

THE COELIB PROJECT



COELIB
...nurturing life

DATA PRIVACY

HACKS FOR SMALL
AND MEDIUM
ENTERPRISES

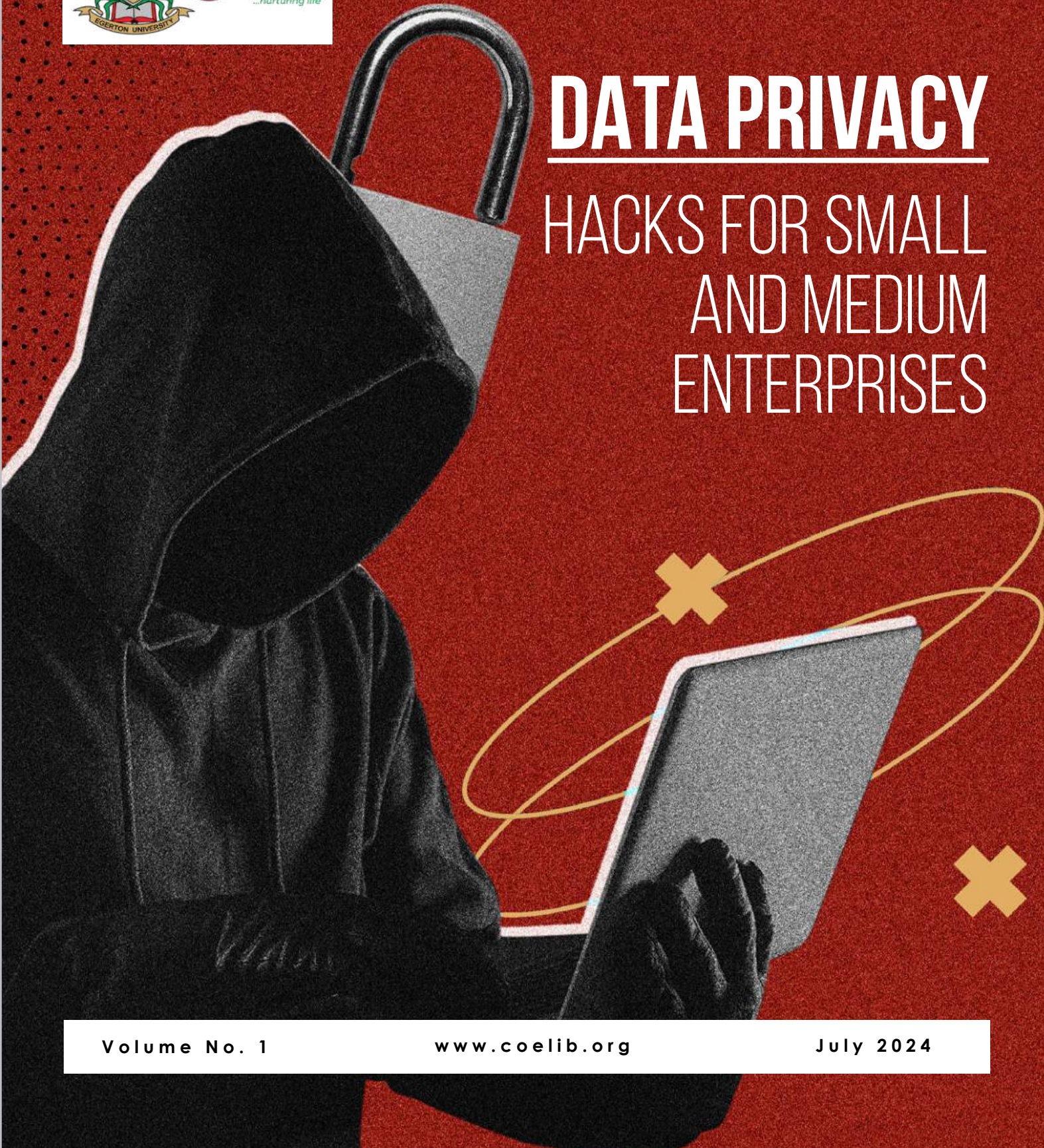


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According to the Population Reference Bureau, Africa has the highest youth population, with over 60% of its population under the age of 25 and approximately 75% under the age of 35. By 2030, African youth will constitute 42% of the global population. Africa's future prosperity thus depends on its ability to harness the potential of its young people as the driving force for transformative change.

Africa is breaking from institutionalized corruption, limited access to resources, and illiteracy, among other challenges. Thanks to the 'youthful' momentum, the youth are taking active roles in shaping the future of policy, technology, education, business, healthcare, agriculture, governance, etc. As recently seen in Kenya, young people are also driving a digital revolution as a tool to amplify their voices, advocate for their rights, and promote inclusivity.

The CoELIB Project continues to empower young people to realise their full potential and influence transformative change in their communities. The project has played a critical role in molding a generation of confident and good decision-makers by creating an inclusive environment where voices are heard and respected.

This goes beyond mentorship and capacity-building to the very essence of planting a transformative seed in their minds that will grow out to change their spheres of influence.

This edition of CoELIB Newslink examines the work of the CoELIB Project on climate resilience, research, innovation, education, technology, inclusion, and the centrality of youth in these circles. It also examines the impact of youth through their sustained interventions across diverse communities.

To the youth, President Obama once said, "There will be times to test your faith, but don't lose your youthful qualities – your imagination, optimism, and idealism. The future is in your hands; keep your head toward the sun and your feet moving forward." You are today's leaders, with your destinies in your own hands. The CoELIB Project and similar organisations are here to help you realise your full leadership potential.

You are the leaders of today. Stand up and be counted.

TAKING STOCK AND TAKING CHARGE



Welcome to our latest edition of the CoELIB NewsLink. This issue covers the shifting landscape of human development, focusing on climate change, research, innovation, technology, education, inclusivity, and health and fitness.

This is all woven together by the CoELIB project's integral role in building knowledge capacities across diverse spheres for sustained impact.

The CoELIB NewsLink spotlights the youth and showcases how they stand at the forefront of fostering change within their communities. Their relentless drive and innovative approaches earmark them as our society's trailblazers and future leaders.

As you immerse yourself in this journey of discovery, I hope the conversations inspire action to create a better future.

Special thanks go to the creatives who spent time researching and creating quality content! This issue stands as a celebration of collective endeavour and mutual ideals, symbolic of what CoELIB stands to promote.

Enjoy!

