



THARAKA INVENTION ACADEMY
PRESENTS:

THE GLOBAL BRIEFING



Weekly Briefing (Sep 1–7, 2025): Global Innovation & Problem-Solving Developments

Liberia Launches \$900 Million Program to Achieve Food Self-Sufficiency

Event Date: September 4, 2025 (announcement at Africa Food Systems Forum, Dakar)

Report Date: September 4, 2025 (FrontPageAfrica via AllAfrica)

Summary: Liberia unveiled a US\$900 million “Legacy Investment” agriculture program at the Africa Food Systems Forum 2025, signaling a major push for food security, rural jobs, and poverty reductionallafrica.com. The plan targets staples like rice, maize, cassava, coffee, and oil palm with ambitious expansions (e.g. **50,000 hectares of rice** to end import dependence)allafrica.com. Liberia’s agriculture minister called the initiative the cornerstone of its transformation agenda toward self-sufficiency and nutrition. The launch drew strong international backing – high-level delegations from Germany, Ireland, AGRA, and the Gates Foundation endorsed the strategy as a model for inclusive growthallafrica.com.

Why it matters for innovators: This program exemplifies **innovation in policy and financing** to tackle systemic challenges. By investing in local value chains and technology for farmers, Liberia is expanding the “toolkit” for problem-solvers in low-resource settingsallafrica.comallafrica.com. The focus on youth and collaboration (the forum’s theme) creates opportunities for young African innovators in agribusiness. Importantly, Liberia’s plan is **home-grown** and aligns with climate-smart practices and women’s empowerment – priorities for many Global South nations. Its success could inspire similar **frugal innovation** approaches in agriculture across Africa, reducing reliance on food imports and building resilience against supply shocks. For African innovators and invention educators, Liberia’s initiative underscores how bold **government leadership coupled with partnerships** can drive sustainable development at scale.

Rubric Score:

Criterion	Score (1–5)
Impact on Problem-Solvers	4
Novelty/Breakthrough	4
Scalability & Adaptability	4
Policy & Ecosystem Shifts	4
Relevance to TIA Curriculum	4
Consequences Beyond Tech	4
Time Horizon (1–3 yrs immediate)	3
Total	27

Sources: FrontPageAfrica/AllAfricaallafrica.comallafrica.comallafrica.com, etc.

Rwanda Debuts Africa’s First Self-Flying “Air Taxi” for Urban Mobility

Event Date: September 4–5, 2025 (public demonstration at Aviation Africa Summit, Kigali)

Report Date: September 3, 2025 (The New Times via AllAfrica)

Summary: Rwanda is making aviation history with the first-ever public flight of a **pilotless electric air taxi in Africa**allafrica.com. At the Aviation Africa 2025 summit in Kigali, a Chinese-made EHang EH216-S two-seater drone will take to the skies, showcasing Rwanda’s commitment to cutting-edge transport solutions. The drone aircraft, capable of vertical takeoff and landing, is being demonstrated as a use-case for **Advanced Air Mobility (AAM)** – envisioned to reduce city traffic, connect remote communities, and provide eco-friendly transportallafrica.com. Rwanda’s government, partnering with China’s EHang and CRBC, has fast-tracked this innovation to **solidify the country as a tech hub** for Africaallafrica.com. The live demo will give regulators and the public a glimpse of the future: it’s the **continent’s first “flying taxi”** case study, building on Rwanda’s success with delivery drones in healthcareallafrica.com.

Why it matters for innovators: Rwanda’s drone taxi highlights the **pioneering spirit in the Global South’s tech scene**. It expands the realm of possibility for African problem-solvers – from engineers to city planners – to leapfrog legacy infrastructure with bold solutions. The project demonstrates how **public-private partnerships** (Rwanda with Chinese tech firms) can bring novel technology to underserved marketsallafrica.comallafrica.com. While still experimental, the initiative could spur supportive regulations and inspire innovators across Africa to tackle mobility, logistics, and connectivity challenges with advanced technology. For regions with poor road networks, autonomous eVTOL (electric vertical takeoff and landing) craft offer a potential **paradigm shift** in delivering services (much as drones already deliver medicine in Rwanda). The **symbolic value** is high, too: an African country is not just consuming but actively **piloting frontier innovation**, helping ensure new tech is adapted to local needs (like affordable, efficient transport) rather than only Western contexts. Rwanda’s AAM demo suggests a future where African cities help define next-generation transport – and invites today’s students and startups to start building that future now.

