

AFRICA MEETS BAVARIA

TALENTS
STARTUPS
SYNERGIES



ABOUT THE PROJECT

Africa meets Bavaria

Building Entrepreneurial Bridges

Africa meets Bavaria is a two-year cooperation project funded by the *Bavarian State Chancellery* and implemented in close partnership with *UnternehmerTUM*. The initiative connects entrepreneurial talents from Africa with innovative Bavarian startups, fostering mutual learning, collaboration, and sustainable economic ties. The program targets African tech talents and Bavarian startups with a strong interest in the African continent and a desire to expand international perspectives and markets.

Program Structure: Three Phases of Exchange & Collaboration

1. Online Training

African talents receive high-quality training in digital product development through the *Digital Product School (DPS)*, including the two-week online course *From Zero to Hero* and a three-month masterclass to gain hands-on experience and entrepreneurial skills.

2. Innovation Exchange in Bavaria

Selected talents join Bavarian startups for eight weeks of practical experience, contributing their skills while gaining insights into entrepreneurship and innovation.

Location: Munich and Bavaria

Participants: 20 talents from 4 African countries over two years

3. Learning Visit to Africa

A delegation of Bavarian startup representatives, businesses, and institutions visits African innovation hubs to explore local ecosystems, connect with key stakeholders, and strengthen German-African cooperation.

Locations: Nairobi, Addis Ababa, Accra, Lagos

Duration: 1 week

Where We Are Now

The first round of the program has come to a successful close, marked by inspiring success stories and valuable insights. These achievements lay a strong foundation for the second round, where we will continue to build momentum and strengthen collaboration.



2025 CELEBRATING THE JOURNEY

This brochure showcases the journeys of our six African talents. It offers a closer look at their personal backgrounds, the experiences and lessons gained through working with startups, and their reflections on Germany's vibrant startup ecosystem.

While four other participants of the program could not join the Innovation Exchange in Munich due to visa challenges, we are excited to welcome them in the next cohort and look forward to seeing what will grow from these collaborations.

Our sincere thanks go to all participants, startups, and partners for making the first round of *Africa Meets Bavaria* such a remarkable success.

- 01 DOROTHY X CARBONWISE**
- 02 REWLA X COASTAL BIOTECH**
- 03 BRUCE X DUSTLIGHT**
- 04 CLIFFORD X DHS AFRICA**
- 05 MARK X RE:DRINK**
- 06 JOY X UNCAP**
- 07 LEARNING VISIT**



Dorothy x CarbonWise

WHERE CURIOSITY MEETS CLIMATE ACTION

I'M

Dorothy Doyoo Yaa Akinie, 22, currently pursuing a Bachelor's in Electrical Engineering in Ghana. My passion for sustainability began during the COVID-19 lockdown, watching videos of Greta Thunberg, and became deeply personal after losing a friend in a disaster partly linked to climate change. Since then, I've been driven to act.



Photo: Mark Kiarie Mahugu, July 2025

THROUGH THE PROGRAM

I first built practical skills by completing the *Zero to Hero* digital product course and *DPS* Masterclass, where my team designed a recycling platform connecting students and companies. This experience gave me hands-on practice in creative problem-solving and international teamwork.

MY STARTUP MATCH

gave me the perfect opportunity to apply these skills. I researched carbon markets, prepared pitch decks, joined strategic meetings, and even traveled to Berlin on behalf of the company to attend the *GreenTech Festival*. These experiences gave me a clearer view of the barriers countries like Ghana face in accessing carbon finance—and how vital it is to simplify such systems.

EXPLORING MUNICH'S INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM

further broadened my perspective. From the *City Administration's* sustainability efforts to *SAP Garden*, *Netlight*, *MakerSpace*, and the *Munich Startup Festival*, I was inspired by the openness with which ideas are shared and grown. As I reflected, I realized:

"In Germany every idea – big or small – is valued. And it's often the small ones that take off."

This shaped my vision: to start a company in Ghana providing affordable solar solutions while fostering a collaborative, innovative workplace culture.

WE ARE CARBONWISE CONSULTING

driven by a vision of sustainable growth, net zero emissions, and positive societal impact. We develop and implement carbon mitigation projects in mobility, energy, industry, and nature-based sectors, focusing on fast-growing markets in developing and emerging countries. Our core business is consulting and supporting local companies and project proponents, while fostering international collaboration under the Paris Agreement's Article 6 to jointly decarbonize the planet.

"The participation in the program and the active contributions of our intern Dorothy helped us greatly to build new connections and identify new carbon project opportunities in various host countries and strengthen our presence in the field of carbon mitigation."

