

CRIW MAGAZINE

Theme: Transforming Ideas into Impact: Innovating for a Better Tomorrow

15th - 17th September 2026 | Kabarak University, Nakuru, Kenya



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WELCOME TO



Prof. Henry Kiplangat, PhD, MBS, OGW

Over the years, CRIW has grown into an important platform for bringing together academia, government, industry, investors, entrepreneurs, development partners, and other innovation ecosystem stakeholders to exchange ideas, build partnerships, and develop solutions to the challenges facing our communities, our nation, and the continent.

At Kabarak University, our vision is to provide holistic, quality education rooted in Biblical Christian values. We believe that the role of a university extends beyond teaching and research. A university must create knowledge that responds to society's needs, nurture innovators and entrepreneurs, and facilitate the translation of research and ideas into products, services, technologies, enterprises, and policies that improve lives.

CRIW 2026 provides an opportunity to turn this commitment into action. Organized by the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Outreach, the event is designed to catalyze innovation-led growth, strengthen research commercialization, and promote multi-sectoral collaboration at regional and national levels. It provides a structured platform where ideas can be tested, challenged, refined, connected to resources, and ultimately transformed into meaningful impact.

Through topical presentations, expert panel discussions, training sessions, technical workshops, innovation showcases, pitching competitions, policy dialogue, and startup exhibitions, CRIW 2026 will facilitate knowledge exchange, investment linkages, mentorship, partnership building, and ecosystem strengthening. Particular emphasis is being

placed on Agritech, Fintech, and HealthTech—three areas with enormous potential to transform lives, create employment, strengthen livelihoods, and accelerate Kenya's development. We also recognize the transformative potential of emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, blockchain, digital technologies, and other innovations that are reshaping economies and societies.

This agenda is closely aligned with Kenya's development priorities, including Vision 2030, digital transformation, health sector reforms, and the MSME development agenda, as well as continental aspirations under Agenda 2063 and Africa's science, technology and innovation priorities. By connecting research, innovation, entrepreneurship, policy, and investment, CRIW seeks to contribute to the transition from ideas and discoveries to solutions that are relevant, scalable, sustainable, and inclusive.

Importantly, CRIW is about collaboration. The complex challenges of our time cannot be solved by universities, government, industry, entrepreneurs, or development partners working in isolation. We must bring together diverse disciplines, experiences, technologies, networks, and resources. Such collaboration is essential for creating solutions that can move beyond the laboratory or classroom and achieve real-world adoption and impact.

I therefore wish to express my sincere appreciation to our partners and sponsors, including Access Bank, DSL, Kenya Industrial Property Institute (KIPI), National Research Fund (NRF), Boresha SACCO, Kabarak University SACCO, Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA), NCBA

Bank, Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA), AMREF, ICEA LION and all other organizations that have supported this important initiative. Your commitment demonstrates a shared belief that innovation, research, entrepreneurship, and collaboration are powerful drivers of inclusive growth and sustainable development.

I also commend our speakers, mentors, judges, exhibitors, researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, students, staff, and all participants whose contributions make CRIW 2026 possible. Your ideas, expertise, experiences, and willingness to collaborate are central to the success of this platform.

To all participants, I encourage you to engage boldly, collaborate widely, share generously, and seek opportunities beyond this event. Let CRIW 2026 be more than a gathering for discussion. Let it be a catalyst for partnerships, investment, intellectual property development,

commercialization, enterprise creation, and solutions that address real societal needs.

As we gather under the theme *Transforming Ideas into Impact*, let us remember that innovation is not simply about having new ideas. It is about transforming knowledge and ideas into solutions that make a measurable difference in people's lives. The future we desire will not happen by chance. It must be imagined, innovated, invested in, and built together.

Once again, I warmly welcome you to Kabarak University and Central Rift Innovation Week 2026. May this edition inspire new ideas, forge lasting partnerships, unlock investment opportunities, and move promising innovations closer to commercialization and societal impact.