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**ELEVATE YOUR STYLE WITH OUR PREMIUM
APPAREL — WHERE COMFORT MEETS
FASHION.**





INSIDE THE CYBERSECURITY TRAINING FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AT COELIB PROJECT



As the digital age progresses, an increasing number of business startups are choosing to establish their presence in the online space. A 2021 report by Cybersecurity Ventures on Cyberwarfare In The C-Suite predicted that cybercrime would cost the world \$6 trillion annually by 2021, doubling from \$3 trillion in 2015. This stark increase underscores the fact that cyber threats are becoming more frequent and financially damaging.

This shift of businesses towards digital platforms underscores the importance of implementing robust internet safety measures. For these emerging businesses, safeguarding online operations against cybersecurity threats is paramount. Ensuring the safety of their digital assets not only protects their data but also secures the trust of their customers, which is essential for sustained growth in the competitive online marketplace



This need prompted the CoELIB Project under CoELIB Incubar to partner with GFA Consulting Group GmbH under the Strengthening Kenyan Intermediaries and Innovation Ecosystem (SKIIVE) program to host a pioneering workshop on online safety for small businesses. The workshop, delivered alongside the Association of Countrywide Innovation Hubs (ACIH), GIZ Kenya, and the Association of Startup and SMEs Enablers of Kenya (ASSEK), trained 34 African small businesses with essential knowledge and tools for secure navigation in the digital space.

The training session addressed fundamental cyber hygiene practices, including inventory management, consistent software updates, encryption, and adherence to robust password protocols, including multi-factor authentication across social media and online accounts.

Furthermore, it highlighted the prevalence of phishing attacks, which account for over 90% of cyber-attacks, underlining the critical need to deploy anti-virus software and Domain Name System (DNS) security strategies.

“After my encounter with a severe cybersecurity attack due to downloading what I thought was harmless software, I have learned the value of being extra cautious online. This experience has drastically transformed my approach, emphasizing the importance of creating strong passwords and securing our digital workplaces.” - Mr. Obed Mwaniki, Founder & CEO, Mwas Creatives.

The training emphasized the need for user awareness and continuous education about malware and data protection. Recognizing early signs of a breach, often initiated by malware attacks, can significantly decrease the potential for damage to a company's data integrity and security.

This proactive approach enables businesses to respond quickly and efficiently, safeguarding sensitive information and maintaining the trust of their clients. Continuous education on the latest malware trends and data protection strategies is essential in enhancing any organization's cybersecurity posture.

“The digital age offers limitless opportunities for startups to connect with a global marketplace, but ensuring the safety of online operations is essential for sustainable growth. Protecting digital assets goes beyond data security; it builds customer trust and ensures innovation longevity in the competitive online landscape.” Mr. Brian Owuor - Business Development Coach, CoELB Project

For the past 8 years, **CoELIB Incubar** has significantly driven innovation and entrepreneurship, aligning with the urgent need for youth empowerment and business leadership in Africa. The continent's youthful population faces challenges such as high unemployment rates. The unit's mission transcends beyond mere business support. It catalyzes societal change, equipping the younger generation with the resilience, innovativeness, tools, and knowledge to create sustainable livelihoods and contribute positively to their communities.



Throughout the sessions, real-world examples and case studies were presented, driving home the magnitude of the threats and the potential consequences of inadequate cybersecurity measures. Participants were encouraged to adopt a proactive mindset, recognizing that even the smallest businesses are susceptible to cyber threats and that complacency can prove costly.

“Through this initiative, we gained invaluable insights into the best practices for creating robust passwords that are hard to crack and easy for us to manage and remember. The knowledge acquired from this training is pivotal in ensuring that our content remains secure, allowing us to continue to share our stories and connect with our audience without the looming threat of security breaches.”
Mr. Caleb Koyo, Co-Founder, Till Next Time Podcast

Mr. Brill Wangao, Founder of Wikkitech Company, noted how the training influenced personal habits and business operations. With new knowledge, the company can generate stronger passwords for clients' routers, WiFi networks, and servers, addressing past security breaches.

“This training will significantly enhance our company's service delivery. As internet providers, we are committed to sharing this cybersecurity knowledge with our clients.” - Mr. Wangao



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Image by Pexels

CYBERSECURITY CHECKLIST FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IN AFRICA

•Take an inventory of all devices and systems

- Take an inventory of all devices and systems
- Identify where valuable data is stored
- Plan for potential breaches, including rapid response measures

•Train Your Employees

- Conduct regular cybersecurity training sessions
- Focus on phishing awareness, password management, and social engineering risk
- Cultivate a security-conscious culture among employees

•Implement Security Defenses

- Deploy endpoint protection systems
- Ensure firewalls and intrusion detection/prevention systems are in place
- Regularly update and patch software to mitigate new vulnerabilities

•Maintain Good IT Security Hygiene

- Perform regular risk assessments
- Securely backup critical data for efficient recovery post-attack

•Prepare a Response Plan

- Develop a detailed incident response plan outlining roles and communication strategies
- Conduct regular practice scenarios to test and refine your response plan

•Encrypt Sensitive Data

- Implement encryption for customer info, financial records, and intellectual property
- Ensure encryption measures are updated and robust
- Staying vigilant and proactive about cybersecurity

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**TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE
THROUGH RESEARCH, INNOVATION,
AND EDUCATION**

COELIB IGNITES YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND INNOVATION ACROSS AFRICA

Despite billions in resources invested in African youth empowerment initiatives, youth still face significant rates of unemployment, limited social and economic opportunities, and major impediments to their livelihoods and well-being. This is due to micro and macro-level challenges that render youth empowerment initiatives ineffective.

Appreciating these challenges and acknowledging the strategic role played by youth in development informs the need for interventions that connect youth through social and economic opportunities.

The CoELIB Project is leading the path of youth empowerment in Africa by building capacities, fostering innovation, and developing leadership.

Since 2008, CoELIB has been making significant strides in fostering innovation and empowerment. It has trained 3,500+ startups, trained and mentored over 7,300 entrepreneurs, and supported 18,000+ farmers in their endeavours. The project has also advised over 14,800 African youths on their entrepreneurial journey. The project's dynamic and progressive business development approach has seen the youths trained and supported through training, which helps them develop sustainable business ventures during the critical startup phase and beyond. The hub catalyses the access of resources such as funding and knowledge between entrepreneurs, the private sector, higher education institutions, the innovation ecosystem, and communities.