Toni Heigl (CEO)

Rewla x Coastal BioTech

**FROM WASTE TO VALUE,
FROM VISION TO IMPACT**

I'M

Rewla Ephrem Abreham, 28, and a mechanical and thermal engineer from Ethiopia. At my university, the local makerspace and its passionate leadership inspired me to explore creativity and practical experimentation, revealing the strong potential in Ethiopia's growing innovation ecosystem.



Photo: Steffen Kastner, June 2025

THROUGH THE PRORAM

I experienced a complementary environment in Germany, where startups benefit from cross-border networks and the strategic use of digital tools.

MY INTERNSHIP

with *Coastal BioTech* gave me valuable insights into market entry strategies across East and Southern Africa. Working closely with an international team, showed me how trust and collaboration can thrive even in remote settings. This experience highlighted how sustainability can be a competitive advantage, blending ecological values with business success. It reinforced my vision to bridge the gap between early-stage incubation and scale-up support in Ethiopia's startup ecosystem.

Inspired by the innovative spirit in both Ethiopia and Germany, I am committed to applying what I've learned to create meaningful impact back home, both broadly and within my own startup. Through this experience, I came to understand what leadership truly means:

"Leadership means learning from every perspective – and building bridges, not silos."

Africa Meets Bavaria gave me the perfect platform to put this into practice.

WE ARE COASTAL BIOTECH

a Munich- and Zanzibar-based startup harnessing seaweed to create natural biostimulants, bio-based materials, and sustainable agricultural inputs. By combining cutting-edge science with local expertise, we provide climate-smart solutions that enhance soil health and crop resilience, offering scalable models for partners in agriculture and biotech.

"Hosting an intern from the *Africa Meets Bavaria* exchange was an incredible experience. Our intern from Ethiopia brought valuable expertise, supporting *Coastal BioTech* with East African market entry requirements, regional policies, and CE marking processes in Europe. Her contributions greatly enhanced our international operations and knowledge exchange, and we would be delighted to offer her a permanent position with us."

Steven Sillah (CCO)

Bruce x Dustlight

SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION IN ACTION

I'M

Bruce Odhiambo, 27 and originally from Kenya. With a background in construction and currently pursuing a Master's in Project Management, I joined *Africa Meets Bavaria* to explore how sustainability can be integrated into Kenya's growing construction industry.



Photo: Steffen Kastner, June 2025

I was excited to be selected for the *Innovation Exchange* and matched with *Dustlight*. At *Dustlight*, I worked on market screenings, lead generation, and client outreach, gaining practical insights into startup operations. The open, collaborative culture made the experience especially valuable.

BEYOND TECHNICAL SKILLS

the program greatly contributed to my personal growth. I became more socially confident, improved my time management, and gained a deeper understanding of sustainable practices.

Inspired by the connections I made, I also started a new project: a mentorship and networking platform for young rugby players in Kenya, linking them with CEOs, directors,

and professionals while generating funds to support clinics and orphanages. As a professional rugby player myself, I understand the impact such guidance can have.

THROUGH MY TIME IN THE PROGRAM

a one lesson became especially clear to me:

“Sustainability may not always be the easiest choice in the moment – but in the long run, it always makes sense.”

Looking ahead, I plan to finish my studies, pursue projects that unite sustainability, innovation, and social impact, and return to Munich for further studies.

WE ARE DUSTLIGHT

a team dedicated to making workplaces safer by tackling the invisible risks of fine dust. Our portable "Dustlight" measurement device monitors airborne particles in real time, helping industries protect their employees and meet regulatory standards. With intuitive apps and powerful reporting tools, we empower companies worldwide to manage dust exposure effectively and improve occupational health.

“Our motivation to participate in the program was not only to explore African countries as an exciting market, but above all to meet people, understand local challenges, and provide young talents with opportunities for international development.”

Benjamin Steidl (Head of Product)

Clifford x DHS Africa

BRIDGING CONTINENTS THROUGH CODE AND COLLABORATION

I'M

Clifford Mbithuka Musyoka, 23, and a computer science student at *Mount Kenya University*. Before moving into tech, I completed a diploma in chemical engineering and worked on an environmental project in Nairobi to clean the Nairobi River. During this time, I discovered my passion for the technical side of problem-solving, which eventually led me to computer science.

Back home, I serve as vice leader of the Google Developers Groups at my university, motivating fellow students to develop their skills and collaborate on tech projects.



