I am delighted to introduce you to the Global Young Innovators 2021. Global Young Innovators celebrates the entrepreneurial spirit and forward-thinking minds of young people based in the UK and South Africa.

This brochure showcases the incredible collaborations between these young entrepreneurs with the aim to help solve global challenges and be a force for positive change.

The Global Young Innovators programme and the #IdeasMeanBusiness campaign empowered 18-30 year-olds from the UK and South Africa to utilise innovative thinking to design products or services as a solution to five of the greatest challenges facing South Africa, with the vision to scale globally.

Together with our partners; UKRI, Exemplas, Innocircle and Advance IDB, this nine-month programme started with 47 inspiring young people, all with the drive to turn their ideas into a business reality. Each young innovator received tailored mentorship from an Innovation Champion and attended a series of highly informative virtual events to equip them with the tools to build a sustainable business.

From there, thirteen projects from joint collaborations were awarded up to £10,000 in grant funding to further develop their ideas. From sustainable fashion to FinTech software, innovation is at the heart of each of these projects with a mission to solve global issues.

I am inspired by the passion and determination that each of these young innovators have for making a difference in society and changing the world for the better. Our vision for all of our Global Young Innovators is to become role models to their peers and for future generations. To motivate others to realise their potential and have the confidence to collaborate with other young people to drive positive change beyond their borders.

I am excited to see what the future holds for each of these projects. Please help us to support young innovators across the globe to reach their full potential and continue to encourage global transformation from great ideas and a strong purpose.

Emily Nott
Head of Diversity and Inclusion Programmes
Innovate UK
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In 2021, the Global Young Innovators Programme offered forward-thinking, entrepreneurial individuals from across the UK and South Africa, a platform to join forces, ignite ideas and co-design solutions that can help solve some of the greatest challenges facing our global community.

Providing mentorship, industry-leading training and the chance to pitch for up to £10,000 in grant funding, this bespoke three to nine-month programme was designed to connect and equip young innovators with the resources needed to bridge the gap and transform early-stage ideas into a viable business.

The young innovators based in the UK and South Africa, aged between 18–30 were given the opportunity to collaborate together to form ground-breaking projects and be a force for positive change. They were asked to generate innovative ideas to help address five challenges in South Africa, with the potential to take the solution to a global scale:

- **LOW-CARBON**
  Solutions that can move South Africa towards a low-carbon economy.

- **EDUCATION**
  Products and services which can improve education and training - make it fairer, more inclusive, accessible and equitable.

- **INFRASTRUCTURE**
  Innovations to support the sustainable expansion of cities, rural communities and infrastructure.

- **URBAN & RURAL COMMUNITIES**
  Solutions to create a positive impact on urban and rural communities, transforming them in sustainable ways whilst working to maintain their heritage and cultural access.

- **QUALITY HEALTHCARE**
  Innovative ideas to improve the quality of healthcare provision, whether it is directly medical related or healthcare equipment that is more sustainable, sanitary and/or efficient.
In January 2021, the programme launches with a selection of 47 young innovators, from the UK and South Africa. The young innovators were supported with access to:

- a five-day training workshop to develop their pitch for funding
- peer-to-peer networking
- 1-2-1 mentorship from a highly experienced Innovation Champion
- a series of webinars to equip the young innovators to build their proposition.

In March, 13 joint venture projects were awarded grant funding of up to £10,000 to further develop their business propositions. Each project received a further package of support and mentorship, which enabled them to develop their offering to make a positive global impact.
Solving Global Challenges

Meet the Global Young Innovators
ABLTY promotes lifelong independence, healthy ageing, social inclusion and physical activity by using an algorithm to recommend personalised exercise plans. This includes on-demand, virtual and pre-recorded exercise programs that are tailored to individual needs and physical conditions.

People living with disabilities and the elderly demographic are often excluded from the fitness industry, and as a result, there is an increased chance of chronic diseases among this excluded demographic. Increased chance of long-term health issues including heart disease and diabetes. There is a growing demand for people within this demographic that are seeking to improve their overall health and wellness by making better choices. ABLTY makes that possible by providing suitable exercises to the individual, improving physical and mental health.