STRENGTHENING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEXT GENERATION OF AFRICAN LEADERS

Leveraging its extensive experience in fostering innovation, the CoELIB Project is playing a crucial role in the [USAID-funded Young African Leadership Initiative Legacy Localization \(YALI LL\) project](#), led by [Arizona State University \(ASU\)](#) in collaboration with [FHI 360](#), the [African Diaspora Network](#) and [Geeks Without Frontiers](#), and. The initiative aims to strengthen and harmonise YALI-Africa, scale and sustain leadership development, and increase alumni impact across 49 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

[YALI LL](#) will leverage CoELIB's expertise in business and institution set-up and incubation, communications, media, monitoring, evaluation, and learning,

curriculum development and delivery, alumni impact, and gender, equality safeguarding, and social inclusion to support the YALI ecosystem in developing the next generation of African leaders.

CoELIB is committed to providing the necessary institutional support for developing frameworks that assist emerging businesses, cultivating strategic partnerships, expanding financial access, and facilitating the integration of entrepreneurs.

This comprehensive support system seeks to empower innovative young Africans and lay a solid foundation for their future pursuits.

POSITIONING AFRICAN AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES FOR CONTINENTAL GROWTH

The CoELIB project increased the capacity of Transforming African Agricultural Universities to Contribute to Africa's Growth and Development (TAGDev)). CoELIB Incubar built the capacity of TAGDev to establish an incubation hub and implement a relevant business management

curriculum. TAGDev is implemented by Egerton University, Kenya, and Gulu University, Uganda. It is a partnership program between the Mastercard Foundation and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM).

NURTURING A NEW GENERATION OF AGRICULTURAL LEADERS

The CoELIB Project is making significant strides under the [Empowering the Novel Agribusiness-led Employment \(ENABLE\)](#) program. At its core, CoELIB's involvement has been crucial in nurturing a new generation of agricultural leaders. The project has taken a hands-on approach to enhancing ENABLE's capacity to deliver agri-entrepreneurship to youth within the program. The project is working with mentors and agribusiness instructors from eight Youth Agribusiness Incubation

Centres across Kenya to transfer business incubation competencies and create a viable environment for the conversion of ideas to enterprises. The mentors and instructors inspire and guide young entrepreneurs in navigating the complexities of starting and managing agribusinesses, innovative farming, financial management, market analysis, etc., ensuring that these young minds have a holistic understanding of what it takes to succeed in the field.

BOOSTING AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIVENESS AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The CoELIB Project is working with Kisii National Polytechnic (KNP) through Egerton University to enhance the institution's competitiveness in different agriculture value chain (AVC) through the AGSKILLS program. This initiative addresses skills shortage in the agricultural workforce, a significant obstacle to achieving sustainable economic impact within AVCs. The project is funded under the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) by the German Development Bank (KfW) and co-implemented by the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). AGSKILLS will build KNP's human and infrastructural capacity to

deliver quality, market-relevant, and gender-sensitive skills programmes for enhanced competitiveness in the AVC.

The partnership also focuses on improving the quality of agricultural education, establishing a quadruple-helix innovation platform for collaboration among various stakeholders, and enhancing the institution's capacity to offer gender-transformative, competency-based programs. It also tackles inadequate training, weak industry connections, insufficient research infrastructure, and limited gender-focused interventions.

ADDRESSING DECENT EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGES AMONG THE YOUTH

The CoELIB Project continues to build ecosystems for decent employment opportunities for rural youth

in Kenya through the [Jobs Open to Youth \(JOY\) Project](#) by addressing obstacles around youth access to financial and non-financial services, wage- and self-employment opportunities, and knowledge gaps for employment. As the principal

hub in Kenya, CoELIB is working with satellite hubs in Kilifi and Kakamega counties to enhance the capacities of

3,000 youths in agribusiness. It also operates as the satellite hub for Nakuru County. The project targets to create 2000 jobs, connect 875 youth to wage employment, and onboard development.

CoELIB is working with satellite hubs in Kilifi and Kakamega counties to enhance the capacities of 3,000 youths in agribusiness. It also operates as the satellite hub for Nakuru County.



375 into enterprise

EMPOWERING KENYAN INNOVATORS

CoELIB is a critical organization that plays a vital role in Kenya's thriving entrepreneurial ecosystem. The project is a member of the Association of Startups and SMEs Enablers of Kenya (ASSEK) and the Association of Countrywide Innovation Hubs (ACIH) and uses these platforms to enhance its impact and dedication to promoting innovation, building the micro, small, and medium enterprise ecosystem and fostering the growth of startups nationwide.

The CoELIB Project has achieved significant progress in empowering youth by closely collaborating

with [Nakuru Box](#). This partnership has played a key role in creating a supportive environment for entrepreneurs in Nakuru, resulting in the remarkable success of many startups. This accomplishment demonstrates the crucial role of CoELIB in providing essential tools, resources, and guidance that have enabled these startups to thrive in a competitive market.

By providing essential resources, mentorship, and support within a collaborative and innovative ecosystem, CoELIB not only empowers the current generation of African youth but also lays a solid foundation for future leaders and entrepreneurs across the continent.