Photo: Steffen Kastner, June 2025

THROUGH THE PROGRAM

I was matched with *DHS Africa*. While my role was primarily in software development, the experience turned out to be much more than just coding. I found myself joining meetings with investors, working on financial planning, conducting interviews for interns, and even managing the company's social media.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST LESSONS FOR ME

was that entrepreneurship is not just about building products –

it's about solving real problems:

"I thought I was a problem solver until I came here. Right now, I can say I have gained that skill of solving problems."

I also experienced a different work culture: structured, communicative, and with a strong sense of work-life balance – something I'll carry forward in my own journey.

THIS PROGRAM

gave me a clearer sense of where I want to go. I plan to finish my studies, build startup that addresses real challenges in Africa, and also pursue a Master's degree later on. The *Africa Meets Bavaria* program didn't just offer me professional experience – it helped shape the mindset I'll need for the future.

WE ARE DH SOLUTIONS

a Munich digital-health startup building a platform that makes healthcare more accessible and affordable in East Africa. Together with partners in Germany, Uganda, and Kenya, we combine technology and local expertise. By working closely with universities in Germany and Africa, hospitals, and foundations, we are developing practical tools that directly support healthcare providers and patients in their daily challenges.

"Working together across continents taught us new perspectives and showed the real strength of combining local and global experience."

Niklas Inderst (CEO & Co-Founder)

05 Mark x Re:Drink

BUILDING TECH FOR GOOD

I'M

Mark Kiarie Mahugu, 23 and currently in my fourth year of a Bachelor's in Computer Science in Kenya. My interest in technology started early, when I began experimenting with simple programming tools on my relatives' laptop. In high school, I created healthcare apps such as a virtual consultation tool and a menstrual tracker, experiences that showed me how technology can make a real difference in people's lives. What drives me is simple: I want to use tech to solve meaningful problems.



Photo: Steffen Kastner, June 2025

THIS MOTIVATION

led me to join *Africa Meets Bavaria*. It was my first time traveling outside Kenya and an opportunity to see how startups work in a different context.

I INTERNED WITH

Re:Drink, where I redesigned their landing page and built a dashboard to visualize machine data. Working within a real product team, guided by technical lead Alex, showed me how different departments align around one mission and helped me grow both technically and personally.

REFLECTING ON THIS EXPERIENCE

I embraced a principle that now guides me:

“Leadership is not about having all the answers – it’s about having the drive to keep learning and sharing what you learn.”

LOOKING AHEAD

I want to gain experience in established tech companies and eventually launch my own initiatives. Long term, I hope to pursue further studies abroad and contribute to making education more accessible in Kenya. *Africa Meets Bavaria* showed me what’s possible and inspired me to pass that belief to others.

WE ARE RE:DRINK

a sustainable beverage technology startup that revolutionizes workplace hydration. We provide bottle-free drink dispensers that create various beverages on-site, from water to flavored drinks, eliminating plastic waste and transportation emissions. Our solutions combine sustainability with convenience, offering healthier drink options while helping companies reduce their ecological footprint and operational costs.

“The program showed me that leadership looks different across cultures. These insights have made me more flexible and thoughtful in how I guide our team and make decisions.”

Alex Colucci (Tech Lead)

Joy x UNCAP

DESIGNING IMPACT, EMPOWERING WOMEN IN STEM

I'M

Joy Watiri Kamau, 19 and currently in my third year of a bachelor's degree in Computer Science in Kenya. Although I once dreamed of becoming a lawyer, a science fair in high school sparked my interest in technology. At university, I now lead a student community that organizes tech events and promotes peer-to-peer learning.



Photo: Steffen Kastner, June 2025

I WAS MATCHED WITH

Unconventional Capital as a UI and UX designer, where I supported the product team by creating onboarding materials to help clients navigate the platform. I gained practical design experience and learned a lot about leadership, trust, and responsibility.

ONE OF MY BIGGEST TAKEAWAYS

was adapting to the company's flat structure. Johannes made it clear: "Do not call me your boss, we are colleagues." That challenged me to speak up more and take ownership of my work. It also reminded me why I care so deeply about supporting women in tech. I plan to use my voice, my platform, and my leadership role to show young women that they belong

in tech just as much as anyone else:

"If I can stand here, so can other women – and I want them to know it."

EXPLORING MUNICH'S STARTUP ECOSYSTEM

left a strong impression on me, showing the impact of believing in an idea and bringing it to life. It also connected me with inspiring peers, with whom I am already exploring future collaborations. Meanwhile, I continue to develop an AI-based land verification platform addressing land challenges in Kenya, applying insights gained from the program.

