe your entrepreneurship journey?

When I was six years old my father got in a terrible accident. He became lame because his legs were amputated. He lost his job and was not able to fend for the family. He died miserably. My mother remained sad, lonely and died too soon after. I was neglected, abandoned and lacked a cared for childhood. I hated myself to the level of regretting why I was born. I was then raised by my poor grandmother, who was a tailor. She inspired me to start making my own dolls from waste using a handneedle, since she could not afford buying me a doll. Through her tailoring gigs, my grandmother supported my education, and when I completed high school I attended a short course in Fashion and Design. I founded Kimuli Collection in 2017, which gave me the chance to transform my difficult past into my purpose of fighting for the inclusion for people with disabilities, and environmental conservation through up-cycling.

Tell us a bit about your business?

Kimuli Collections transforms plastic waste into sustainable fashion products in Africa. It is an inclusive Eco-fashion label that provides

employment opportunities to disabled tailors and youth who turn plastic polythene into durable, sustainable and waterproof garments and accessories.

In what ways did the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme influence some of the sustainability practices that your business currently adopts?

Kimuli Collections was an idea until I received the support from the Tony Elumelu Foundation. The TEF Entrepreneurship Programme led to the real birth of Kimuli. I was fortunate to be matched to a great mentor who till date remains a strong support system and advisor for my business and my team. The enterprise start-up toolkit was a great tool for understanding our customers and during the programme - I wrote a business plan for the first time in my life. These learnings and support have led to the success of Kimuli Collections. Till date, my team and I use the resources and templates that the TEF Entrepreneurship Program provided, every time we have a challenge. With the seed capital I received, I was able to purchase the raw materials and machinery that Kimuli needed to go into production.

Can you share some of these sustainability practices being adopted by your business?

We sell innovative sustainable fashion garments and accessories made from upcycled textile and plastic waste. We also organise inclusive fashion shows - the first and only of its kind in Uganda - where disabled persons are the runway models. Finally, we facilitate creative tailoring trainings and sensitise in rural and urban communities, as well as organisations and companies, on how to turn plastic waste into sustainable products.

How are you promoting sustainability and climate consciousness within the communities that your business operates in?

Socially, we have trained and created direct employment to over 96 people with disability as tailors who are now able to fend for their families. For example, Nakabaka, a physically impaired single mother of 5, was able to renovate her house and can provide for her family. Kimuli Fashionability has trained and employed 120 marginalized youth as waste collectors, thereby challenging youth unemployment which is a core challenge in Uganda with over 83% youth unemployed. These youth are inspired to start small and grow big through upcycling initiatives while changing their mind-set that waste can actually act as a resource.

Environmentally, we have upcycled over 50 tonnes of plastic waste into over 20,000 upcycled garments and accessories. This has reduced the amount of waste that would have negatively impacted the environment. We aim to transform public perception of disability being an inability to do whatever, or that plastic is a resource which cannot be consumed as disposable, by building an internationally recognized waste fashion label. Our rain jacket from upcycled plastic sugar sacks which were made by disabled Ugandans and auctioned at the UN General Assembly in New York was a major step towards high level awareness to inspire policy making towards environmental sustainability and inclusiveness.

Our impact? We implement environmentally conscious initiatives to reduce 400CO₂, such as conserving the environment from the dangers of disposing waste and burning.

What significant milestones has your business recorded recently?

We were thrilled to unveil our refreshed brand identity. Kimuli collections was previously known as Kimuli Fashionability. The updates show the evolution of our company since its founding in 2017. While this is a significant change, our core beliefs haven't changed:

Preserving the environment through upcycling and recycling plastic waste into sustainable fashion products and Empowering people living with disabilities through job creation. We have made changes to our social media handles and we kindly invite you to share, like and follow our pages to stay updated with our growth and promotional opportunities. We appreciate your continuous support.