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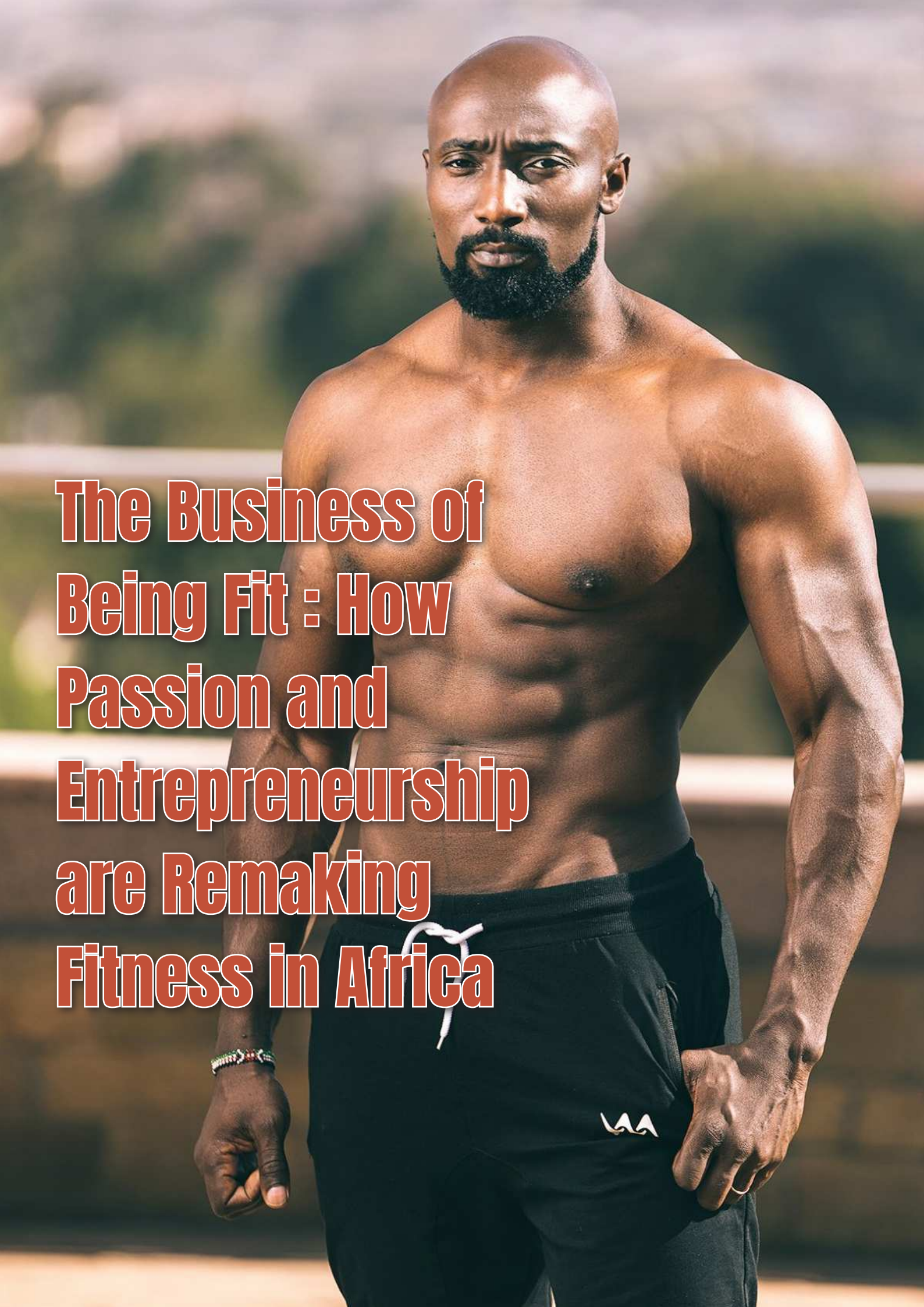


DEVELOPERS

WE UNITE INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

CoELIB Developers is a dynamic powerhouse that goes beyond boundaries, uniting **innovation** and **technology**.



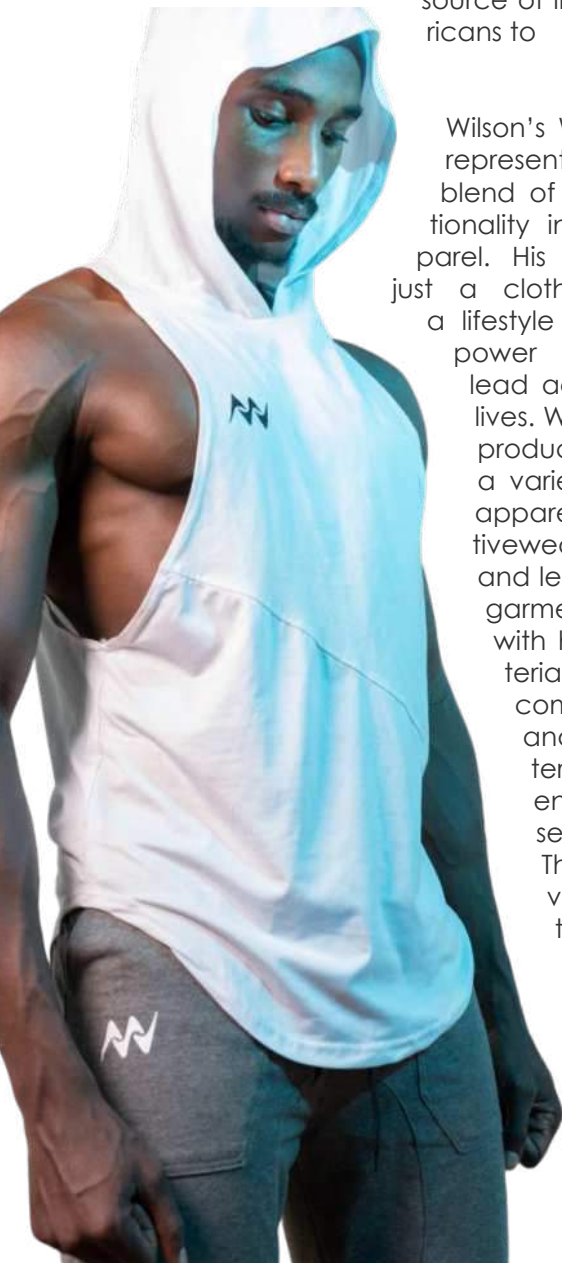


**The Business of
Being Fit : How
Passion and
Entrepreneurship
are Remaking
Fitness in Africa**

In recent years, Africa's younger generation has demonstrated a keen interest in health and wellness, leading many to turn their passion into thriving ventures. Mr Wilson Munene's journey from a school acrobat to a celebrated fitness entrepreneur mirrors the emerging trend.

Wilson found his calling in the gym, connecting with Ken, his mentor. Ken imparted essential lessons about fitness and business, shaping Wilson's path ahead. With Ken's mentorship, Wilson immersed himself in the fitness realm, undertaking various roles, from teaching aerobics to gym management. Wilson learned that success in the fitness industry wasn't just about knowing the right exercises or having the best equipment; it was about building relationships, understanding client needs, and always being willing to learn and adapt.

Wilson's career took off post-university when he delved into personal training, modeling, and fitness nutrition. His career is marked by several endorsements and ambassadorships. Wilson envisions fitness as more than just a job but a source of inspiration for Africans to



Wilson's WMActive Wear represents the perfect blend of style and functionality in athleisure apparel. His business is not just a clothing brand—it's a lifestyle choice to empower individuals to lead active and stylish lives. WMActive Wear's product line includes a variety of athleisure apparel, such as activewear, sportswear, and leisurewear. These garments are crafted with high-quality materials that prioritize comfort, durability, and mobility, catering to casual enthusiasts and serious athletes. The brand offers versatile options that effortlessly transition from exercise to everyday wear. His focus on early market

engagement and product adaptation showcases his strategic approach to surmounting entrepreneurial challenges.

