



Bernard Chiira, Director  
Innovate Now

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I am delighted to welcome you to the first Innovate Now newsletter. We work with assistive tech (AT) startups to create market fit, scalable and investable AT solutions. We do this by taking the startups through an active curriculum, human centered user testing, coaching and mentorship and exposure to an investor network. [Learn more](#) about the partnership goals.

In 2022, we have worked with the most diverse yet unique AT founders from six African countries to validate their assistive technology products and services. Our commitment to the founders is long term support to ensure they receive the required support including investment to launch and scale their solutions.

We have also partnered with different players in the assistive technology sector and beyond to create awareness about disability innovations and opportunities in the AT market. We appreciate the support from our partners, the Norwegian Agency for Development (NORAD, Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa and IKT-Norge.

On 3rd December, we celebrated our 3rd anniversary by reflecting on the progress we have made supporting more than 60 AT founders, 35 AT ventures across seven countries forming one of the fastest growing AT start-up ecosystems in the world.

We look forward to supporting more AT founders in 2023 and growing strategic partnerships to enhance access to affordable assistive technology.

I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 2023!



In picture; Julius Mbura, Innovate Now team, alumni and CEO, Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa

## NEWSLETTER HIGHLIGHTS

- DIRECTOR'S NOTE
- ACCELERATOR NEWS
  - THE DIGITAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP PARTNERSHIP
  - DEMO DAY
  - MOONSHOT DISABILITY INITIATIVE
- VENTURE SUCCESS
  - HOPE TECH PLUS
  - assistALL APP
  - Speaking Engagements
- TECH4ALL EVENT
- CALL FOR APPLICATIONS - COHORT 7

## Follow us on :



@InnovateNowAT



@InnovateNowAT



@Innovate Now



@at\_innovatenow



inadmin@kilimanjaro-blindtrust.org

## ACCELERATOR NEWS

### THE DIGITAL ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP PARTNERSHIP

The digital AT and entrepreneurship project under Innovate Now is a partnership between GDI Hub, ICT Norway, Norad, and Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa to support digital assistive technology (AT) ventures in Africa. The project aims to increase access to assistive technology and investments for the assistive technology ecosystem in East Africa and beyond.

In 2022, through this collaboration, Innovate Now has supported 15 ventures, in two cohorts from 6 countries from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, Zambia, and United States of America. The ventures have interacted with a total of 850 persons with disabilities through live lab activities. The solutions from these ventures address challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the following domains: mobility challenges, learning disabilities, hearing and visual impairments, epilepsy and speech disorders. [See video for announcement](#)



### DEMO DAY

Innovate Now celebrated its founders in August and September through Demo day. Solutions addressing hearing impairments by Kenya Christian School for the Deaf and Deaf Outreach Programme emerging as the top innovations for cohort 5 and 6 respectively. Watch the cohort 6 Demo Day [here](#) and [read](#) on the innovations.

*Demo Day winners with mc and guest*

### PARTNERSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT BY MOONSHOT INITIATIVE

Innovate Now was selected alongside other ten accelerators to be a part of the Moonshot Disability Accelerator Initiative, supported by Enable Ventures, SmartJob, and the Clinton Global Initiative.

The Moonshot Initiative is an unprecedented global effort to close the disability wealth gap through entrepreneurship and innovation, bringing together the minds behind the next generation of technologies and solutions in the early-stage disability market and scaling the growing ecosystem for disability innovation. [Watch more about this initiative](#)

## VENTURE SUCCESS STORIES

### HOPE TECH PLUS



Our founder, Brian Mwiti innovated the Sixth Sense device, a disruptive assistive technology which is an ultimate walking companion for the visually impaired.

The assistive technology uses echolocation and sonar, same as is used by bats and dolphins in object detection and applying modern concepts in IoT, Artificial Intelligence, machine learning and Big Data.