Kimuli Collections has managed to sign supply contracts with over 3 international fashion houses till day and is upcycling over 50 tonnes of plastic waste into over 20,000 upcycled garments and accessories , creating direct employment to over 30 trained disabled tailors (who cannot hear and talk and those with physical impairments) and we furthermore provide income generation opportunities for an additional 81 marginalized youth as waste collectors. An example is Nakwanga Rose, a physically impaired single mother of 5 children who all live in temporary housing. Thanks to the employment with Kimuli she was able to renovate her house and is financially independent and self-sustaining.

Selected as a Westerwelle foundation fellow in the Young

Founders program 2022. I will be sharing this 6-month experience with 24 other founders from Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Our story of Kimuli Collections was featured in the publication by The German economic magazine "Business Punk" - a seven-page story on recycling in Uganda.

A word of advice to young entrepreneurs on the importance of taking a more deliberate approach towards sustainability

To my fellow African women who would wish to start a sustainable business, I urge them to utilize each and every opportunity that comes their way, through partnerships, networking and hard work. Do not wait for when you have "lots" of money to start, start small and grow big, as you learn from failures.

It's no surprise that grassroots women's led organizations are so successful today because as women, we are able to adapt to local needs while mobilizing community members to create positive societal change therefore, I strongly urge all women to raise up from their long-lasting comfort zone challenges to get involved in working together to dismantle barriers, challenge perceptions and improve the lives of women and girls, and save the environment in our various communities.



MANUFACTURING

Creativity Meets Sustainability



Msindazwe Ndhlovu

THE NOBLE SAVAGE

How would you describe your entrepreneurship journey?

“Nobody said it was easy, but no one said it was this hard”.

This quote best describes my journey thus far. It's been hard every day. I get home, tired as a donkey, but tomorrow at 4:00 am I am awake and ready to tackle the day. However, I am grateful for the help and encouragement I have received along the way, as I tow this path. I will not exchange it for anything else. I have learnt and mastered a lot of things.

Tell us a bit about your business?

The Noble Savage is a construction company that makes innovative building materials by transmuting waste into usable products. We recycle waste plastic and glass to manufacture eco-friendly building materials which are lighter, stronger, and more durable than your concrete products. We make roof tiles paver kitchen countertops and have prototyped a solar roof tile. We make products for the environmentally conscious individual who seeks for something aesthetically beautiful, durable, and affordable.

In what ways did the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme influence some of the sustainability practices that your business currently adopts?

First and foremost, the Tony Elumelu Foundation was the first organisation that believed in our dream. The support that we received through the TEF Entrepreneurship Programme helped validate our business idea and move The Noble Savage from being just an idea to a business that has been able to create 10 direct jobs and over 120 indirect jobs to vulnerable members of society, while generating between \$50-\$180 per month in income.

Thank you again TEF. When we started, we were immigrants but we eventually relocated back to our home country, because sometimes home is best. When we did our training, we were taught 2 fundamental lessons: management and continuous learning in building your business. The lesson on learning to sustain your business taught us to be sustainable in all our business activities. We learnt how to create a business plan, marketing plan, an operational plan and scrutinise how the potential sustainability of a business model. That was the main difference that gave our business the edge. Yes, there have been corrections and reviews, but that's how the business grows.

Can you share some of these sustainability practices being adopted by your business?

Our entire business model is green. One of the fundamentals we had to learn was to be known for that one thing - instead of trying to be everything/ everywhere. Another was learning to turn your

team to your tribe. Finally, we report on a triple bottom line: people, planet, profit.

How are you promoting sustainability and climate consciousness within the communities that your business operates in?

The Noble Savage works very closely with the authorities - the city council and environmental agency - to help educate communities on waste sorting, setting up waste collection sites, and then buying from these communities, thus creating employment opportunities. We are introducing color-coded bin liners and street bins to encourage sorting from source.

What significant milestones has your business recorded recently?

We have become one of the top 4 recycling companies in Bulawayo. We process over 50 tons of waste month on month. We were also selected as the top innovator for 2022. We have stopped over 500 tonnes of waste from going to the landfill and one of our subsidiaries hit \$100,000 dollar valuation shortly after its set up in 2022.