The next step for ABLTY is to launch their MVP to build traction and revenue, and they hope to get more grants and sponsorship to enable them to create content for their website. The big vision is to develop an algorithm that will recommend an exercise program most suitable for the individual. In the next five years they hope to have live and on-demand classes, and incorporate wearable technology internationally.

‘The ABLTY team has taken on another director who they met through the programme. In addition, they have sourced additional funding for filming from the University of Hertfordshire to produce content for two video programs, which will mean that the company can launch its MVP in January 2022. Their mentor has signed them up for the innovation growth coaching services with Innovate UK EDGE.’

ABLTY Mentor

‘Our mentor was very supportive. She provided us with good ideas for business start-up and helped us throughout the program.’

Rosaria Berreto
Founder and Director

Rosaria Barreto is the founder of Vitality Hub and ABLTY. Her background is in clinical exercise and fitness-focused on chronic health conditions and accessibility for people over 60.

‘I was interested in the programme because of the investment opportunity and collaboration with Innovate UK. I needed support with funding the next stages of my business and wanted to learn about scaling a business.’

ABLTY Mentor

Mamatela Kgiba
Co-founder and Director

With a degree in hospitality and events management, Mamatela is very passionate about healthy living and helping people with disabilities.

‘ABLTY is my first owned business, which has taught me a lot and has developed me as a young entrepreneur. I believe in preventive health and wellness, so I want to develop a solution where I can help people especially the excluded population to have accessible exercise programs.’
Hydrop designs modular ablution platforms for people living in rural settings, makeshift villages and low-cost housing in Sub-Saharan Africa. The goal of Hydrop is to solve a global health crisis arising from the lack of adequate sanitation facilities and overcrowded living conditions. The inspiration came from Jeremiah’s experience associated with the hygiene challenges he faced in sharing shower facilities with many other people in a communal living setup.

The team utilised their engineering backgrounds to develop a solution that improves the human experience by maintaining a good standard of sanitation and hygiene, and at the same time, reducing the energy footprint and environmental impact.

The Global Young Innovators Programme helped provide the financial resources to enable the team to produce designs and production processes for the product. The next stage in Hydrop’s journey will be the refinement and extension of the prototype unit to meet several real-world market situations. They plan to apply for a patent covering the multifunctionality and portability of the design.

‘We had great mentors who provided us with the guidance we needed to develop our idea further. Mentorship coupled with the training we received at the beginning of the programme also helped us to understand more about the business idea we were developing.’

Hydrop continue to search for more grant funding and to establish a UK partner to further to further develop their business. Hydrop has also applied Y Combinator development funding for their prototype launch presentation.

HYDROP Mentor

Mxolisi Siyabonga Mamba
Technical Engineer-Product Development and Testing Lead

Mxolisi is a career adviser and an acclaimed multi-skilled leader with a BEng in Electrical and Electronic Engineering. He takes challenges head-on and thrives on making everyday a learning experience.

‘The impact that I want to make in the world is to educate other young people to be innovative and solution-driven.’

Sina Sadrzadeh
Business Lead

Sina is a serial social entrepreneur, whose previous business was providing surplus food redirection for food establishments across the UK. He hosts leading entrepreneurship podcast ‘The Millennial Entrepreneur’.

‘Sanitation is a human right and the people that live within informal settlements not only in Sub-Saharan Africa, but worldwide, they are not being addressed and often marginalised. The reason why I love working on Hydrop is that we have the ability to impact the lives of these people who feel like they are being ignored.’

Jeremiah Shibalabala
Project Manager and Product Design Lead

Jeremiah is an electrical engineer, who studied at the University of Johannesburg and advanced into the solar industry space. At present, Jeremiah is a solar design engineer for residential and commercial businesses.