Venturing into Africa's fitness industry has hurdles, especially in financing and navigating market peculiarities. Wilson pursued creative financing solutions and continuous education in entrepreneurship. He also reinvested personal savings and earnings, formed partnerships to split start-up costs, embraced crowdfunding through online platforms to draw support from broader communities, and attracted investors interested in the fitness sector. Furthermore, his collaborations with premier brands like Safaricom and Versman Lotion and his role as an ambassador for Ultimate Sports Nutrition (USN) helped him leverage brand sponsorships and endorsements to fuel and broaden his enterprise.

“The heartbeat of Africa's fitness industry lies not in the treadmills and weights but in its people. My journey, sparked by an unforeseen friendship, has taught me that true success comes from lifting others, sharing knowledge, and creating spaces where health is a shared community treasure.” - Mr Munene.

Wilson shares invaluable advice for upcoming fitness entrepreneurs, emphasising the essence of steadfast passion and capitalising on unique skill sets. He advocates for setting explicit goals and adaptability in the fast-evolving industry landscape. His endorsement of niche specialisation and the cultivation of partnerships reflects his dedication to innovation and resilience.

Mr Munene's inspiring story shows just how much opportunity there is in Africa's growing fitness industry. As more people in Africa focus on living healthier, there's ample opportunity for new, creative business ideas in fitness.

Roksana Gichia is a Communications and Media Engagement Assistant at CoELIB-Egerton University and a Radio and TV Presenter at CoELIB Media. She is also a Digital Content Creator and Sales and Marketing Director.



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SECURING AFRICA'S DIGITAL FUTURE: CYBERSECURITY IMPERATIVES FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

According to the Africa Business' publication on "Africa's Cybersecurity Threat", 90% of African businesses lack adequate cybersecurity measures, leaving them vulnerable to cyber threats. African nations recorded a concerning 31% rise in cyber-attacks in 2021, stressing the need for immediate proactive measures. With the increasing global expenditure on cybersecurity, African organisations and businesses are frequently impeded by budget limitations when implementing robust security solutions.

With the United Nations' goal of universal connectivity by 2030 in mind, African businesses are fully tapping into technology. The continent's mobile penetration is growing. Most businesses in Africa, including micro-businesses, have mobile phones, and digital payments are the order of the day. A study by Genesis Analytics on "How Social Media is Empowering Small Businesses in Africa" found that social media is a potent tool for establishing and expanding new small and medium-sized enterprises.

The study was conducted in eight African countries, including Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, South Africa, Nigeria, Ghana, and Mauritius. It highlighted the impact of the digital economy on small and medium-sized businesses. According to the statistics, between 1999 and 2019, the number of residents with Internet access increased from 1.2% to 36.7%, indicating increased technology reliability.

Just like large enterprises, small businesses face significant cybersecurity threats. Many small business owners mistakenly believe their smaller teams are less appealing targets for cybercriminals.

According to research by United States International University-Africa's Nkurunziza Annie Seilla titled "A Framework for Cybersecurity Risk Management: A Case of ICT SMEs in Nairobi, Kenya", small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) face increased risks due to heavy reliance on technology with little know-how of risk management frameworks.

Nkurunziza pointed out that while SMEs play a crucial role in economic growth, their technological dependency leaves them vulnerable to cyber threats. The study highlighted several cybersecurity risk management challenges encountered by ICT SMEs in Nairobi. Insufficient funding emerged as a significant barrier, restraining investment and innovation in ICT. Many SMEs face difficulties securing loans or venture capital essential for supporting their ICT initiatives. Additionally, a shortage of IT expertise within these SMEs impedes the effective adoption and utilisation of technology. The discussion emphasised the importance of training and capacity-building initiatives to address this skills gap.

Moreover, the study appreciated the need for established mechanisms to continuously monitor cybersecurity measures and performance. A proactive approach is needed to regularly update and improve cybersecurity policies and procedures in response to evolving threats and industry best practices.

“*Ensuring the cybersecurity framework of your business is robust and up-to-date is crucial. Cyber threats constantly evolve, and Kenyan businesses are not immune.*” - Richard Otwor, IT Security Consultant.

Business owners must regularly update their software and security systems to include patches that address vulnerabilities and protect against newly discovered threats. Failing to update your operating system can expose you to significant risks, including data loss, compromised access to important accounts, and potential identity theft. These risks can have severe consequences, such as losing sensitive information and financial damage.

Businesses should also invest in user awareness and education for information security. After establishing a risk framework, an information security policy should be created and implemented. New users should be aware of their security responsibilities, and refresher training should be provided to remind all users of cyber risks.

“Protecting customer data is not just a security issue, but a cornerstone of trust and reputation in the digital age.” Mr Otworì highlighted that a business’ commitment to data protection in the digital marketplace is directly linked to its credibility and customer loyalty. Business owners should invest in network security, ensuring all their data is backed up frequently and encrypted.

Creating strong, unique passwords and enforcing password policies with complex requirements. Businesses should implement two-factor authentication and use a password manager to store and share passwords securely. Weak password usage can take many forms. Employees might use easy-to-guess passwords like “Password123,” reuse the same password across multiple accounts or share passwords with team members without restrictions or protection.

A virtual private network (VPN) encrypts online activity and hides identity. It’s recommended that businesses require employees to use a VPN for all online work. Small businesses should consider using remote access VPN, especially in the gig economy where people work online. On the other hand, large organisations and businesses would benefit from using site-to-site VPNs, which connect businesses with multiple offices and facilitate safe file sharing. This type of VPN creates a secure connection between different office locations, ensuring that data transmitted between sites is encrypted and protected from

unauthorised access.

While cybersecurity does require financial resources, the investment is justified by the crucial protection it offers against potentially devastating cyber threats. Cybersecurity costs may vary widely depending on the expertise and tools needed to safeguard businesses from cyberattacks, including preventive measures, threat detection, incident response, and ongoing security management. Investing in robust cybersecurity measures is essential in helping small businesses mitigate risks, enhance business resilience, and safeguard sensitive data, thereby preserving customer trust and ensuring operational continuity in an evolving digital landscape.