Rubric Score:

Criterion	Score (1–5)
Impact on Problem-Solvers	3
Novelty/Breakthrough	5
Scalability & Adaptability	3
Policy & Ecosystem Shifts	4
Relevance to TIA Curriculum	3
Consequences Beyond Tech	3
Time Horizon (1–3 yrs immediate)	4
Total	25

Sources: The New Times/AllAfricaallafrica.comallafrica.com

West African Experts Innovate Financing to Fight Lassa Fever

Event Date: September 3, 2025 (webinar ahead of ECOWAS Lassa Fever Conference)

Report Date: September 3, 2025 (Premium Times via AllAfrica)

Summary: In the run-up to a regional Lassa Fever conference, **West African health experts issued a bold call to reinvent funding models for epidemic research**allafrica.com. Noting that heavy reliance on foreign donors has left Africa’s outbreak preparedness vulnerable, they urged governments to **adopt innovative financing** blends – combining domestic budgets, philanthropy, and private capital – to sustain R&D for Lassa fever and other diseasesallafrica.comallafrica.com. As discussed in a Sept. 3 webinar, one idea is to emulate South Korea’s model where government guarantees 50% of funding for promising R&D (attracting investors to cover the rest)allafrica.com. Another proposal is truly home-grown: **earmark a small share of commodity export revenues (like coffee or cocoa) to fund health research**, tying economic productivity to scientific investmentallafrica.com. The experts stressed that developing a **“value-driven bio-industry ecosystem”** in Africa – moving from donor dependency to locally owned solutions – will boost pandemic preparedness, spur biotech innovation, and create jobsallafrica.com.

Why it matters for innovators: This story highlights **financial innovation as a form of problem-solving**. By redesigning how research is funded, African leaders are addressing a root cause of lagging health innovation – the funding “brain drain” – and empowering local scientists and entrepreneurs. For Global South innovators (especially in Africa), the push to **“customise models to our local context”**allafrica.com is a rallying cry: it underscores that solutions need not only be technological but also **institutional and financial**. If Africa can channel its own resources (even a fraction of GDP or export earnings) into homegrown R&D, it expands the toolkit for every problem-solver on the continent – from vaccine developers to social entrepreneurs – by ensuring sustainable support. The timing is urgent: climate change and population growth raise the stakes for epidemic threats, so new funding models could accelerate life-saving inventions (like region-specific diagnostics or vaccines). For educators and students, this case is a reminder that innovation isn’t just about gadgets; it’s about **redesigning systems and incentives** to enable breakthroughs. Africa’s stance here – seeking self-reliance through clever financing – could inspire other low-resource regions to leverage local assets for global health solutionsallafrica.comallafrica.com.

Rubric Score:

Criterion	Score (1–5)
Impact on Problem-Solvers	4
Novelty/Breakthrough	4
Scalability & Adaptability	5
Policy & Ecosystem Shifts	5
Relevance to TIA Curriculum	5

Criterion	Score (1–5)
Consequences Beyond Tech	5
Time Horizon (1–3 yrs immediate)	4
Total	32

Sources: Premium Times/AllAfricaallafrica.comallafrica.com

Public-Private Alliance Tackles Child Labor in Côte d’Ivoire’s Cocoa Communities

Event Date: September 2, 2025 (program expansion announced; runs 2025–2030)

Report Date: September 2, 2025 (Ferrero press release; Confectionery Production)

Summary: A **groundbreaking child protection initiative** in Côte d’Ivoire is scaling up to eliminate child labor in cocoa farming communities. Chocolate maker Ferrero, Save the Children, and the Italian development agency (AICS) have formed a €20 million partnership to expand a pilot project from 80 villages to **235 communities, reaching ~42,000 children** by 2030confectioneryproduction.com. The program attacks root causes of child labor – extreme poverty and lack of services – by funding schools, birth registries, basic healthcare, nutrition, and women-led livelihoods in cocoa-growing areas. Crucially, it embeds child labor monitoring and remediation into the **cocoa supply chain** itself, so that improvements are sustained by industry practices. Described as a **holistic, systemic approach**, the initiative links up government bodies, local civil society, and private-sector buyers to create resilient communities where children can stay in school and out of hazardous workconfectioneryproduction.com. By connecting previously siloed efforts (community development, supply chain audits, etc.), the project aims to turn short-term charity into **long-term social impact** – potentially influencing national policy on child welfare and corporate responsibility.