Prof. Henry Kiplangat, PhD, MBS, OGW
VICE CHANCELLOR

Building Kabarak University's innovation and IP ecosystem: *From Research and Ideas to Solutions, Enterprises and Impact*



Prof. John N. Ochola
*Deputy Vice Chancellor -
Academic and Research*

Universities today are expected not only to generate knowledge, but also to translate that knowledge into solutions that address societal and economic challenges. At Kabarak University, this transformation is being advanced through a growing ecosystem of research, innovation, entrepreneurship, intellectual property (IP), incubation and partnerships.

The Kabarak University Innovation Masterplan 2026–2028 provides a strategic pathway for strengthening this ecosystem. Its focus is to create an environment in which promising ideas can move beyond research outputs and competitions towards prototyping, validation, IP protection, incubation, investment, market access and ultimately societal impact.

This direction is complemented by the Institutional IP Diagnostic and Positioning Assessment undertaken by the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KeNIA) in May 2026. The assessment provides Kabarak with an important baseline for strengthening its IP management and commercialization systems. Kabarak achieved a weighted composite score of 36.5%, placing the University in the Initial maturity band, while its Strategic Governance and IP Leadership construct reached the Developing level at 57.5%.

Importantly, the diagnostic identified strong executive commitment as a major institutional asset, while also highlighting areas requiring

deliberate action. These include strengthening the institutional IP policy, introducing pre-publication IP screening and invention disclosure procedures, properly constituting the technology transfer function, standardizing IP clauses in research and collaboration agreements, and establishing a central IP register. Kabarak already has a strong foundation on which to build. Through the Innovation and Business Incubation Centre, students and researchers are encouraged to form teams, participate in innovation challenges and hackathons, develop prototypes, protect their IP, seek mentorship and consider the market readiness of their ideas.

The University's innovation journey is also demonstrated through participation in competitions, exhibitions and partnerships. Kabarak innovators have participated in national and international platforms, including the China

International College Students' Innovation Competition, with innovations such as LifeTrack, RespiraMate, Mkulima Hub and ResQNode earning recognition at the regional level. The Central Rift Innovation Week (CRIW) further provides a platform for innovation showcases, entrepreneurship exhibitions, pitching, mentorship, partnerships and market linkages. Going forward, our ambition is clear: to move from innovation for display to innovation for impact. The Masterplan and KeNIA diagnostic provide both the roadmap and the baseline for this journey.

Prof. John Ochola

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR, ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH, KABARAK UNIVERSITY

From Ideas to Impact: *Building an Innovation Ecosystem that Delivers*



Dr Phillip O. Nyawere

*Director, Research, Innovation & Outreach
Kabarak University*

Welcome to the Central Rift Innovation Week (CRIW) 2026, hosted by Kabarak University under the theme *Transforming Ideas into Impact: Innovating for a Better Tomorrow*. This edition marks another important milestone in a journey that has steadily grown from an innovation-focused university event into a platform for connecting ideas, research, entrepreneurship, industry and investment. Over the years, CRIW has evolved into a space where innovators, researchers, students, entrepreneurs, industry leaders, policymakers, investors and development partners come together to exchange knowledge, showcase solutions and explore opportunities for collaboration. This evolution reflects a changing innovation landscape—one in which universities are increasingly expected not

only to generate knowledge, but also to translate that knowledge into solutions that address real societal and economic challenges.

At the heart of this transformation is research commercialization. Research creates value when its findings move beyond academic publications and laboratories to become technologies, products, services, enterprises and policies that improve lives. CRIW therefore provides an important bridge between discovery and application. We must ask ourselves not only, “*What have we discovered?*” but also, “*What problem does it solve, who needs it, and how can it reach them?*” We should carry out research and innovation with the user or market in mind or by understanding whom we are innovating for.

A critical component of this journey is intellectual property (IP). Our ideas, inventions, designs, technologies and creative works represent valuable assets that require protection and strategic management. Strong IP systems can give innovators the confidence to disclose their inventions, attract partners and investment, negotiate licensing opportunities and ultimately create sustainable enterprises. Innovation must therefore be accompanied by a deliberate culture of IP awareness, protection and commercialization.