‘I believe that Hydrop will drastically improve the standard of sanitation in Africa, and save lives in the process. I want to see people’s lives being saved through innovative solutions.’
At Night Owl Studio, their aim was to create interactive digital resources for the education sector, a sector that is lacking innovation. With accessibility at the forefront, they wanted to break down barriers in education to make learning more fun and interesting. Their target market was predominantly children aged between 13-18 based in educational institutions in the UK and South Africa, a tech-savvy generation that are comfortable with mobile devices and new technologies.

VR and AR are still relatively new technologies and with no industry standard of how they are applied, Night Owl Studio developed materials that complement traditional teaching methods. Night Owl Studio are now drilling down into the specifics on how they can become the preferred supplier for immersive solutions and future development. Their goal is to have a growing client base that allows them to develop creatively in this new and exciting technological space.

‘Over and above the training workshops that gave all participants a baseline level of business understanding, and the financial support that allowed us to purchase the hardware and training that allowed us to jump-start our projects, the support and guidance of our allocated mentor was extremely valuable.’

Luke Draper
Co-Founder/Developer

Luke is a game developer with background and academic qualifications in theatre and visual arts. Luke specialises in making interactive games focusing on augmented reality, musical themes and mobile device functionality.

‘I have a passion for finding ways to combine art and technology, it just so happens that it mentality fits in really well in the Edtech space. I applied for the program because COVID-19 shut down live events and in turn any career plans I had for the year. I thought the programme would be what I needed to turn what I called a hobby into a profession.’

Hannah Blair
Co-Founder/Developer

Hannah is a software and website developer who enjoys working on immersive technologies. In her spare time she enjoys building impactful projects with the aim of aiding people’s educational development.

‘I applied to the programme to collaborate with someone with a similar mission. I knew I wanted to work on projects that solved a real problem and I wanted use my technical skills where it mattered. I went in with an open mind towards what project I may come out with, and have finished the programme with the project member of my dreams who is on a similar journey of trying to leverage technology for good.’

‘Since completing the programme, Night Owl Studios have have won a R500,000 innovation award. They continue to look for new clients and are in the process to securing additional funding to cover development fees. Furthermore, they are securing a UK-based lawyer to draw up the final version of the joint venture and have pitched their business to the MTN Group.’

Night Owl Studio Mentor
Pro Nutri Cosmetics is a skincare company that prioritises health and sustainability through the production of chemical-free products using natural raw materials such as plants and fruits.

Pro Nutri Cosmetics products are aimed at achieving some of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals of Good Health & Wellbeing (SDG 3), Responsible Consumption & Production (SDG 12), Life on Land (SDG 15), as well as Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17).

Their plan is to produce numerous skincare products that will be inspired by natural or chemical-free raw materials. They anticipate Pro Nutri Cosmetics products being listed in various retail outlets in South Africa and the UK.

‘The programme connected us as a team from different parts of the world. It also provided us with impactful content and materials that helped us in building our business.’

Pro Nutri Cosmetics Mentor

‘Pro Nutri Cosmetics are looking at hiring interns to assist with their work. In addition, they have researched a number of different manufacturers and have chosen Alchem, who have already produced samples for them.’

Sherina Begum
Chief Executive Officer

Sherina is an enthusiastic young innovator who loves the environment. Her background is in law (LLB) and international economic law (PGDIP), LPC. Her vision is to build products that will incorporate natural raw materials or less chemical-based formulations.

‘I applied for the GYI Programme because I wanted to learn more about business in order to bring my dreams and vision into a reality. I am a lover of the environment and I am not pleased with the amount of chemicals in the products we consume in the UK.’

Sizolwakhe Innocent Mtetwa
Chief Operations Officer

Sizolwakhe’s background is in civil engineering and construction project management. As a young innovator, he has been part of an entrepreneurial organisation, Enactus, of which he established and has led the team since 2019, growing the team number to three amongst all the universities in South Africa.