Why it matters for innovators: This effort showcases **social innovation beyond high tech – a blend of grassroots action and corporate accountability** to solve a complex ethical challenge. For problem-solvers, the project is a case study in scaling an unheralded innovation: an **integrated model** that treats child labor not just as a crime to punish, but as a symptom of deeper problems that can be fixed with creativity and cooperation. It also underscores the power of **cross-sector partnerships**: by pooling NGO expertise, public funding, and industry incentives, the alliance multiplies its impact in a way any one actor couldn’t achieve aloneconfectioneryproduction.com. Innovators in the Global South, especially Africa, can draw inspiration from how this program reframes a constraint (corporate supply chains often perpetuate labor issues) into a solution (supply chains become channels to deliver social programs). The initiative’s emphasis on women’s empowerment and community enterprise adds a frugal innovation lens – leveraging local knowledge and small businesses as part of the solution. Importantly, success in Côte d’Ivoire could provide a **proof of concept** to be replicated in other sectors (coffee, mining, textiles) where child labor and exploitation persist. For young innovators, it’s a lesson that **“innovation” can mean a new coalition or strategy** just as much as a new device – and that ethical, culturally informed solutions can redefine norms and protect the next generation.

Rubric Score:

Criterion	Score (1–5)
Impact on Problem-Solvers	5
Novelty/Breakthrough	4
Scalability & Adaptability	4
Policy & Ecosystem Shifts	5
Relevance to TIA Curriculum	5
Consequences Beyond Tech	5
Time Horizon (1–3 yrs immediate)	4
Total	32

Sources: Confectionery Production confectioneryproduction.com confectioneryproduction.com

Colombia Funds “Energy Communities” to Democratize Clean Power Access

Event Date: September 3, 2025 (call for proposals launched)

Report Date: September 3, 2025 (Radio Nacional de Colombia)

Summary: The Colombian government has opened its **first-ever call to finance “community energy” projects**, aiming to put clean power generation in citizens’ hands. Backed by over **11 billion pesos** (~US\$2.8 million), the program will fund four pilot projects where local communities, in partnership with scientists and energy companies, design and operate their own renewable energy systems radionacional.co. Two projects will be in the national grid zone and two in off-grid rural areas, reflecting a focus on both urban and remote populations. Each project must be technically, environmentally, *and* socially sustainable – for example, by lowering electricity costs or improving reliability in underserved regions radionacional.co. The initiative, led by Colombia’s science and energy ministries alongside state oil company Ecopetrol’s innovation arm, is framed as a step toward the **“democratization of energy”**: diversifying the country’s energy mix while making access to clean energy a right and an opportunity for development radionacional.co. Communities, academia, and industry are encouraged to form alliances and submit proposals by Nov. 14, 2025, with winning projects to be implemented in 2026.

Why it matters for innovators: Colombia’s move highlights a growing trend of **grassroots innovation in the climate and energy sector**. Rather than a top-down infrastructure approach, it empowers local problem-solvers – community leaders, local engineers, even students – to tailor renewable energy solutions to their context. This is especially impactful in the Global South, where many communities remain energy-poor: **community energy systems** (like solar micro-grids or bioenergy co-ops) can leapfrog expensive centralized grids and foster local entrepreneurship. For innovators, the program provides both funding and validation for out-of-the-box ideas (technical or social) that make green energy affordable in low-resource settings radionacional.co. It also represents **policy innovation**: by integrating science, technology and innovation (STI) policy with clean energy transition goals, Colombia is creating an

ecosystem for sustainable invention. Importantly, the language of *energy as a right* and *community as protagonist* signals that problem-solving is shifting to be more inclusive – drawing on Indigenous knowledge, local buy-in, and co-creation with end-users. Aspiring innovators in Latin America and beyond can look to this as a model of aligning national support with local ingenuity to address both climate change and energy inequality. In sum, Colombia is turning its energy transition into a lab for **socially driven innovation**, which could yield new models applicable across the Global South.