A word of advice to young entrepreneurs on the importance of taking a more deliberate approach towards sustainability

Sustainability should be in your DNA; it takes time to get there but make it part of you. We are a company that deals with waste, so technically speaking we should be on the outskirts of town, but we carry out our processes in a way that does not raise complaints of smells, flies or anything. We have built the business

to the point that anyone who visits can't help but be impressed with our top-level operations.

Mechi Amaah

2019 TEFALUMNI & FOUNDER,
BLACK AND NATURAL COSMETICS
Cameroon

After losing her father at a very young age, Mechi Amaah had to look after pigs in her parent's farm and sell them under her mother's supervision to provide for their basic needs. Upon getting to the university, she started businesses selling various things to make ends meet but eventually decided to focus on manufacturing and selling hair products solely.

She had made plans to launch new services and products when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. The US \$5000 non-refundable seed capital that she received from the Tony Elumelu Foundation enabled her to continue her expansion plans and employ 2 additional employees, thereby saving her business from liquidation. Speaking on the impact of the TEF Entrepreneurship Programme business management training, Mechi says - *"The training that the TEF Entrepreneurship Programme offered, helped me to keep tabs on my mission, vision and most importantly, my finances. Ever since I successfully completed the TEF Entrepreneurship Programme, I can proudly say the books of my businesses are in order."*

Since receiving the TEF seed capital in 2019, Mechi has employed 4

additional staff and successfully increased her annual revenue by 70%, with multiple awards and recognitions for her business.

“To give back to my community, I have created jobs and am currently working on an accelerator program to train young girls with vocational training skills that can enable them gain employment or start up their own business. This will go a long way to reduce unemployment in my community and country.”



AGRICULTURE

Creativity Meets Sustainability



Ababacar Samb

2018 TEF ALUMNI & FERME AGRO-ECOLOGIQUE DOMOU
AFRIC (FAEDA)
Senegal

How would you describe your entrepreneurship journey?

My entrepreneurial journey has never been a long calm river. I have recorded successes such as being one of the African entrepreneurs chosen by the Tony Elumelu Foundation in 2018 with wealth-creating ideas for the economic development of Africa. I faced challenges (not to say failure) during the implementation phase of the strategic development of our company; Ferme Agro-Ecologique Domou Afric (FAEDA).

In short, entrepreneurship is a real obstacle course.

Tell us a bit about your business?

FAEDA is an agricultural company created in 2018 in Senegal. We are an agricultural company that deals in the production and distribution of broiler chickens, eggs for consumption, fresh vegetables and fish, chicks and poultry feed. Our economic model is based on the sale of our products to cater for professionals, individuals and schools. We also provide coaching and support services on the design and management of a farm.

In what ways has the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme influenced some of the sustainability practices your company is currently adopting?

The TEF Entrepreneurship Programme has enabled us to strengthen our production activities by launching a chick production unit, opening points of sale for our products and strengthening our skills in business development.

This has helped us create more jobs for young people and women, increased the quantity and quality of products available to our customers and created more wealth.

What milestones has your business achieved recently?

Our company began to grow with the development of other activities such as the production and marketing of chicks and poultry feed. We've also started work on our fresh vegetable production site and we have also won the trust of certain NGOs such as the ZIG, which entrusts us with certain markets for the delivery of poultry products.

Advice for young entrepreneurs on the importance of taking a more deliberate approach to sustainability.

There is never a failure in entrepreneurship. Either we succeed or we learn to do better.



Sepenica Darco

2018 TEF ALUMNI & FERME AGRO-ECOLOGIQUE DOMOU
AFRIC (FAEDA)
Senegal

How would you describe your entrepreneurship journey?