*A man fitted with the sixth sense device*

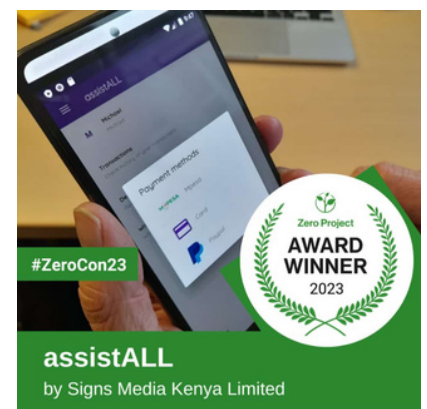
Hope Tech recently closed seed round investment and is in the process of raising series A in 2023, a testament that investors are looking at assistive Technology for investment opportunities. The company has also managed to penetrate to the UK and the Austria market through strategic networks and partnerships. The product will be launched in UK and Austria in 2023. [Read more.](#)

### AssistAll APP

Our founder, Luke Muleka innovated the assistALL app which is an online platform that offers on demand sign language interpretation from anywhere in the world. The app was officially launched in April 2022.

In July 2022, the company got into partnership with IEBC (an electoral management body in Kenya) and UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and was mandated to oversee voter education and information for persons with hearing impairment.

Recently, the app was awarded the zero-project winner 2023 for enabling an all-inclusive society. The app is available on Google play store.



*The assistAll app on a phone screen*



## TECH4ALL EVENT



*A group in discussion during the hackathon*

Young people present at the event were taken through how to use technology for good and opportunities therein disability innovations. The event culminated with a hackathon where five groups presented their inclusive tech concepts. The hackathon winners were presented with gifts from Home254 apparel.

Innovate Now in partnership with Kilimanjaro Blind Trust Africa celebrated the International Day for Persons with Disabilities through a Tech4all event.

The event brought together over 100 young people to network and learn about technology, inclusive innovations and how technology can be used as a medium for good. The full day event was sponsored by eMobilis, Oracle Academy, Citizen Digital, IBM, Safaricom, IamtheCode among others.



*IN and KBTA leadership award Tech4all winners*

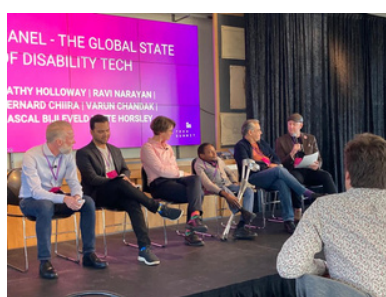
## Speaking engagements

In 2022, we participated and shaped important global engagements, adding our voice to the assistive technology and disability inclusion narrative. Our director was a panel and keynote speaker in the inABLE Inclusive Africa Conference, Access Israel 8th international conference, RightsCon and many more. He was also featured in podcasts including **Remarkable Insights** and **Wheels in Motion**.

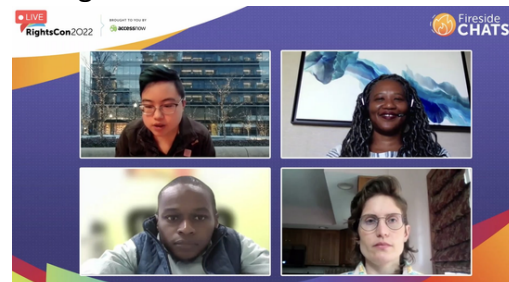
Access Israel conference



Remarkable Tech Conference



RightsCon 2022



## CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: COHORT 7

We call on all digital assistive technology innovators who are improving access to education, healthcare and finances for persons with disabilities, to apply for Cohort 7 Accelerator program.

To be part of this digital assistive technology and entrepreneurship program, apply here:

<https://atinnovatenow.com/apply> applications close on 5th January 2023.



**Follow us on:**

- @at\_innovatenow
- @innovatenowat
- @innovatenowat
- @innovatenow

**IN Innovate Now**  
Unlocking Human Potential

**APPLICATIONS ARE NOW OPEN FOR COHORT 7**

Is your startup helping persons with disabilities digitally access assistive products, education, healthcare, livelihoods, financial and information services or create employment?  
Join our cohort 7 and...

Build a scalable AT Solution

Test your AT with persons with disabilities

Showcase and attract investors and potential partners

**APPLY NOW** Application closes on 5th January 2023