These experiences reinforced my goal to build tech solutions with social impact — in Kenya, Germany, or beyond.

WE ARE UNCAP

a Germany-based impact startup revolutionizing access to funding for early-stage entrepreneurs in Africa. We provide unbiased, non-dilutive, revenue-based financing to founders who traditionally lack access to capital. Our proprietary software enables a fair, data-driven selection process and supports portfolio companies with monitoring and resources. Our mission is to democratize capital and empower diverse entrepreneurs to grow sustainable businesses across the continent.

"Our motivation for participating in the program was to highlight the Africa Rising perspective and show how much German companies can learn from partnerships based on equality."

Johannes Willms (Managing Director)

HIGHLIGHTS BEYOND THE INTERNSHIP



DIGITAL PRODUCT SCHOOL FINAL SHOW | MUNICH STARTUP FESTIVAL | BAVARIAN ALPS | SAP GARDEN |

NETLIGHT | MUNICH URBAN COLAB | SALZBURG | SAP GARDEN | BMW WELT | WERK 1



Learning Visit to Nairobi & Addis Ababa

Introduction

The Learning Visit, one of the four pillars of the project *Africa meets Bavaria* funded by the Bavarian State Chancellery, took place from 14–20 September 2025 in Nairobi and Addis Ababa.

The 13-member delegation – including Bavarian startups, ecosystem builders, and UnternehmerTUM's International and Digital Product School teams – set out to explore East African markets, engage with local players, and identify opportunities for sustainable cooperation.

Program Overview

In **Nairobi**, the delegation gained a comprehensive understanding of Kenya's rapidly evolving tech ecosystem, often referred to as the "Silicon Savannah" – a hub where innovation, entrepreneurship, and digital technologies are transforming the region. Through briefings by the *German Embassy*, *GTAI**, and the *Bavarian Representation in East Africa*, participants learned about the country's digital infrastructure, investment climate, and the role of policy in fostering technological growth.

In **Addis Ababa**, discussions with *PSD-E**, *EASE**, and local incubators shed light on Ethiopia's emerging startup scene. Exchanges with the *African Union* and *GIZ AU* focused on the role of policy in supporting entrepreneurship. The startup *Kubik* demonstrated how circular economy solutions can create scalable impact. The Ethiopian-Bavarian Startup Night, co-hosted with our Ethiopian partner institution *iceaddis*, brought together founders, investors, and ecosystem actors for direct exchange.

Outcomes

The visit highlighted Nairobi and Addis Ababa as dynamic innovation hubs, where technology and entrepreneurship are driving tangible solutions across sectors like FinTech, CleanTech, Agritech, HealthTech, and the Circular Economy. Bavarian startups gained concrete insights into local markets, connected with potential partners, and explored opportunities for collaboration and international expansion. The program also reinforced Bavaria's role as a proactive and engaged partner in Africa's innovation landscape, opening doors for future projects and joint ventures.

GTAI = German Trade Invest;
PSD-E = Private sector Development Ethiopia;
EASE = Ethiopian Association of Startup Ecosystem

Delegation at a glance

Coastal Biotech

Seaweed-based biostimulants
for sustainable agriculture

ContainerGrid GmbH

AI infrastructure enabling digital
circular supply chains

DH Solutions Africa UG

Digital healthcare platform with
AI triage and telemedicine

KIREAP Technologies

Deep-tech solutions for
agriculture and smart cities

NoMaze GmbH

AI prediction tool for faster,
climate-resilient plant breeding

ReDrink GmbH

Smart IoT dispenser for
sustainable hydration

SmartAIs

AI navigation improving
mobility for blind people

ZamBam Sports UG

Bamboo-based shin guards
for Fair Football for all

BMW Group

Global automotive company

Netlight

Global IT and management
consulting company

Start2 Group GmbH

Global startup accelerator



Credits & Outlook

This Learning Visit was made possible through the Africa meets Bavaria program, financially supported by the *Bavarian State Chancellery*. The Nairobi part was realized in exchange with the *Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Regional Development and Energy*, together with *Bayern International* and the *Bavarian Office for Africa*.

Looking ahead, the next delegation is scheduled for **19–25 July 2026 to Accra (Ghana) and Lagos (Nigeria)** – two of West Africa's most dynamic hubs – to continue building bridges between Bavaria and Africa's innovation ecosystems.

Interested in joining next
year's Learning Visit?

Contact us: Lara.Knoedler@unternehmertum.de
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INNOVATION

KNOWS

NO BORDERS

THANK YOU

FOR BUILDING
THE FUTURE
WITH US