

UNICEF StartUp Lab

Program Information Brochure
Cohort 2023 (January - June)

Are you working to...?

Are you working towards achieving **social impact through your startup? Is your solution **tech-driven**?**

If you answered "yes" to both of these questions, we want you to become part of the UNICEF StartUp Lab.

This brochure will tell you about the programme, eligibility, and how to apply.



What's UNICEF StartUp Lab and why is it unique for social impact startups?



UNICEF StartUp Lab is an accelerator programme for impactful businesses working to advance the SDGs for children and young people. The programme is led by UNICEF in Ghana, supported by KOICA and implemented by MEST Africa.

The StartUp Lab aims to enhance the business, technological, and communication skills of participating entrepreneurs, and advise on the product-problem fit of their social impact, tech-driven solutions. It delivers a six-month curriculum to startups through intensive bootcamps in Accra, known as Work Weeks, as well as incubation hosted at partner hubs, mentorship, and virtual learning sessions.

UNICEF StartUp Lab provides a unique product by integrating business incubation and wide-reaching technical expertise and systems knowledge in the social sector, amplified by the reach of UNICEF's and KOICA's partnerships. While participating in the programme you will interact with UNICEF and KOICA programme experts, and learn about supporting tools available from United Nations agencies.

By participating in the UNICEF StartUp Lab you ensure that your impact-focused business is aligned with existing development needs and gain access to networks that can support your work. The UNICEF StartUp Lab is supported under the "KOICA-UNICEF Accelerating Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Ghana Project".

Why should I apply? What are the practical benefits?

Funding:

Each selected startup receives up to GHS 25,000 of prototyping funding

Investment:

Networking and investment opportunities for graduates, including from UNICEF Venture Fund

Partnerships:

Opportunity to work with KOICA and UNICEF

Growth:

Intense, hands-on business acceleration

Knowledge:

Access to UNICEF, KOICA, and MEST experts

Resources:

Technology perks

Impact:

Opportunity to refine your product-social impact fit, and become a UN-recognized Digital Public Good

Also, it's fun!



What's the curriculum?

Over the course of 6-months, participating startups will be taken through the following key modules:

Month 1

Diligence - Running diligence on teams and businesses

Month 3

Business - Problem scoping

Month 5

Communications - Preparations for investor-style pitches

Month 2

Product - Scoping business and finding key solutions

Month 4

Unit Economics - Revenue and finance

Month 6

Investor Readiness - Understanding how to prepare your business for funding

In addition you will attend sessions and webinars on:

- How to become a UN-recognized Digital Public Good
- UN System support tools for tech-driven entrepreneurs
- Interacting with government policymakers and why it's important



Additional benefits you'll get

We provide many benefits outside of the curriculum. Some of the benefits and perks (not all!) for previous participants included:

- Up to GHS25,000 of Prototyping Funding
- Free AWS credits
- Developers' support
- Being featured on UNICEF blogs and websites
- Opportunity to present product at UN events
- Dedicated support to apply for a Digital Public Good status
- Dedicated support to apply for the \$100K equity-free UNICEF Venture Fund funding

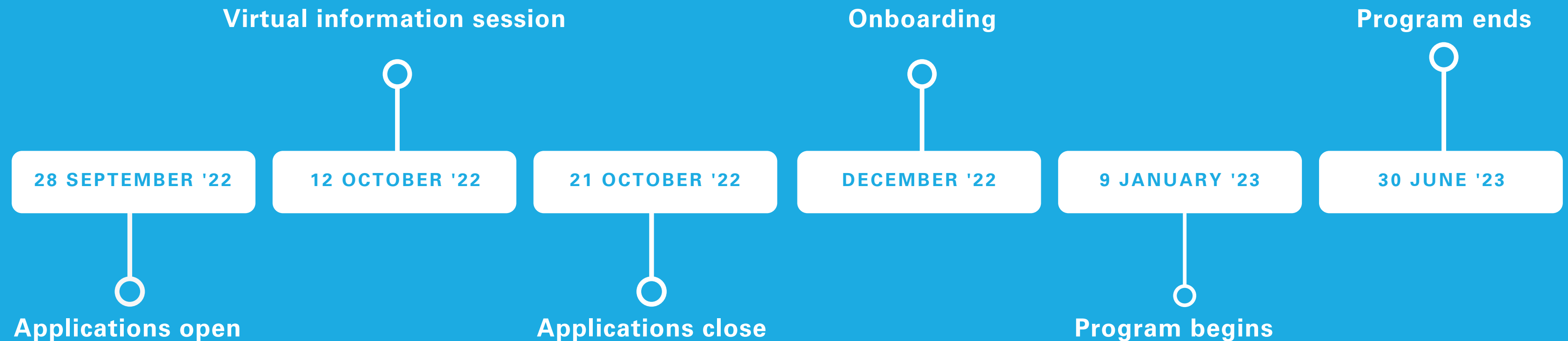
It sounds great. Am I eligible?