With more businesses transitioning to the digital space, ensuring the safety of online operations has never been more critical. Small businesses, in particular, must take a proactive approach to fortifying their infrastructure across devices, applications, and networks. By prioritising internet safety, small businesses can safeguard their assets, reputation, and, most importantly, their customers’ trust. A secure online presence is not just an option but a fundamental necessity for businesses aiming to thrive and succeed.



CoELIB partnered with the GIZ’s GFA Consulting Group to host online safety training for small businesses. The workshop gave entrepreneurs vital knowledge and tools for navigating the digital space. *(Read more on the page 7)*

Faith Mumo works as a media and communications attaché at CoELIB while pursuing her studies at Egerton University, Njoro.





QUOTABLES

**VOICES OF VISION : EMPOWERING
QUOTES FOR TODAY'S
AFRICAN YOUTH LEADERS**



The seeds of success in every nation on earth are best planted in women and children. - **Dr. Joyce Banda, Former President of Malawi**

It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. - **Wangari Maathai, Environmental Activist**

Young people should not just participate in the social-economic agenda; they should be at the center of the agenda. They should own and drive the agenda. **Ian Tarimo, Executive Director, Tai Tanzania**

Anything that makes any powerful country powerful comes from Africa. We have all the resources. We have gold. We have everything. - **Burna Boy**

We truly need a lot of resilience from young people around the globe as we build up organizations, embark on projects and face challenges. - **Eng. Norah Magero, Co-Founder & CEO at Drop Access Limited**

Great leaders don't set out to be leaders. They set out to make a difference. It's never about the role - it's always about the goal. - **Doug Thorpe, Business Advisor**

There will be times to test your faith, but don't lose your youthful qualities - your imagination, optimism, and idealism. The future is in your hands; keep your head toward the sun and your feet moving forward. - **Barack Obama, Former president of the United States of America**

To the youth of today, I also have a wish to make: be the scriptwriters of your destiny and feature yourselves as stars that show the way towards a brighter future. - **Nelson Mandela, Former President of the Republic**

Pioneering Gender and Equity in Workplaces

The CoELIB Project is pioneering a movement towards a more inclusive and equitable society. Rooted in believing everyone deserves to be treated fairly and authentically, regardless of gender, CoELIB is challenging traditional stereotypes and advocating for systemic change. This groundbreaking initiative sets new standards and provides a vital benchmark for other African organisations to follow in addressing workplace gender dynamics. As societies increasingly question rigid male and female roles with long-defined social and professional expectations, the project promotes the idea that traditional gender roles should not confine identity. Doing so encourages individuals to break outdated norms and embrace their true selves.

Central to CoELIB's mission is the push for equal opportunities in education, employment, and leadership. The project is dedicated to ensuring that individuals are judged based on their abilities and talents, not their gender. CoELIB aims to create a level playing field where everyone can thrive by advocating for fair hiring practices and inclusive educational policies. This commitment to fairness and meritocracy is a model for African organisations aiming to cultivate a more equitable workplace.

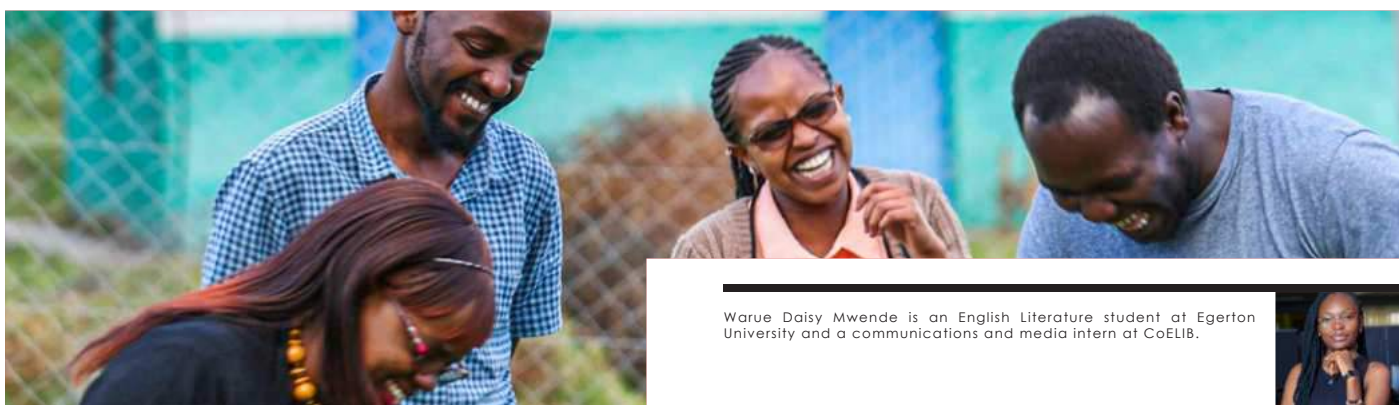
CoELIB's inclusive approach extends to all gender identities. This fosters an environment where diversity is not only accepted but celebrated. Such openness catalyses creativity and innovation, making workplaces and communities more dynamic and welcoming. African organisations can look to CoELIB's example to understand the benefits of embracing diverse gender identities and creating an inclusive environment.

“Our mission at CoELIB is to create environments where talent is nurtured and cherished, and where your gender does not dictate your future.” - Lucy Muhambe, Gender Officer at CoELIB.

The journey towards equality has its challenges. The project aims to create safe spaces for all individuals by implementing stringent policies and protections. Additionally, CoELIB addresses women's specific challenges, such as menstrual health, ensuring they receive the support they need to manage their cycles comfortably and with dignity. These initiatives demonstrate the importance of comprehensive policies that address gender-specific issues, serving as a guide for other organizations.

Each initiative undertaken by CoELIB is a step towards dismantling outdated barriers that hinder progress. By fostering an environment of acceptance and equality, CoELIB demonstrates the importance of fighting for a world where everyone is free to be themselves. This ongoing work highlights the critical need for African organisations to actively participate in creating an inclusive culture and breaking down societal barriers.

The CoELIB Project's commitment to creating a fairer and more accepting world is a beacon of hope for those yearning for equality. As society evolves, the project's efforts highlight the critical need to embrace all individuals, irrespective of their identity. Through education, advocacy, and unwavering support, CoELIB is making significant strides toward a future where everyone can live authentically without fear of discrimination.



Warue Daisy Mwende is an English Literature student at Egerton University and a communications and media intern at CoELIB.

