

Young Environmentalist Innovation Challenge

Meet the finalists of the
2025 edition



About Us

The Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) is a public charitable foundation founded in 1997 that supports sustainable community-driven development in Kenya. KCDF exists to support communities and duty-bearers to sustainably organise and address systemic barriers that perpetuate power imbalances, social injustice and poverty, hindering sustainable development. KCDF believes that lasting change is possible when communities initiate and drive their development agenda.

KCDF works to enhance community growth and sustainability by advancing community-led development, community philanthropy, and an enabling environment for social justice. We invest in strengthening the capacities of community organisations and systems to enable communities to lead their own development processes, mobilise local resources, and influence decision-making.

Through long-term, strategic collaborations with government, civil society, the private sector, and individuals, KCDF catalyses sustainable, inclusive development by shifting power to communities, fostering local giving, and promoting accountability for equitable service delivery



Vision

Flourishing and Resilient Communities.



Mission

To Promote Social Justice and the Sustainable Development of Communities.



Values

Our work is guided by core values that inform every aspect of our operations, from programme design and implementation to partnerships and resource mobilisation. These include:



- **Equity:** We are committed to promoting equal economic, political, and social rights and opportunities.
- **Respect:** We believe that the rights and dignity of every human being are to be upheld, irrespective of their social standing or any other circumstance.
- **Integrity:** We are committed to transparency, accountability, and efficiency in all our dealings with others.
- **Collaboration:** We believe in working with partners and collaborators in a dedicated manner to achieve common targets and goals.
- **Innovation:** We value reflection, learning, and innovation, and strive to evolve, promote, and share best practices with others.

Foreword

Environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution continue to threaten livelihoods, health, and ecosystems across Kenya. While young people are driving innovative solutions, many remain small-scale and underfunded, limiting their wider impact.

Since 1997, KCDF has invested in community-led initiatives to promote sustainable development and social justice. We believe lasting change happens when communities drive their own development, work with governments and partners to access basic rights, and grow their resources with minimal external support.

The Young Environmentalist Innovative Challenge (YEIC), established in 2023 through a generous gift from Mackenzie Scott, aims to nurture action-oriented youth committed to environmental conservation. The first two editions of YEIC supported youth-led innovations in waste management, tree growing, climate-smart agriculture, clean energy, circular economy, and climate technologies across various counties in Kenya.

The first edition of YEIC, launched in 2023, supported 5 finalists from Nyandarua, Kajiado, Kiambu, and Nairobi Counties to implement innovations in waste management, tree growing, and climate-smart agriculture.

The second edition, launched in 2024, supported 12 finalists from Kisii, Meru, Kisumu, Machakos, and Nairobi Counties, who had youth-led innovations in clean energy, smart agriculture, the circular economy, and climate technologies.

The third edition, launched in 2025, has seen 7 seven winning innovations emerge from a highly competitive pool of more than 700 applications submitted from across the country. The finalists were selected following a rigorous evaluation process that assessed innovation, impact potential, sustainability, and scalability.

Below are profiles of the organisations awarded in the second round of the YEIC.

Congratulations to all the finalists.

KCDF Communications Team.



1 Twende Green Eco Cycle

Twende Green Ecocycle is a social enterprise based in Mombasa, Kenya, founded to tackle two problems at once: the marine plastic waste crisis choking the city's beaches and informal settlements, and the chronic shortage of school furniture that leaves children studying while crowded four-to-a-desk or seated on the floor.

We collect plastic waste from local informal settlements, individual waste pickers, community-based organisations, and waste collection companies. That plastic is sorted, cleaned, and processed at our recycling facility, then transformed into durable, affordable eco-desks and other school furniture. Every desk we build removes roughly 13kg of plastic from the environment while giving a child a safer, more comfortable place to learn.

Since securing our first grant funding of USD 25,000 in May 2023, we have grown from a student prototype into an operating social enterprise supplying schools across Mombasa County.

Beyond manufacturing, Twende Green Ecocycle runs an Eco-Ambassador programme in partner schools, teaching students to divert plastic waste and champion responsible waste management among their peers. We also organise and join community beach clean-ups along Mombasa's coastline, working alongside county officials, scouts, youth groups, and fellow social enterprises to pull plastic out of the marine environment before it ever reaches our recycling line.





2 FiberText Green Paper

Fibertext Green Paper Ltd is a Kenyan climate-tech and circular bioeconomy enterprise pioneering the transformation of agricultural waste into sustainable industrial materials. We convert banana pseudostems, an abundant agricultural by-product traditionally left to rot or burned after harvest, into biodegradable paper and packaging solutions while utilising the remaining biomass to produce organic fertiliser.

Founded on the belief that waste is a valuable resource, Fibertext is redefining how agricultural residues contribute to economic growth, environmental restoration, and climate resilience. Our innovative circular production model simultaneously tackles four interconnected challenges: agricultural waste, plastic pollution, deforestation, and rural poverty.