‘I have observed a tremendous change to the South African climate since 2005 to date. It deeply concerns me that the next generation may not enjoy much of the goodness that the current generation is enjoying. My vision is to develop projects that will reduce the negative impact on the environment.’
React-Habita

The React-Habita system is an easily accessible, affordable remote monitoring and communications platform that connects those in care with their dependents. The AI-enabled ‘HabitaHub’ establishes the normal baseline behaviour profile of a disabled dependent person and alerts the remote caregiver via a smartphone app when deviations are detected. It also permits two-way instant voice messaging between caregiver and care beneficiary.

The lack of usability and affordability of connected devices in South Africa leaves over 2.5 million elderly and disabled dependent persons disadvantaged. Relatively simple technologies can enhance their wellbeing, health and safety. Combining both the Feather Linx and OXLABS technologies, they have produced a unique product and service offering that is due to launch in South Africa in within the next 12 months.

React-Habita is attracting interest from potential private, institutional, and venture investors in South Africa. The aim is to conclude a seed fundraising round before the end of the year. This will then enable the team to complete the product development in the form of a smartphone app, cloud-based database and the in-home Habita Hub hardware.

‘The most important and influential element of the programme has been our superb mentor, Anthony Stonefield. Anthony’s highly approachable and friendly manner has been key in bringing the UK and South African teams together to form our exciting collaboration.’

Megan Adonis
Co-Founder & CEO

After Megan lost her sight in 2015, she refused to let the challenge of being without sight overwhelm her and instead she challenged herself to be a better visionary which made her discover the spirit of entrepreneurship. The Feather Linx team has been developing a voice interactive smartphone app specifically to address a number of the challenges faced by the blind and otherwise disabled community for whom complex user interfaces exclude them from taking advantage of enabling technologies.

‘What motivates me to run my own business is to be a solution to the marginalised population. My vision is to see our technology rolled across South Africa, and then ultimately, globally.’

Shefali Sharma
Co-Founder & Strategy Director

Shefali has a Masters Degree in Space Engineering and has spent over 7 years working with technical start-ups to gain a better understanding of how successful businesses are built. Shefali own business, OXLABS, came up with the idea for the Habita system after reading about the UK Government’s Ageing Population Challenge and its desire to give the elderly an additional five years of quality, independent life.

‘Within five years, I want React-Habita to be the leading brand for remote telemonitoring of the elderly and vulnerable. And Habita available globally, supported by a young and dynamic, international team.’
Rounds Payment Gateway is a backend software company, enabling the movement of money between e-wallets. Their API's and tokens connect to early-stage FinTech companies to allow them full control of their apps and payment systems. The software enables young start-up companies to accelerate their growth and limit their chances of failure during the early-stage development.

Rounds Payment Gateway was born as a joint venture to solve problems that both of the founders had faced whilst running their own international companies. They found that integrating a backend payment movement system was extremely difficult and involved a huge amount of costs.

Their target customers are rural communities in South Africa, where payment infrastructures are quite limited. Rounds Payment Gateway allows these communities to have access to better financial software and therefore fueling economic growth required for city infrastructure.

The future plan for Rounds Payment Gateway is to continue the customer discovery journey and expand the marketing focus to fully understand the exact needs of their clients. The big vision is to take Rounds Payment Gateway across South Africa and have a solution integrated into every single FinTech company in the next few years.

Rounds Payment Gateway Mentor

‘Round Payment Gateway has secured a developer. Nomuntu has reserved the business name and had meetings to share compliance credentials with another FinTech company.’

Anuj Ashar
Co-Founder

Anuj Ashar is a serial entrepreneur and currently holding the position of Founder at three internationally-based organisations. His very first venture A-Pay is an all-in-one student FinTech platform, aimed at supporting young people throughout their university journey by means of open banking technology, financial literacy and payment support through our integrated partners. Anuj is also the founder of a tech brokerage service called Beta Booster.

Nomuntu Ndhlovu
Co-Founder

Nomuntu is a female entrepreneur from South Africa with a Post-Graduate Diploma in Business Management and a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology. She is the founder of Untum Financial Solutions, a company that aims to help people master finances through training and coaching.