However, no institution can build a vibrant innovation ecosystem alone. Partnerships are indispensable. Universities need industry to understand market needs; innovators need investors to scale promising solutions; government and policymakers provide enabling frameworks; and development partners can provide expertise, networks and catalytic resources. CRIW is therefore not simply a showcase—it is a platform for building relationships that can continue long after the event concludes.

Investment is equally important. Many promising innovations fail to reach the market not because the ideas are weak, but because innovators lack the resources, mentorship, business models and market connections required to move from prototype to scale. We must create pathways

through which promising ideas can become investment-ready ventures capable of attracting funding and generating sustainable economic and social value.

I therefore call upon our innovators, researchers and students to be bold. Do not allow your ideas to remain confined to notebooks, laboratories or conference presentations. Identify the problem, develop the solution, protect the intellectual property, test it with users, build the business case and seek the partnerships and investment necessary to take it to scale. To our industry partners, investors, government agencies, development partners and other stakeholders, I invite you to look beyond the exhibition stands and presentations. Look for opportunities to invest, mentor, collaborate, adopt and scale. Somewhere within CRIW is an idea capable of becoming the solution to a challenge we face today.

As we celebrate innovation during CRIW 2026, let us embrace a shared responsibility: to move from ideas to impact, from research to solutions, and from innovation to sustainable transformation. Let us connect, collaborate, invest and transform ideas into impact.

Dr Phillip O. Nyawere

Director, Research, Innovation & Outreach



The Editor's CORNER

Dr. M. N. Walekhwa, PhD, MBA,
PGD

Welcome to the inaugural edition of *The Innovation Pulse*, the official magazine of Central Rift Innovation Week.

This publication marks a new chapter in a journey that began five editions ago with a simple but powerful conviction: great ideas should not remain ideas. They must find the people, partnerships, resources and courage needed to become solutions.

Central Rift Innovation Week has grown into a meeting point for innovators, researchers,

entrepreneurs, industry leaders, policymakers, students and communities. It is a space where curiosity meets opportunity, where problems become possibilities, and where conversations can spark action.

As the first edition of this magazine, *The Innovation Pulse* captures more than the events of a week. It documents a growing ecosystem and the people shaping its future. Through the stories, conversations, innovations and perspectives featured in these pages, we hope to celebrate progress while provoking deeper questions about what our region can create, solve and lead.



Dr. Michael N. Walekhwa
Editor-in-Chief

As Editor, I invite you to read beyond the headlines, discover the people behind the ideas, and consider your own place in this innovation journey.

The future will not simply happen to us. Together, we can design it.

MESSAGE FROM CHAIR; INNOVATION & BUSINESS INCUBATION COMMITTEE

Nurturing Ideas, transforming Communities: the power of intentional innovation



Dr. Joyce Mudengani Mochere
*Chair - Innovation & Business
Incubation Committee*

Today's rapidly evolving socio-economic landscape demands more than the passive

acquisition of knowledge. It demands the courageous translation of insight into impact. At Kabarak University, innovation is neither an isolated academic exercise nor the exclusive domain of laboratories. It is a shared mindset, a vibrant culture, and our collective responsibility to respond meaningfully to the urgent challenges facing our society.

The Innovation and Business Incubation Committee stands as the bridge between curiosity and commercial or social viability. Our primary mandate is to build an enabling ecosystem where novel concepts are

nurtured, de-risked, and transformed into scalable enterprises. True innovation thrives at the intersections. When the boundless imagination of the creative arts converges with technological engineering, business acumen, and indigenous African knowledge, we unlock authentic, contextual solutions. Whether addressing food security, creative economies, environmental resilience, or digital transformation, the incubator exists to ensure that groundbreaking student and faculty research does not end on a library shelf, but lives and breathes in the marketplace.

Incubation is intentionally designed as a transformative journey. Through structured mentorship, intellectual property guidance, prototyping support, and industry linkages, we empower our innovators to navigate the demanding pathway from ideological discovery to enterprise development. More critically, our incubation space fosters ethical resilience. We challenge our innovators to embrace experimentation, view constructive failure as an essential diagnostic tool, and create solutions grounded in moral integrity and long-term sustainability.

