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## Expo 2020 Dubai backs 26 projects that are improving lives or helping to protect the planet

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Dozens of innovations, ranging from agricultural initiatives that empower women and farmers to novel products that could combat desertification or plastic waste, are among the latest to receive a major boost from global social impact programme Expo Live, run by organisers of the next World Expo, Expo 2020 Dubai.

Twenty-six projects from 22 countries have been selected in the third cycle of Expo Live's flagship Innovation Impact Grant Programme, following a rigorous evaluation process that included live presentations in Dubai. The competition was particularly strong in this cycle, with more than 1,200 applications from 114 countries.

Expo Live supports projects whose creative solutions to pressing challenges improve people's lives or preserve the planet – or both. These innovators will join an existing community of Expo Live Global Innovators, bringing the total to 70 grantees from 42 countries.

Among the new Global Innovators is a Ghanaian woman who is empowering other women by teaching them how to grow a local wild grain called fonio on abandoned lands.

Through her social enterprise Unique Quality Products, Salma Abdulai engages disenfranchised women to farm abandoned land, helping them to provide for their families and gain financial independence.

Abdulai told Expo Live judges a heart-warming story of one of her women farmers: "While I was in hospital pregnant, a woman who had just given birth was next to me crying all day. She'd just found out that her husband had run away because he couldn't pay the USD 2.5 a day to cover medical expenses.

"We offered her a job at the fonio farm and now she has been making a stable income for four years and has been able to send her children to school – all by herself."

To help such projects reach their full potential, Expo Live provides each successful initiative with a grant of up to USD 100,000, made available as they meet ongoing conditions. Projects are also supported with business guidance and promotion, and may have the chance to showcase their work to many millions of visitors at Expo 2020 Dubai.

The Expo Live grant will help Abdulai purchase land from the community and prevent the women from being evicted once fonio cultivation makes the land arable enough to grow other profitable crops.

The Global Innovators operate in an array of fields, including healthcare, education, renewable energy, fintech, waste management and water management.

Germany's Coolar, for example, has developed a solar-powered refrigerator that can store life-saving vaccines in off-the-grid, remote locations without the need for electricity. The Expo Live grant will help the firm pilot the refrigerator.

Christopher Göller, Co-founder of Coolar, has larger ambitions: "Ultimately, we want to provide an environmentally-friendly alternative to conventional refrigerators worldwide."

OTTAA Project from Argentina is giving a voice to the speech impaired with its portable, AI-powered device that predicts what users want to say and says it for them. In addition to reaching more users, the Expo Live grant will help the project to develop groundbreaking technology – a brain computer interface that picks up electrical activity in the visual cortex and then uses eye tracking to identify which image the user is focusing on.

Héctor Andrés Costa, Co-founder and Chief Technology Officer at OTTAA Project, said: "We are improving the lives of more than 2,500 people who have created more than half a million sentences using the OTTAA Project. This means half a million expressions of 'I love you', 'I'm fine', 'I'm happy' or even just a simple 'thank you'. That's the real power of the OTTAA Project."

Yousuf Caires, Vice President – Expo Live at Expo 2020 Dubai, said: "Expo Live is based on a firm belief that innovation can come from anywhere to everyone. This is a major component of our redefinition of what a World Expo can and should do: tap into its convening power well before the event to enable problem-solvers around the globe to promote innovation and build partnerships that leave a lasting legacy not only in the UAE and the region but across the world."

Expo 2020 Dubai will take place from 20 October, 2020 to 10 April, 2021 and will be the first World Expo to be held in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) region. It will be a festival of human ingenuity that gives a glimpse into the future, guided by its three pillars: Opportunity, Mobility and Sustainability.

Full list of the Global Innovators from the third cycle of the Expo Live Innovation Impact Grant Programme:

