

PRESS RELEASE

KCDF LAUNCHES THE YOUNG ENVIRONMENTALIST INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Thursday, July 6, 2023. Nairobi, Kenya. The Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) has today launched the Young Environmentalist Innovative Challenge (YEIC), an environmental innovation fund that aims at developing action-oriented young individuals committed to the conservation of the environment.

The finalists of this challenge will be awarded in two categories; the first category will see three young environment champions awarded a grant of between Ksh. 800,000 to Ksh. 1,500,000, while the second category will have six organizations awarded a grant of between 3,000,000 to Ksh. 5,000,000 each implementing their unique environment conservation-based ideas.

YEIC is an environmental innovation fund established by KCDF through the generous gift of Mackenzie Scott to support innovative ideas and solutions that promote environmental conservation, sustainable resource management, and community resilience. KCDF has partnered with the National Environment Trust Fund (NetFund) and Green Generation Initiative.

In a ceremony that brought together, youth representatives, the private sector, environment champions, advocates and enthusiasts, the event highlighted the importance of conserving the environment as part of the efforts to mitigate the current global challenges like drought and climate change.

Speaking during the event, the Chief Guest Mr. Samson Toniok, CEO - National Environment Trust Fund (NetFund) applauded the initiative as timely when the world today is faced by unprecedented environmental crisis including the global phenomena of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

“The effects of these global challenges remain stark realities in our day-to-day lives such as frequent droughts, rising waters, extreme weather and flash floods that continue to take the toll on Kenyans and their livelihoods. For this reason, I would like to applaud KCDF for this noble initiative and encourage you continue fostering partnerships for future and continued success of this challenge.” He said.

On her part, the KCDF Executive Director highlighted the need to embrace and promote innovation in the development sector.

“When you give organizations unrestricted funding, innovation comes about. People are able to take the money where it is most needed. One of the key innovations we came up with is YEIC, that challenges the youth and youth organizations to come up with environmental solutions that would advance livelihoods and education. The narrative in the community has been that if we are conserving the environment, livelihoods suffer, and our intention is to burst this myth.” Said Ms. Grace Maingi.

Gordon Odundo, a Board Director at KCDF challenged the youth to take lead in conserving the environment. “The youth, this environment is your future, you need to protect it, look after it and participate in the good work of preserving it.” He said.

Elizabeth Wathuti the Founder of Green Generation Initiative (GGI) said that the YEIC challenge was

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very timely as an empowering platform for the Kenyan youth who continue to face a stiff competition for resources against bigger organizations. Michael Waiyaki, C.EO and Founder Miti Alliance said that as a community we need to know the difference between tree planting and tree growing and embrace the latter which is more effective. Josephine Wawira, the Communications Lead, Sustainable Inclusive Business Kenya insisted on the need to avoid using complex jargon on issues of environment and climate change and come down to the community's level and communicate effective contextual strategies towards climate change mitigation. Ebenezer Amadi a Program Manager at the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) said that the private sector continues to play a pivotal role in advocating for proper pro-environment policies and regulations in the country.

This Young Environmentalist Innovative Challenge is built on KCDF's environment work that began in 2016 under the Wangari Maathai Scholarship Fund.

Applications are open on the KCDF website, www.kcdf.or.ke

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