Unlocking the Future of AI in Africa

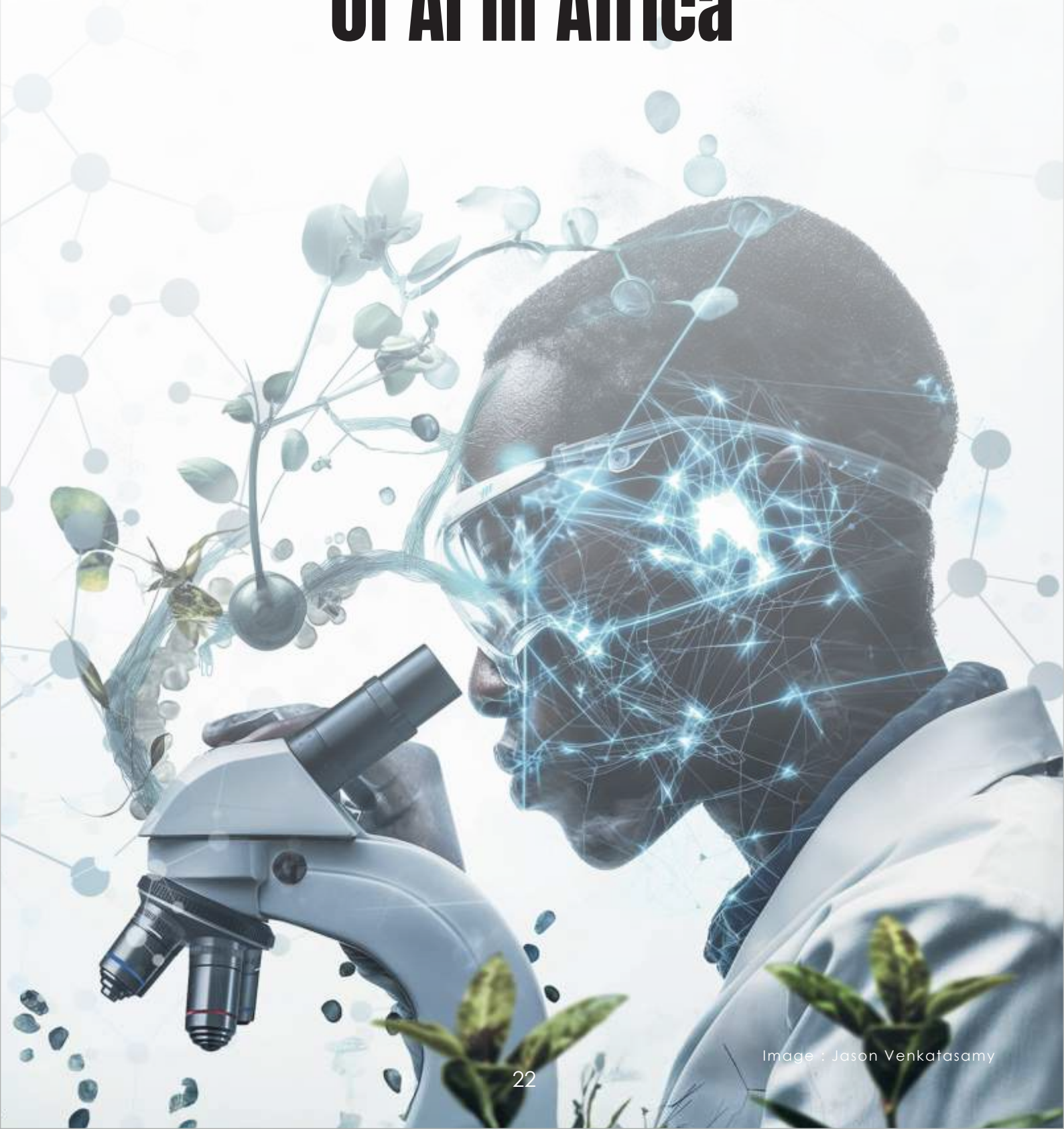


Image : Jason Venkatasamy

In an era where technology dictates progress, Africa is emerging as a vibrant landscape of innovation and growth in Artificial Intelligence (AI). Despite being at different stages of development across the continent, African nations are rapidly embracing AI, with countries like South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria, and Egypt leading the charge. These nations are leveraging AI to tackle local health, agriculture, finance, and education challenges, promising a future where technology is a cornerstone of societal advancement. The continent's foray into AI is fueled by government backing, private-sector investments, and a dynamic startup ecosystem. These elements are pivotal in overcoming the infrastructural and financial hurdles that have traditionally hampered technological progress in Africa.



Rose Delilah Gesicho, data scientist and community manager at Zindi

Inspiring case studies like Rose Delilah Gesicho's Zindi showcase the continent's potential to leverage AI for social and business problem-solving.

Christine Wanjiru is a Communications and Media Intern at CoELIB, Egerton. She is passionate about raising awareness of youth-related issues and co-hosts the CoELIB Drive show on CoELIB Radio.



Notably, AI's applications are diverse and impactful. From boosting agricultural yields and enhancing healthcare diagnosis to revolutionizing financial services and improving educational outcomes, AI is a game-changer.

However, this technological leap forward has its challenges. The adoption of AI has sparked debates around job redundancies and unemployment, with concerns over the displacement of low-skilled jobs juxtaposed against the optimism for new, high-skilled employment opportunities. Furthermore, ethical considerations, particularly around data privacy, security, and algorithmic bias, are at the forefront of discussions, highlighting the need for transparent, accountable, and inclusive AI systems.

In response to these challenges, a wave of initiatives promoting AI education and fostering innovation is sweeping across the continent. Governments, NGOs, and private entities are launching programs focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics education, AI training workshops, and innovation hubs. These initiatives are crucial for building local talent and ensuring Africa's active participation in the global AI narrative.

Inspiring case studies like Rose Delilah Gesicho's Zindi showcase the continent's potential to leverage AI for social and business problem-solving. Stakeholder views emphasize the importance of a collaborative approach to AI development, underscoring the need for supportive policies, educational investment, and ethical guidelines to ensure equitable societal benefits.



Compared to global AI applications, Africa focuses more on addressing fundamental socio-economic challenges than on automation and consumer technology. This distinct approach offers a fresh perspective on the potential of AI to drive development and solve pressing cross-continent issues.