Sepenica Darco, established FarmerTribe to be a one-stop-shop for smallholder farmers in last mile communities to enable them access quality and improved seeds, agrochemicals and fertilizer, agronomic training, extension services and market linkages. Farmer Tribe distributes agricultural inputs to small-scale farmers for a commission and also provides farm training and free extension services to these farmers. According to Sepencia, not only did she get the non-refundable US \$5,000 from the Tony Elumelu Foundation, but meeting with other entrepreneurs with the TEF Alumni network taught her to dream big and to be a blessing to herself and her community.

“I applied for the TEF programme with just an idea, getting selected in 2018 was all the verification I needed. It gave me the endorsement that I was not "Crazy" for leaving a job most young graduates in Ghana "kill" for. Meeting other entrepreneurs at the TEF Forum also gave me the power to dream big, growing up with a single mum, my only dream was to work hard so I can afford to put food on the table. I never for once dreamt of making an impact in the life of other people until TEF.” she said.

After kicking off FarmerTribe in 2019, Sepenica's business generated a revenue of \$160,154, which increased to \$313,899 and \$469,834 in the subsequent years. FarmerTribe is on the way

to making an annual revenue of \$900,000 in the year 2022. She now has 10 permanent staff and 72 seasonal staff employed with FarmerTribe in 4 different locations. She works with 36 community input agents, mostly women, and youths who earn a commission for retailing farm inputs from FarmerTribe to over 7000 farmers. FarmerTribe works with the various Ministry of Agriculture in their areas of operation to host demonstration farms where farmers can have hands-on training on new agronomic practices and products, which keeps them updated on the latest technologies.



ARTS

Creativity Meets Sustainability



Gladys Chibanada

2019 TEF ALUMNI & CEO KRAFTED INK

How would you describe your entrepreneurship journey?

My journey as a Creative Entrepreneur started in 2016, when I was just 21 years old. I started a company called Krafted Ink: an innovative art and craft-oriented enterprise, specialised in African textile journals and gift packaging. I grew up in a suburb in Zimbabwe that was a home and still is a home of so many small businesses. Oftentimes, I would get an opportunity to assist my mother who ran a lot of different businesses, hence working in a corporate environment was not unfamiliar to me, because just as children learn from their environments, I had already developed a desire to become a business owner. I also loved making things - sketching fashion designs, knitting, and all sorts of crafts. However, there was a stigma that I got accustomed to, thanks to society, which is that a person who pursues the creative arts as a profession is not going to be successful, as it is and should remain a hobby. This made me question my abilities to be successful with my passion.

Fast forward 2016, two weeks after the inception of the company I registered the business because I told myself that I was going to be professional and that also needed an office space. I want to defy the narrative that creatives are not professionals. I also wanted to do everything differently, challenge the status quo. So,

it catalysed the business to grow because customers would be impressed by the level of professionalism the business operated with. And whenever I got the opportunity, I would always over-deliver.

Tell us a bit about your business?

Krafted Ink is an innovative art and craft-oriented enterprise, specialised in African textile journals and gift packaging, they have mastered the art of combining colors in making gift packaging to ensure lasting smiles in the lives of people. The handmade products include, journals, diaries, gift bags, gift boxes using African print fabric. The company was conceived out of a strong desire to uphold the African Ubuntu standards of sharing gifts and memories. Its design philosophy is of traditional craftsmanship and afro-contemporary style which enables the creation of unparalleled memories and experiences that are timeless in impact and nature. Krafted Ink also boasts of a wide portfolio of corporates in Zimbabwe who engage them for corporate gifts. Krafted Ink ensures people celebrate momentous occasions with the appropriate gifts. Whether the celebration is a wedding, the birth of a child, a new home, or a birthday, Krafted Ink has something to suit every gifting need. Krafted Ink has since expanded to product packaging and launched a couple of fashion lines.

In what ways did the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme influence some of the sustainability practices that your business currently adopts?

Without the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship

Programme, there was no way or chance that my business was going to survive. The programme not only helped with the business plan and funding but it also helped me adopt sustainability practices that has made me see why it's better to run an impactful business beyond making a profit.

How are you promoting sustainability and climate consciousness within the communities that your business operates in?