‘My purpose and the purpose of Untum is to ignite economic inclusion. This drives me to continuously innovate so that fellow entrepreneurs can have access to products I didn’t have access to. I would like to see a world where everyone can have access to formal financial products and be informed about what those products are and how to use them without negatively affecting your life or your relationship with money.’

‘The most valuable support we gained was the support of our mentor Bolaji! She guided us on every stage of our journey and made sure that our progress was kept up to date. She was able to connect us with investors, guide on our business plans and make changes based upon our previous ideas.’

‘I applied to be part of the Global Young Innovators Programme due to the success rate of Innovate UK, and their track record with supporting entrepreneurs in scaling their companies. I was excited about the prospect of working with an entrepreneur based in South Africa and a learning experience that I would get through a FinTech related joint venture.’
SaniCare, produce reusable sanitary pads aimed at teenage girls. They are 90% cheaper than disposables over a two-year lifespan, and unlike disposable pads, SaniCare’s pads last all day, enabling girls to attend school without the need to change their pad.

Entrepreneurs, Bankies and Alison began working together to manufacture reusable pads in South Africa and create a brand that inspired young women to believe their menstrual cycle wouldn’t be limiting.

SaniCare works towards solving three critical global challenges. From an environmental perspective, each woman uses and disposes of 14,000 sanitary pads in her lifetime. Each woman switching to a reusable pad will save 500kg of plastic waste. From an educational perspective, 1.1 million girls in South Africa miss school when menstruating, resulting in a low literacy rate of 48% in rural areas. Switching to SaniCare pads will enable girls to continue attending school while menstruating. Finally, from a health perspective, the common practice of exchanging sex for sanitary pads has led to the HIV rate in young women to quadruple that of young men. Having an affordable reusable pad will prevent this practice.

SaniCare have started their first production. The next step is launching the pad to market and focus on distribution—supplying pads to women and tuck shops, supporting their selling and collating feedback.

‘Taking a product to market is a long journey, but we’ve had fantastic customer feedback with girls excited to use the pads at every stage. To be able to start providing the pads to a broader audience is incredible. The vision is to provide a range of period products at affordable prices across South Africa so no one is disadvantaged by their period.’

SaniCare Mentor

‘I applied for the programme as I knew that period poverty presents many challenges to young women across South Africa. I wanted to meet other like-minded business owners to develop a solution that has the scale to support women across the country, while receiving professional support in creating a collaborative process.’

Alison Wood
Product Developer and Distributor

Alison is an award-winning entrepreneur with an MA in Economics from the University of Edinburgh. Driven by her passion for sustainability, Alison currently runs a start-up, Floco. Floco designs and sells super comfy and thin reusable period pads and 10% of revenue is donated to international projects – ensuring everyone can have the best period they can.

‘As a start-up, finance plays a vital role when starting a business and getting the business off the ground, thus the grant fund from the Global Young Innovators Programme really did boost us and helped us to create a corporate identity and enable product development.’

Bankies Matlou
Marketing and Sales

Bankies is the founder of Botle Sanitary Towels business based in South Africa. From an early age he had the drive and determination to set up his own business. After realising the potential his business had in improving the lives of young girls and woman, Bankies decided to participate in the Global Young Innovators Programme to receive the mentorship and guidance to enable him to grow his business.

‘SaniCare are exploring further support available for their project including grants to support website development, marketing collateral and additional projects. Their mentor is also supporting them with applying for a trademark for their products.’

SaniCare Mentor
Swyft Lab

Swyft Lab is a swap, thrift and upcycling fashion brand that promotes sustainability as well as promoting home-grown youth creativity in Johannesburg. Swyft Lab redirects pre-loved fashion items from landfill into the wardrobes of the youth through the intervention of design and craft. Giving pre-loved garments and footwear new life, whilst educating the youth about the value of fashion waste in a sustainable circular economy.

Creators of Swyft Lab, Sibusiso and Chantelle both come from creative backgrounds and have been building a similar brand concept individually. With both creative minds alike, they found a way to merge their brand concepts together to create Swyft Lab for the benefit of social and sustainability progress in Johannesburg.