Looking ahead, the future of AI in Africa is bright, with continued investment in education, infrastructure, and ethical frameworks crucial for unlocking its full potential. As Africa navigates its unique challenges, its approach to AI development could provide valuable lessons and insights for the rest of the world, heralding a new era of innovation and progress for the continent.



Promoting Diversity and Belonging in Workplaces: A Guide by The CoELIB Project



The significance of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in today's rapidly evolving and competitive work environment cannot be overstated. Organisations aiming for success prioritise these principles, creating environments where employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to their fullest potential.

Organisations must consider diverse diversity aspects to foster a truly inclusive workplace regarding gender, disability, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, culture, and religion. They must also consider the needs of historically underrepresented groups who have often fallen prey to discrimination and social injustices.

Diversity brings about new perspectives and angles of reasoning. Inclusion may call for people to be themselves and embrace self-appreciation.

By employing the DEI, organisations enjoy benefits such as high employee retention, more innovations and improved business outcomes.

DEI IN PRACTICE AT COELIB

At the CoELIB Project, inclusivity is deeply embedded in its mission, ensuring that individuals from all backgrounds feel welcomed and valued. The CoELIB Project strives to mainstream DEI through education and training programs that encompass knowledge that empowers employees and beneficiaries to be cognizant of forms of discrimination, including unconscious bias and microaggressions. The project offers equal opportunities to individuals across the gender spectrum. It also implements DEI-friendly policies to foster an environment of equitable representation and safeguarding. It also considers diverse voices, acknowledging that inclusivity and employee welfare are vital to success.

The structural layout of the workplace also plays a significant role in promoting diversity. Features such as accessible ramps for people with mobility impairments and a variety of seating options cater to the diverse needs of employees, enhancing comfort and facilitating social interaction and collaboration.

Regarding social inclusivity, the project conducts educational programs and utilises inclusive language. Flexible policies regarding parental leave, remote work options, and adjustable work schedules are instrumental in ensuring employees feel heard and included.

Adopting DEI as a core aspect of the organisational culture is crucial for organisations striving to create a thriving workplace.

This commitment fosters a more equitable environment, drives innovation, improves financial performance, and boosts employee satisfaction and retention. Implementing effective DEI strategies requires ongoing education, a willingness to address challenges, and a profound commitment to building a better future for all stakeholders involved.

The CoELIB Project Illustrates the importance of embracing diversity and creating an inclusive environment. Organisations must prioritise inclusivity to ensure all workforce members feel valued and respected. It fosters innovation and excellence, laying a solid foundation for sustained success in today's dynamic business environment.

Joy Ombele is an intern at CoELIB Egerton and is a second-year university student at Moi University pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics, Mass Media, and Communication.



ACROSS THE CONTINENT: EVENTS AND PROGRAMMES TO WATCH



Africa is filled with opportunities for the youth. "Across the Continent" showcases some of these opportunities.

YALI Alumni Expo and Trade Show (YALI Expo)

Attend the inaugural YALI Expo in November 2024 in Cape Town, South Africa, at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC). The YALI Expo will convene, connect, and celebrate YALI alumni making positive change in their communities by creating networking opportunities and showcasing innovations for sustainable impact in communities, countries, and the continent. It will also create networking opportunities and showcase innovations for sustainable impact in communities, countries, and the continent.

To register, sponsor, and participate, visit <https://www.yaliexpo.com/>.

Independent Curators International (ICI) Mentorship Program

In collaboration with the Njabala Foundation and the Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions (AWARE), the ICI is offering a 6-month mentorship program for emerging female-identifying curators based in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The mentorship program aims to support emerging artists by providing a platform to develop their practice, gain resources, enhance research and discourse, and engage with established curators from East Africa and beyond. Submit all applications through ICI's application portal

(<https://ici.awardsplatform.com/>)

by August 15, 2024, 11:59 pm EAT.

L'Oréal SAPMENA's Big Bang Beauty Tech Innovation Program

The L'Oréal SAPMENA Big Bang Beauty Tech Innovation Program 2024 is an exciting initiative that aims to co-create innovative solutions for the future of beauty. The program seeks to identify innovative startups that can help propel L'Oréal's Beauty Tech ambition by co-creating solutions for the future. It spans countries across the South Asia Pacific, the Middle East, and North Africa. Submit applications by Saturday, July 13, 2024, 11:59 pm GMT on the Big Bang Beauty

website:<https://bigbang.lorealapmena.com/>.

African World Heritage Fund (AWHF) Moses Mapesa Research Grant

Applications are now open for the 2024 AWHF Moses Mapesa Research Grant to support African Doctoral and Master's Students in the field of natural and cultural heritage. This grant seeks to further research (particularly supporting fieldwork) on World Heritage and tentatively listed African sites. Request the application form (English, French, and Portuguese versions) by emailing bridgetd@dbsa.org. Application Deadline: July 31, 2024.

Afreximbank Research Sabbatical Programme

The 2025 Afreximbank research sabbatical program is now accepting applications. The programme offers individuals from academic or research institutions the opportunity to undertake relevant research that contributes to the bank's intellectual leadership in fulfilling its mandate. Interested applicants should complete an online application form on the Bank's website and submit it electronically.

Partnerships for Innovative Research in Africa 2024 Call for Proposals.

The Alliance for African Partnership (AAP) invites proposals for its Partnerships for Innovative Research in Africa (PIRA) strategic funding program. PIRA is a funding opportunity created to support collaborative research partnerships at any stage of development, whether they are new or existing initiatives. This program is open to ten leading African universities, a distinguished research network for African research institutes, and Michigan State University.

Submission deadline: Wednesday, August 14 (11:59 PM ET)

To submit a proposal, please visit :

[AAP PIRA Call for Proposals 2024 \(qualtrics.com\)](https://qualtrics.com)

Egerton University is one of the founding members of AAP. AAP aims to foster lasting partnerships between African institutions, Michigan State University (MSU), and other global collaborators that are sustainable, impactful, and fair. AAP is hosted at the CoELIB Project.

CoELIB Newslink wants to hear from you

What role do social media play in advocating for youth leadership in Africa?



Send 500 words or fewer to info@coelib.org for a chance to be featured in the newsletter's opinion section

YALI ALUMNI EXPO

& TRADE SHOW | 2024

UNLEASHING POTENTIAL, ACCELERATING IMPACT

*Amplifying Yali Alumni Potential and Spotlighting Their
Impact in Diverse Spheres of Influence*

11th - 14th November 2024

Venue: Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC)

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