**Nestlé and Ashoka kick-off Social Investment Accelerator Programme**

Nestlé and Ashoka have kick-started a [social investment accelerator program](https://www.nestle.com/media/news/social-investment-accelerator-programme-young-entrepreneurship) to accelerate social entrepreneurship and boost economic development of Africa, on 10th September 2018.

12 social entrepreneurs from Benin, Ghana, Egypt, Kenya, Uganda and South Africa will learn new tools and methodologies to help refine their business model and become investment ready. This is essential to find the right hybrid of corporate structure to gain access to finance. These selected young social entrepreneurs are working in the fields of nutrition, agriculture, education, e-commerce, water and sanitation.

A select number of employee experts in legal affairs, accounting, business support, technology and marketing from across the continent will be mentoring these social entrepreneurs during the next five months. They will prepare their final submission to angel and social impact investors to access financing.

In Central & West Africa, three start- ups are part of the initiative. Exportunity Global Trade hub (Benin) is an exclusive virtual market, which connects vendors and sellers through Business-to-Consumer (B2C) and Business-to-Business (B2B) intra African trade.

Project Maji designs (Ghana), develops, and builds environmentally sustainable solar-powered water kiosks across sub-Saharan Africa. The water kiosks are designed to work reliably in the harshest environments with minimal running costs.

Maintenance and Sustainability Africa (MSA) (Ghana) is a volunteer-based youth-led organization, which focuses on sustainable development through initiatives such as education financing. Its Edupay model makes quality education financing affordable for rural poor parents earning less than $4 purchasing power parity (PPP) daily, whose wards are enrolled in low-cost private schools (LCPSs). Godfred Turkson, CEO of MSA, is happy that his organisation is part of this initiative: “I look forward to an engaging and experiential learning phase during this mentorship period, to take Edupay model to the next level, reaching additional schoolchildren and parents”.

Kayode Oladapo is Category & Marketing Manager- Coffee, for Nestlé Nigeria. For him, this experience of mentoring young people through the Social Investment Accelerator Programme is a laudable one. “I am excited to mentor these young talents and I look forward to a great experience that will add value to their business. In line with the company’s purpose, we are helping create opportunities for growth and experiential learning for young people. In the end, we are creating shared value and a two-way learning for both the company and these dynamic young people”

The Social Investment Accelerator Programme supports Nestlé’s [Global Youth Initiative](https://www.nestle.com/csv/communities/global-youth-initiative-nestle-needs-youth/Pages/home.aspx). Nestle’s purpose is “enhancing quality of life and contributing to a healthier future”, and its ambition to help 10 million young people around the world have access to economic opportunities by 2030, supports UN SDG Goals on promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all.