Despite the hurdles that the pandemic presented, Sibusiso and Chantelle are continuing to build their network and are due to have their first physical store launch. They are also due to run their first event for the clothes swap system with educational workshops for fashion sustainability. The ultimate vision is for Swyft Labs to be recognised by the youth of Johannesburg as the spot to go for shopping and events. Most of all, they hope to help the next generation be inspired to collaborate and make a difference in the world.

‘Swyft Labs have contacted a number of Laundromats which they hope they can start a partnership with. They have had a number of interviews and press releases, to assist with the promotion of their business. In addition, they are recruiting for another market assistant.’

Swyft Labs Mentor

Chantelle Anonuev
Marketing Manager

Chantelle is a fashion design graduate based in the UK. She has used the fashion platform for social causes and is in the progress of making her own artist collaborative brand in London.

She also studied sustainability in luxury fashion to further extended her knowledge on how to best approach fashion design in a sustainable and conscious approach.

‘I want to be a part of the fashion revolution. Helping move fashion and the craft of designing to move our world forward with a more sustainable approach.’

Sibusiso Zulu
Operations Officer

South African-based, Sibusiso is the founder of sneakers4change where he collected and donated 10,000 pairs of sneakers for around six years in order to curate artist collaborations and establish successful social impact exhibitions. He is also a photographer, visual artist and designer.

‘I want to use my business to create opportunities for the youth in my community, and create something great that will inspire young people in South Africa and change the world.’

‘Global Young Innovators has opened new doors for both of us. Firstly, to create a business idea both of us would not have thought of. It allowed global connections and business partnerships for Sibu and Chantelle to collaborate their innovative ideas. With the mentorship and grant funding, it helped make it all come alive – the experience from start to finish was very supportive and was what we needed as new business owners.’

Global Young Innovators
Innovate UK drives productivity and economic growth by supporting businesses to develop and realise the potential of new ideas.

We connect businesses to partners, customers and investors that can help them turn ideas into commercially successful products and services and drive business growth.

We fund business and research collaborations to accelerate innovation and business investment into R&D. Our support is available to businesses across all economic sectors, value chains and UK regions.

Innovate UK is part of UK Research and Innovation.

Launched in April 2018, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) is a non-departmental public body sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

Our organisation brings together the seven disciplinary research councils, Research England, which is responsible for supporting research and knowledge exchange at higher education institutions in England, and the UK’s innovation agency, Innovate UK.

Our nine councils work together in innovative ways to deliver an ambitious agenda, drawing on our great depth and breadth of expertise and the enormous diversity of our portfolio.

We are Exemplas: pioneers of advisory services in the UK.

Owned by the University of Hertfordshire Group, we build strong relationships with organisations to enhance their value proposition and benefit their markets. And support them from our offices across the UK.

Positive. Flexible. Agile. That's the way we approach our work. If there's an opportunity, we make it happen – to help you and your clients succeed.

Driving innovation and unlocking potential.

Corporates depend on innovative mindsets for their survival and skills to cope with increasingly dynamic and uncertain environments. At the same time, innovative start-ups disrupt existing industries and create new industries altogether.

Innocircle’s team of diverse experts focuses on creating value for you and your organisation with our expertise, capabilities, and collective passion to position you – and your organisation – for success.

Advance International Business Development is a private company, incorporated in South Africa.

We provide business and management consulting services to Nordic, European and South African companies and organisations to develop and implement their international business and export strategy.

Offering foreign market assistance to companies, to advance and grow through exporting, international trade and business development.

Newable is a trusted provider of services to SMEs. We support SMEs through the provision of products and services in three key areas; Money, Advice and Workspace. Our portfolio is curated to best support ambitious SMEs at every stage of business development.

We are driven by a focus on inclusive and sustainable growth and helping undeserved sections of the business community. We have been supporting businesses to thrive for the best part of the past four decades, helping over 43,000 businesses thrive each year.