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Novelty/Breakthrough	4
Scalability & Adaptability	4
Policy & Ecosystem Shifts	4
Relevance to TIA Curriculum	4
Consequences Beyond Tech	4
Time Horizon (1–3 yrs immediate)	4
Total	28

Sources: Radio Nacionalradionacional.coradionacional.co

Uganda Launches Youth Climate Challenge to Ignite Grassroots Solutions

Event Date: September 1, 2025 (MoU signed, challenge launched in Kampala)

Report Date: September 1, 2025 (Nile Post via AllAfrica)

Summary: Uganda has become the latest country to roll out the “**Pachi Panda**” Youth Innovation Challenge, a contest empowering young people to combat climate-related challenges in their communities. Telecom giant MTN Uganda and WWF announced the program on Sept. 1, inviting youth (ages 18–35) to pitch projects addressing **food security, clean energy, or water access** – all areas under strain from climate changeallafrica.com. The challenge, first piloted in Zambia in 2022, has spread to Cameroon, Nigeria, and South Africa; Uganda is now the 5th African market to adopt itallafrica.com. Winners will receive seed funding (approximately **\$5,000 for first place** and lesser prizes for runners-up) plus incubation and mentorship to develop their ideasallafrica.com. Top Ugandan innovations will advance to a continental final in early 2026, showcasing home-grown solutions on a larger stage. The initiative is aligned with Uganda’s national Vision 2040 development framework and relevant UN Sustainable Development Goals, reinforcing a commitment to **sustainable, inclusive growth** through youth-led innovationallafrica.com.

Why it matters for innovators: This story spotlights **grassroots and youth-driven innovation** as a key piece of the global problem-solving puzzle. By channeling funding and support to young entrepreneurs, Uganda is effectively crowd-sourcing solutions for local climate adaptation –

from smarter farming methods to community water systems – and validating youth as capable innovators. For African students and makers, programs like these create a pipeline from **classroom creativity to real-world impact**, encouraging a mindset that even big problems like climate and food insecurity can be tackled with *frugal, locally adapted ideas*. The multi-country expansion of the Pachi Panda Challenge also illustrates how successful innovation models can **scale across borders** (a form of social franchising for impact)allafrica.com. Another notable aspect is the public-private partnership: a major corporation (MTN) and an NGO (WWF) combining strengths to support social entrepreneurship, which hints at a broader shift in the ecosystem. Instead of siloed CSR projects, companies are working with civil society to build platforms that empower innovators of any background – a trend that could greatly benefit the Global South’s innovation landscape. In summary, Uganda’s launch of this challenge not only addresses specific local issues but also invests in the **next generation of problem-solvers**, proving that with a bit of seed funding and mentorship, youth can deliver high-impact solutions for their communities and beyondallafrica.com.

Rubric Score:

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Novelty/Breakthrough	3
Scalability & Adaptability	5
Policy & Ecosystem Shifts	3
Relevance to TIA Curriculum	5
Consequences Beyond Tech	4
Time Horizon (1–3 yrs immediate)	5
Total	29

Sources: Nile Post/AllAfricaallafrica.comallafrica.comallafrica.com

Meta-Summary – Trajectory of Global Innovation:

This week’s developments suggest a **transitional moment in global innovation** – one where the **Global South is taking the lead in problem-solving**, often through inclusive and collaborative means. Across Africa, Latin America, and South Asia, we see innovators turning constraints into catalysts: countries are crafting **home-grown solutions under financial, infrastructural, and social constraints** rather than importing one-size-fits-all ideas. A unifying theme is the push for **self-reliance and empowerment** – whether it’s African experts designing new research funding models to reduce donor dependenceallafrica.com, or Colombia and Uganda entrusting communities and youth to drive energy and climate innovations. Technology remains vital (as Rwanda’s drone taxi shows), but equally notable is the emphasis on **collective innovation frameworks** – multi-stakeholder alliances, public-private partnerships, and community-based approaches are emerging as the “secret sauce” to tackle complex systemic issuesconfectioneryproduction.com. There’s also a pronounced ethical and social dimension:

innovators are not only asking “*Can we do it?*” but “*Who benefits?*” – prioritizing food security, child welfare, equity in healthcare, and climate justice. In sum, the trajectory points toward a more **decentralized, inclusive innovation landscape**: one where diverse regions contribute solutions tailored to their context, and where solving big problems is no longer the domain of high-tech labs alone but of **empowered communities and creative coalitions worldwide**.

Citations: allafrica.com/confectioneryproduction.com