By integrating thousands of smallholder farmers into a climate-positive manufacturing value chain, we create

new income opportunities while reducing greenhouse gas emissions, conserving forests, and accelerating the transition toward a circular economy.

Today, Fibertext Green Paper Ltd is emerging as one of East Africa's leading innovators in agricultural waste valorisation, demonstrating that sustainable manufacturing can generate lasting environmental, social, and economic impact.



3 Queening Afrika

Queening Afrika is a tech-enabled social enterprise addressing Kenya's Synthetic hair waste crisis. It's building a digital waste collection system to upcycle non-biodegradable braided waste into Afrocentric handcrafts, including handbags, pouches, and home decor items, creating green jobs for local women and youths and advancing inclusive circular urban sustainability.



To date, Queening Afrika has diverted over 3 tons of synthetic braid waste from open dumping and burning, partnered with 50 salons across Nairobi, directly employed 20 women and youth, trained more than 350 artisans and waste collectors, and built a growing network advancing sustainable manufacturing and inclusive economic opportunities. Through technology, innovation, and community-driven action, Queening Afrika is pioneering Africa's first circular-economy solution dedicated to synthetic braid waste while promoting environmental sustainability, women's economic empowerment, and climate resilience.





4 ECOBORA Company

Ecobora company is located in Ruai, Kenya, Africa, working to enable rural and peri-urban schools in Kenya to access solar-powered cooking boilers that will eliminate the use of firewood by 100%. With the government ban on logging in Kenya, rural, marginalised, and under-funded schools have experienced pressure on firewood prices, leading to a doubling of the price of firewood.

By 2025, it is projected that there will be a biomass deficit of -67% in Kenya. Ecobora has engineered the first-ever solar cooking boiler that rural marginalised schools in Kenya are using to cook food for their students around the clock, cooking by tapping the sun's energy and storing it in a repurposed oil tank with waste motor oil as an effective carbon sink tank, eliminating 100% use of firewood and providing heat energy even during rainy seasons. Our stoves are easy to install and use, and do not emit any smoke.



Objectives: 1. Increase the number of schools using our solar-powered boilers instead of firewood to 5000 schools by 2030. 2. Increase our current market share to 15% within the next five years. 3. Cut down our boiler manufacturing costs by reducing the importation of parts by 60% by 2027. 4. Be the leading boiler manufacturer and distributor in Kenya by 2030.



5 Majik Water Technologies

Majik Water is a company that has been actively involved in various industries, specialising in the development of modern water systems. As a building and manufacturing firm, we provide international services, including sustainable applications to meet local water demands.

Decentralised water solutions refer to community-based systems for water supply chains and other industrial applications, serving cities, villages, and communities. Sustainability is a key advantage, especially in the use of natural resources.

At Majik Water, we are dedicated to helping communities access clean water solutions that improve environments, create economic opportunities, and enhance resilience for future generations. Our decentralised systems provide long-term value by leveraging local structures and reducing infrastructure costs.





6 Eco Build Gold

Eco Build Gold is a Kenyan green enterprise that converts hazardous gold mining waste into eco-friendly interlocking building blocks, addressing pollution and enabling affordable, sustainable construction.

Our circular economy approach tackles environmental pollution, the affordable housing shortage, and youth unemployment simultaneously — creating green jobs and restoring ecosystems.

Eco Build Gold detoxifies mining tailings and manufactures sustainable interlocking blocks

powered by solar hydraulic technology — turning waste into affordable building materials.

Over the years, our work has gained recognition, such as:
 Presidential Innovation Award 2025
 BeGreen Africa Young Environmentalist
 Siaya County Ambassador for Waste Management.



7 Bio-Regen Earthworks

Bio-Regen Earthworks Kenya is a pioneering youth-led social enterprise and agricultural innovation hub strategically located in Kangari, Murang'a County. Born out of the urgent need to address declining agricultural productivity in Kenya's highlands, our organisation stands at the intersection of environmental conservation and rural economic empowerment.

We operate as a catalyst for a youth-driven revolution in regenerative agroecology, ensuring that the next generation of farmers has the tools to thrive in an unpredictable climate.

Our core specialisation lies in the technical development and commercial upscaling of Organic-ACT Probiotic Fertiliser. This is an Actively Aerated Compost Tea (AACT) produced through a precision-controlled brewing process that multiplies beneficial microorganisms. Unlike conventional synthetic inputs that contribute to soil acidification, Organic-ACT is engineered to restore soil microbial life, improve structure, and naturally suppress pathogens. By introducing a rich diversity of Plant Growth-Promoting

Rhizobacteria (PGPRs), we facilitate a transition from chemical dependency to biological resilience.

The strength of Bio-Regen Earthworks Kenya lies in our unique collaborative model. We act as a critical bridge between academic research at Murang'a University of Technology (MUT) and the practical realities of the farm. This "lab-to-land" approach ensures our products are scientifically validated—leveraging microbiologists' expertise—while remaining low-cost for smallholder farmers. Our solutions directly tackle the triple threat of soil acidity, nutrient depletion, and climate instability, jeopardising tea and coffee livelihoods.





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