

Improving lives through sustainable bio-innovations

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Success of the quarter!

BioInnovate Africa project receives award in support of agro-processing innovation

25-year-old Olivia John Kitau is a bachelor's degree graduate of economics and statistics from the University of Dar es Salaam. She is pursuing a career in data management but is also passionate about agriculture, and spends her free time learning from and being inspired by impacting society through mushroom value addition for smallholder farmers. "I support work on value added products from mushrooms because it is addressing and promoting food security and nutrition in the society," she says.

Olivia supports the work done by Mr. John Kimario, a BioInnovate Africa implementing partner on the project that is commercializing nutrient-rich substrate blocks for mushroom cultivation in East Africa. Mr. Kimario manages the OKOA Mushroom Supplies Enterprise Limited located in Morogoro, Tanzania, a start-up business that is developing an innovative mushroom substrate block in partnership with the Tanzania Industrial Research and Development Organization (TIRDO) and Global Agro Concept Limited based in Rwanda.

In April 2019, Olivia attended a two-week innovation workshop held in Tanzania that provided her with an opportunity to present about the challenges envisaged by mushroom farmers during collection of various biomass materials and the opportunities to innovate and contribute to the mushroom value chain. As a result, she was awarded USD 3,000 by the Marc Cornelissen Brightlands, to support the work done by the business on mushroom value addition. "This award is a milestone for OKOA Mushroom Supplies Enterprise Limited as it has enabled the procurement of an electric drier, as well as a mushroom grading tool to support value added products and curb high production wastage experienced during the rainy season for the mushroom crop," says Olivia.

Mr. Kimario says he is very pleased about the award because as a business venture, the procured equipment will boost the production processes for mushroom value addition. "The award is also an international recognition of the innovative work on agro-processing that is being supported through BioInnovate Africa," he says.



Olivia receives award from Marc Cornelissen Brightlands in support of the OKOA mushroom value addition.



Mr. John Kimario displays the price award to support the OKOA mushroom value addition.

Programme team visit project sites for newly joined BioInnovate Africa implementing partners

Between April and June 2019, BioInnovate Africa programme team paid visits to project sites for cohort two implementing partners in Kenya, Ethiopia and Tanzania, and provided them with implementation support. The partners were also taken through an orientation on financial reporting for their projects.



BioInnovate Africa team provide project implementation support to partners in Tanzania.

Biolnnovate Africa participates in an international research symposium

Debre Berhan University (DBU) is a Biolnnovative Africa project implementing partner, piloting use of earthworms to decompose coffee waste and excess worms as poultry and fish feed. On 24 and 25 May 2019, Biolnnovate Africa programme manager, Dr. Julius Ecuru, took part in the DBU sixth annual International Research Symposium on "Participatory and innovative research for technology transfer and sustainable development" that was held at the main university ground in Ethiopia. The symposium was attended by various stakeholders including both local and international researchers who presented their scientific notes and research papers that addressed the theme. The symposium also provided an opportunity for participants to assess efforts made towards research and community service, and technology transfer.



Dr. Julius Ecuru, Biolnnovate Africa programme manager, with Dr Almaz Afera, Debre Berhan University's Vice President for research & community service, and other dignitaries at the DBU 6th annual symposium.



A photo of the 12 pioneer group of Biolnnovate Africa women fellows

Biolnnovate Africa Pioneer group of women fellows successfully complete their fellowship

In this reporting period, a total of 11 out of the 12-pioneer group of Biolnnovate Africa women fellows had successfully completed their four-month fellowship initiative and safely returned home from their respective host institution and country. The remaining fellow will complete her fellowship by end of September 2019.

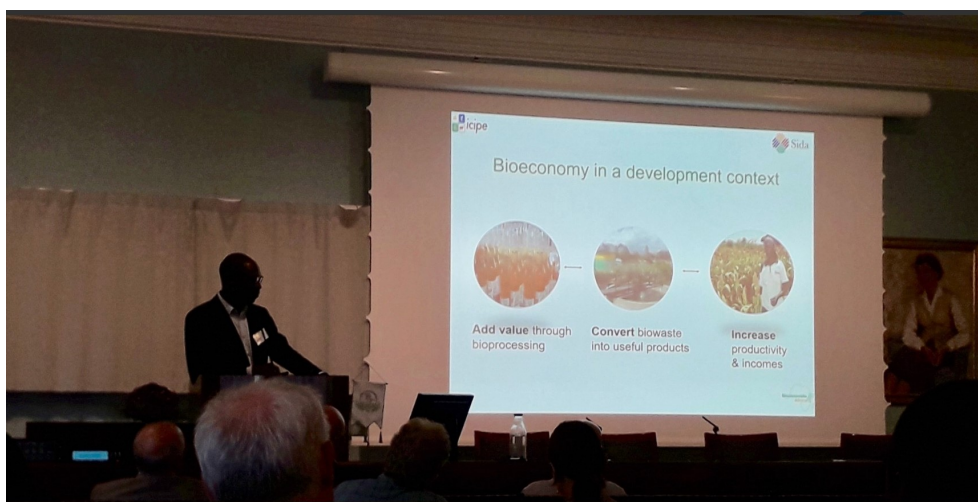
Call for applications for the second group of women fellows was sent out in April 2019 and the fellowship is expected to run between July to December 2019, also targeting 12 fellows from the six Biolnnovate Africa participating countries.

Click [here](#) to watch a testimonial video by one of the fellows about her fellowship experience.

Seminar on benefits of bioeconomy

In June, Biolnnovate Africa programme manager, Dr. Julius Ecuru, attended a Bioeconomy Public Seminar that was held in Sweden, and organized by the Stockholm Environment Institute. At the seminar, Dr. Ecuru made a presentation on the benefits of bioeconomy in developing countries, using examples in Biolnnovate Africa.

"Biolnnovate Africa is adding value to biological resources through bioprocessing and converting biowaste into useful products. This type of bioeconomy is sustainable and inclusive, because smallholder farmers, who are the majority in Eastern Africa, can now find new uses and market chains for their produce", says Dr. Ecuru.



Dr. Julius Ecuru while making a presentation on the benefits of bioeconomy in developing countries.