The process of garment production involves cutting of fabric into different styles. Research shows that this process counts for 16% of waste from the total material intake. We retrieve this waste and turn it into useful and beautiful products like notebooks, diaries and gift bags. Fabric is not biodegradable and if it is not well disposed, it potentially harms the environment because of the inks and processes used to make fabric. Litter is not pleasing to look at and can affect water drinking supplies or block drainage systems. Our business reduces the negative impact of fabric waste. In our Zimbabwean culture, gifts play an important role in building relationships and communities at all levels. Our products are timeless and keepsakes, ideal for any personality or occasion. The handcrafted nature of our products embeds lasting memories between people that share and use them. We make bespoke products that adopt our fabric touch to meet the needs of clients with personalised or special requests.

What significant milestones has your business recorded recently?

The work Krafted Ink has been doing has attracted a lot of media coverage. I have received awards and recognition: Gladys has

been listed in the Gumiguru 50 under 30 young leader's class of 2021. She has served as the youngest Executive board member of ZAACA (Zimbabwe applied and crafts association). Featured Entrepreneur of the month by Fashionomics Africa in Côte d'Ivoire. Gladys Chibanda also founded Tisu Digital Craftsmen, an agency that specializes in Brand Identity Design that specializes in packaging design for small businesses. In 2021 Gladys Chibanda was awarded the Business Growth Award from the Youth Connect Program run by UNDP, one of the Foundation's long term partners.

A word of advice to young entrepreneurs on the importance of taking a more deliberate approach towards sustainability

Creating and growing sustainability in business is good for several reasons, chief among them being that we live, work, and play on one planet, and we need to take care of it for the benefit of all. However, good conscience aside, a sustainable business model is also a successful business model.



TONY O. ELUMELU, DAVID MILIBAND:

**COP27 is over. Africa
Cannot Wait Any Longer
For Climate Action**



Let us be frank. The Africans who bear the harshest effects of the climate crisis are those least responsible for creating this crisis in the first place.

This month's Cop27 climate negotiations in Egypt were being called "Africa's Cop", a recognition of the daily impact of the climate crisis on communities across the continent.

The question is whether climate negotiators used this opportunity to address the urgent, immediate needs of African communities around food security, adaptation and access to climate financing.

We are already seeing how the climate crisis is negatively impacting food security and economic livelihoods tied to food production. Africa is home to 60 per cent of the world's agricultural land and the majority of the population are smallholder farmers. While Africa has the potential to be an agricultural powerhouse, the continent's rain-fed agricultural focus creates unique vulnerability. And as one of the most climate-affected parts of the world, immediate action from the international community is required.

The impending famine in east Africa is a devastating example. Today, the region faces its longest-running drought in 40 years. Thousands of people have already died. As many as 36 million lives are affected, across Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. This is a story of political and international failure.

And let us be frank. The Africans who bear the harshest effects of the climate crisis are those least responsible for creating this crisis in the first place. The continent contributed a total of 3.8 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions in 2020. Somalia, at the epicentre of the hunger crisis in east Africa, only contributed 0.002 percent of emissions over the past 250 years.

Following Cop27, it is clear that we need more action on the climate crisis and the inclusion of the world's most affected in climate solutions.

After the meetings, the impact of climate change on people, livelihoods and communities must remain front and centre. Failure to address climate inequity will result in growing economic disparities for countries in Africa. The continent's rising debt is expected to reach close to 70 per cent GDP, up from 58 per cent as of 2019.

The first critical action for world leaders is ensuring these communities have access to climate financing.

Currently, Africa receives less than 4 percent of global climate finance – most of which is made as loans, not grants – and burdens the countries with debt. To bridge the energy inequality that exists between Africa and the rest of the world, the continent must prioritise investments in the provision of traditional and renewable energy for Africans. Green energy transition must allow room for Africa to sustain its economic growth.