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Name	Origin	Details
Saathi	India	Saathi Eco Innovations produces a sustainable sanitary pad made of locally sourced banana fibre, which decomposes in only six months. With the support of the Expo Live grant, Saathi aims to achieve its '1 million pad project' in rural India by making the pads more accessible.
ayzh Health		To address preventable childbirth-related deaths and complications, ayzh Health has developed a Clean Birth Kit, containing soap, a blood absorbing sheet, a scalpel and other items. The Expo Live grant will help ayzh train 1,000 midwives and provide them with kits to support the delivery of 10,000 safe births.
Coolar	Germany	Coolar's solar-powered refrigerator stores life-saving vaccines at a constant cool temperature in remote areas without the need for electricity. The company aims to use the Expo Live grant to finalise its third prototype and to produce its first pilot refrigerators.
Desert Control	Norway	Desert Control rejuvenates infertile land using 'liquid nanoclay' – an innovative mixture of water and common industrial clay – that is applied to soft, dry sand. It creates spongy structures that retain water and nutrients to sustain plants. The Expo Live grant will help Desert Control build larger mixers and further develop their product.
Ethis Crowd	Indonesia	Ethis Crowd is the first Islamic real estate crowdfunding platform that enables small investors to fund new low-income residential developments in accordance with Shariah law. Ethis Crowd has helped more than 5,000 people buy a new home and the Expo Live grant will help expand the impact.
Hello Ruby	Finland	Hello Ruby produces a book series and website to teach children, parents and educators computing in a fun, creative and age-appropriate way. The Expo Live grant will enable Hello Ruby to produce a series of 10 free videos and create teaching materials.
Institute for Orkonerei	Tanzania	Institute for Orkonerei helps Maasai women gain financial independence by commercialising their only asset, according to tradition – milk from cattle. The institute has set-up dairy plants that buy the women's milk and use it to create dairy products sold around Tanzania. The Expo Live grant will enable them to reach more women and expand distribution.
InvestEd	Philippines	InvestEd, based in Manila, is a private student lender for university students ineligible for conventional loans. InvestEd assesses an applicant using unorthodox sources of information and provides them with flexible funding. The Expo Live grant will help improve the platform's technology and expand its operations to benefit 3,500 students.
Selina Wamucii	Kenya	Selina Wamucii has developed a mobile platform that allows buyers and exporters to source fresh produce directly from more than 3,000 smallholder farmers – without internet access. The Expo Live grant will help them develop and expand the platform, as well as help farmers gain organic accreditation.
Jaan Pak	Pakistan	Jaan Pak is helping to prevent respiratory illnesses among the poor in Pakistan by selling cook stoves that require little biofuel and limit the release of harmful smoke. The project addresses not only health problems but also air pollution and deforestation. The Expo Live grant will help develop more affordable stoves.
Jobdoh	China	Jobdoh is an on-demand hiring platform that provides short-term job opportunities to low income earners, helping them top-up their salaries, and also provides access to discounted health insurance and financial services. The Expo Live grant will help Jobdoh build new features and expand.
MeeTwo Education	England	MeeTwo addresses the rising issue of anxiety and depression among young people by offering them a safe platform to talk through problems and get advice. Expo Live will help the app expand to support more than 100,000 young people in the UK by 2020, eventually expanding globally.
Mobbisurance	South Africa	South African start-up Mobbisurance provides more affordable crop insurance for uninsured farmers by using satellite imagery and weather data instead of humans to validate claims. The Expo Live grant will help an additional 5,000 farmers get insurance.
Incluyeme.com	Argentina	Incluyeme.com helps disabled job seekers gain employment by connecting them with recruiters. The platform also educates employers on the benefits of hiring people with a disability. More than 200,000 people are already registered. The Expo Live grant will help automate the process and to expand the platform into other countries.
OTTAA		OTTAA Project is giving a voice back to the speech impaired through its AI-enabled device that predicts what they want to say using images. The Expo Live grant will help OTTAA Project reach 20,000 additional users and to develop groundbreaking technology – a brain computer interface that picks up electrical activity in the visual cortex and then uses eye tracking to identify which image the user is focusing on.

<b>Pixis</b>	France	<i>Pixis</i> is an AI-driven platform that aims to be the career counsellor of the future, providing students with information to help them make better career and education choices. The Expo Live grant will help enhance the platform's digital tools and allow its art history lecturer to develop English and Arabic versions.
<b>Plympton Farms</b>	Guyana	<i>Plympton Farms</i> has developed an outdoor hydroponic system based on low-cost polyethylene growbags that turns infertile, sandy soil into arable farmland. The Expo Live grant will help finance a commercial trial of the system, taking the existing pilot through to commercialisation.
<b>Posadi.Les</b>	Russia	<i>PosadiLes</i> – which means 'plant a forest' in Russian – is a game to raise awareness about deforestation in an entertaining way. For each tree planted virtually, a volunteer plants one in real life. To date, 3,000 volunteers have planted more than 30,000 trees in Russia and with the Expo Live grant, <i>PosadiLes</i> aims to reach 500,000 users in Russia, and an additional 500,000 across the world.
<b>Fish.me</b>	Bahrain	<i>Fish.me</i> is an app that links Bahraini fishermen and consumers to simplify the supply chain, ensuring a fairer and fresher fishing industry. The Expo Live grant will help develop in-app payment options and provide value-added services to fishermen by collecting and analysing sales data.
<b>Public Planet Partnerships</b>		<i>Public-Planet Partnerships</i> is a consultancy that has developed a framework of thinking that requires governments and companies to consider nature as a stakeholder when developing solutions to problems. The Expo Live grant will help implement at least three PPP projects by next year.
<b>Siam Organic</b>	Thailand	<i>Siam Organic</i> is giving Thai farmers new financial opportunities by teaching them how to grow organic Jasberry rice – a new variety of purple rice whose higher nutrition value allows farmers to tap into the 'superfood' market. The company has helped more than 1,800 farmers increase their incomes. Their goal is to reach 20,000 families thanks to the Expo Live grant.
<b>Suyo</b>	Colombia	<i>Suyo</i> is empowering low-income families by helping them to secure their property rights, which leads to greater financial opportunities. It aims to benefit 500,000 low-income families. The Expo Live grant will help to scale up and diversify its services by implementing intelligent automation and machine learning.
<b>Unique Quality Product Enterprise</b>	Ghana	<i>Unique Quality Product</i> engages disenfranchised women to farm fonio, a local wild grain that grows in harsh environments and is highly nutritious, helping to address the issues of women unemployment and food insecurity. The Expo Live grant will help the women buy the lands and expand operations.
<b>TeachMeNow</b>		<i>TeachMeNow.com's</i> global platform for live and on-demand teaching helps make knowledge accessible to anyone, anywhere, by connecting students and teachers around the world. The Expo Live grant will help the platform expand.
<b>Ustad Mobile</b>	UAE	The <i>Ustad Mobile</i> app enables users in low-income countries to share educational contents on their phone – even without access to the internet. <i>Ustad Mobile</i> will use the Expo Live grant to adapt its existing online education content to run offline and run a series of workshops in key places.
<b>Woobox</b>	Serbia	<i>Woobox</i> produces wooden cooler boxes lined with wool that can replace polystyrene boxes used in the food industry. With comparable performance but use of more sustainable materials, it could help prevent millions of tonnes of harmful waste each year. The Expo Live grant will be used to increase production capacity and to expand into European and U.S. markets.

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His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai, today attended the graduation ceremony.



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Vice President, Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum said that Area 2071 is a bridge to the...

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