If your startup meets the following eligibility criteria you should apply:

- Your startup has been operational for 1+ year
- Your startup is a registered business in Ghana (no NGOs, foundations, or individuals)
- Your startup has technology as the core enabler of the business
- Your startup has a business model with a social impact that addresses at least one of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Open-source solutions, or startups that are willing to open-source their solutions, are particularly encouraged to apply
- Startups with female founders/co-founders are encouraged to apply
- The program is designed to include startups from all regions of Ghana



What are the key dates?



How long is the selection process?

(Hint: it's quick)

①



Application form

28 Sep - 21 Oct



Startup founders are invited to fill out the application form.
Ensure you submit your complete application before the deadline.

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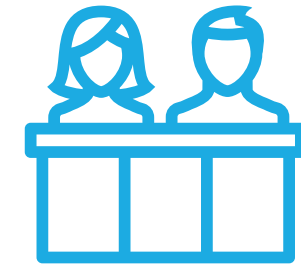
Stage I interviews

28 Sep - 21 Oct



Applications are assessed on a rolling basis until the deadline. Within this period, startups that submit a complete application will be shortlisted and invited for a virtual interview with MEST.

③



Stage II interviews

14 Nov - 25 Nov



Startups that make it to the final stage of the process will have a final virtual interview in front of a panel of representatives from UNICEF, KOICA and MEST.

[Start my application](#)

Have additional questions? Here are some FAQs.

What is the time commitment for the program?

Participants are expected to attend all bootcamp Work Weeks. Bootcamps take place in Accra in the first week of each month from Monday - Friday. Participants on returning to their bases of operation after the Work Week spend between 5 - 10 hours participating in virtual sessions and field work (where applicable) for the three subsequent weeks in any given month, known as Key Weeks.

Will the program be virtual or in person?

Work Weeks (first week of every month) are in-person and Key Weeks (remaining 3 weeks of each month) are virtual.

Who covers the costs of Work Weeks in Accra?

UNICEF StartUp Lab covers the costs of transportation and accommodation for the Accra Work Weeks.

Does every founder need to participate in the program?

Every founder is expected to participate in the virtual onboarding in December 2022 and the first Work Week in January 2023. Other team members may represent the participating startup in subsequent modules as it relates to their role within the startup. e.g. CTO at Product module, CFO at Unit Economics module.

How many companies will be selected for the program?

Around 20 startups will be admitted into the program.

What is meant by "prototyping funding"?

Prototyping funding is used to support startups with the development of their product. The process involves testing new ideas and developing them in an iterative approach. Sometimes prototyping funding is used to simply accelerate the development of your product.

Will companies receive the prototyping funding during or after the program?

Companies will receive prototyping funding during the program so as to maximize the combination of financial and technical assistance provided in the program.



**We are looking forward to
receiving your application.**

Good luck!

[Click Here to Apply.](#)

Deadline for applications: October 21st, 2022

KOICA-UNICEF Accelerating Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Ghana Project

The KOICA-UNICEF "Accelerating Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Ghana Project" contributes to the efforts of the Government of Ghana to support young entrepreneurs and make further progress towards the SDG Agenda.

Through this project, KOICA will provide funding to the UNICEF StartUp Lab programme in the years 2022-2026. The project is expected to increase the knowledge and capacity of social impact startups to develop tech-driven solutions that can succeed in the marketplace. UNICEF and KOICA will resource and empower startups that address social and economic deprivations and improve efficiencies in the social sectors, especially in the areas affecting youth.

The initiative will support entrepreneurship and innovation in Ghana, especially for ICT-enabled solutions with significant societal impact potential, in line with the digitalization efforts of the Government of Ghana. The initiative will also link to the GK-IMPACT, the new Ghana-Korea Centre of Excellence for ICT-based Startups and Asian Research to be constructed and inaugurated at the premises of the University of Ghana by 2026.

About KOICA

The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) was established in 1991 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea as a governmental organization to implement the Korean government's grant aid and technical cooperation programs. KOICA Ghana Office has been supporting and implementing developmental programs in Ghana in four key sectoral areas - Public Health, Agricultural, Rural Development, Education, and Governance. Ongoing flagship initiatives include the Implementation of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) in Ghana, CHIPS + project with the Ghana Health Service, Rice Value Chain Improvement Project in Central Region, and Girls STEM Project with Ghana Education Service.



About UNICEF

UNICEF is a United Nations agency which works to uphold the rights and well-being of all children in 190 countries. Operating in Ghana for 40 years, UNICEF's current mandate focuses on health, nutrition, water, sanitation, hygiene, education, protection, and social policy sectors, as well as adolescent and youth empowerment and social behavior change.



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