Furthermore, for the millions who live with the present effects of

extreme weather, major donors must focus on devoting at least 50 per cent of the climate finance commitment to adaptation. Climate-resilient agriculture, for example, would help to support rural communities through climate shocks. Progress, transparency and time-bound tracking of climate finance commitments, bringing international finance on adaptation onto an even footing with mitigation, is central to addressing the climate crisis. Secondly, green entrepreneurship and agripreneurship play critical roles in driving innovative solutions to environmental issues. It is crucial to invest in the people behind these ventures to attain climate equity on the micro level. There are bottom-up solutions that must be pursued.

Local entrepreneurs have the power to affect change through their actions or inactions. To empower and further their focus on sustainability, the Tony Elumelu Foundation mentors and provides \$5,000 (£4,200) seed capital towards sustainable businesses across the 54 countries in Africa. More than 1,500 of these entrepreneurs run small businesses addressing environmental issues, in sectors ranging from energy and power generation to waste management.

Over a million Tony Elumelu Foundation participants are being encouraged to create businesses that incorporate sustainability into their practices. And, to empower youth and grow the demand for and availability of solar power in Ivory Coast, an International Rescue Committee (IRC) programme is building skills and supporting access to employment in the renewable energy sector.

With 22 percent of working-age Africans already starting

businesses and contributing to the economic growth of the continent, according to the African Development Bank, these businesses have the power to serve as agents of a sustainable revolution.

Third, to break the cycle of hunger and famine, long-term, flexible programmes that strengthen livelihoods and resilience at the earliest warning signs of drought are needed to prevent, recover and rebuild.

Supported by Google, the IRC is piloting a project in Nigeria that aims to improve smallholder farmers' ability to weather climate stress and shocks and build sustainable agricultural livelihoods. To achieve this, the IRC is testing the effectiveness of providing advanced cash transfers, triggered by an innovative data platform that predicts climate risks in these communities.

In the Central African Republic, the IRC and partner organisations are implementing a Forest Garden Approach to help vulnerable smallholder farmers to increase their own food security, generate sustainable income and revitalise degraded natural resources. Investing in resilient livelihoods will not only reduce personal vulnerabilities to climate stress and shocks. It will also foster economic growth in green jobs and greener economies, which holds the potential to mitigate future crises, conflict and migration.

There is no time to wait for climate action in Africa. Too many lives and livelihoods are already at risk in east Africa and beyond to delay bold and visionary investment and leadership any further.

David Miliband is president and CEO of the International Rescue Committee. Tony Elumelu is chairman of the United Bank for Africa and founder of the Tony Elumelu Foundation.

Source: [Independent.co.uk](https://www.independent.co.uk)



Keeping Up With TEF



500 TEF Alumni were given the opportunity to pitch their businesses to investors at the TEF-UNDP Mali Entrepreneurship Programme Pitching Competition. The TEF squad was in Bamako, Mali for the inaugural ceremony of this pitching competition, where they met with the Ambassador of Nigeria to Mali.

1

30 women TEF Alumni from across Africa participated in the Demo Day of the Growth Programme: Women Entrepreneurship for Africa Programme, where they had an opportunity to pitch their business for additional funding. This opportunity was made possible through the Foundation's partnership with the European Union and the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS).

2

The Tony Elumelu Foundation received the Silver Creators Award from YouTube for crossing over 100,000 subscribers on YouTube.

3

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In business in life at home, everything, luck is often overlooked. Business schools do not teach luck. Luck is humbling it is not spread equally, luck is not an entitlement, and it comes in many forms. It can be by chanced meeting, an inheritance, or a choice of direction between two paths that can change your life forever.

- Tony O. Elumelu, CFR

CREDITS

*Director of Communications & Partnerships: Somachi
Chris-Asoluka*

Editor: Chidinma Nwaukwa

Copy Editor: Moyosore Olisa

Copy Editor: Chinemerem Agbo

Creative Director: Joshua Praise



TEF Circle is the Tony Elumelu Foundation's monthly publication sharing updates on our alumni, our TEF Network and the global economy.

www.tonyelumelufoundation.org