To our visionary students and faculty: your ideas possess transformative power, but an idea without execution remains mere potential. The doors of our incubation hub are open. Bring your prototypes, your creative scripts, your algorithmic

models, and your community-centered concepts. To our corporate, government, and development partners: we invite you to invest in this pipeline of agile, mission-driven problem solvers.

As you navigate the inspiring initiatives documented across the pages of this edition, let them serve as empirical proof of what happens when purpose meets opportunity. Let us continue to question conventional boundaries, incubate boldly, and build sustainable enterprises that leave a lasting imprint across the continent and beyond.

Dr. Joyce Mudengani Mochere

Chairperson, Innovation and Business Incubation Committee

Building an Innovation Culture



Dr. Andrew Kipkebut
Coordinator – Innovation and Business Incubation

The Central Rift Innovation Week (CRIW) 2026 provides a vibrant platform for celebrating innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship, and technological advancement across the Central Rift Valley region and beyond. It brings together innovators, researchers, students, entrepreneurs, industry, government, investors, and development partners to showcase innovative solutions, exchange knowledge, build networks, and forge strategic partnerships.

At Kabarak University, we continue to witness significant growth in innovation and entrepreneurship, with ideas and research increasingly being transformed into practical

solutions with real-world potential. Through the Innovation and Business Incubation Office, students, staff, and researchers have developed promising innovations and successfully participated in local and international innovation challenges, exhibitions, and competitions, gaining recognition, mentorship, incubation, capacity-building, and valuable networking opportunities.

We have also recorded increased uptake of intellectual property protection, demonstrated by the growing number of IP applications and registrations, alongside notable progress in prototype development, market validation, industry engagement, and commercialization. These achievements and success stories have increased the visibility of Kabarak University innovations and strengthened our partnerships with industry, government agencies, investors, development partners, and the wider innovation ecosystem.

Our focus extends beyond generating and showcasing ideas to supporting the entire innovation journey from idea to impact. This includes mentorship, prototype development, intellectual property protection, market validation, commercialization, funding and investment linkages, technology transfer, and scaling of promising innovations.

CRIW 2026 therefore provides an important opportunity to celebrate our achievements and success stories, showcase emerging innovations, strengthen partnerships, and create new opportunities for innovators across the Central Rift Valley region and beyond.

As we celebrate CRIW 2026, we encourage innovators to remain curious, collaborate across disciplines, identify problems worth solving, and transform their knowledge, research, and creativity into solutions that make a meaningful difference.

Together, we can strengthen Kabarak University as a vibrant hub for innovation and entrepreneurship, transforming ideas into enterprises, technologies, and impactful solutions for Kenya, Africa, and the world.

Dr. Andrew Kipkebut

Coordinator – Innovation and Business Incubation

KABARAK UNIVERSITY INNOVATION CLUB (KABUIC)

Innovation isn't just about creating something new but rather it is about seeing a problem differently then having the courage to create a solution. Being the Chairperson of the Innovation Club I have come to appreciate that some of the most powerful ideas begin with simple observations that seek to make a great impact. They may emerge from something that does not work from a challenge people face every day or from a question that has never been properly answered.

The Central Rift Innovation Week will serve as an important platform because it reminds us that innovation belongs to everyone. It brings together students, young entrepreneurs, researchers, institutions and communities in a space where ideas can be shared knowledge can be exchanged and creativity can be transformed into meaningful solutions. What's more it gives young innovators an opportunity to see that their ideas have value beyond the classroom.

Our Innovation Club exists to nurture this spirit. We seek to create an environment where students are not afraid to experiment fail learn then try again. We believe that a student's idea should not remain a thought written in a notebook. Provided that the right mentorship resources collaboration and determination are available that idea can become a product a business a technology or a solution capable of changing lives.

As young innovators we also have a responsibility to look closely at the challenges surrounding us. From agriculture and climate change to education healthcare technology and financial inclusion our communities present countless opportunities

to make a difference. While these challenges may appear overwhelming, they also represent opportunities for young minds to create solutions that are relevant sustainable and transformative.



Mr. Dennis Wanjuje
KABUIC Chairman

My vision is to see our club become a bridge between ideas and impact. A place where innovation is not simply celebrated but actively developed tested refined and implemented. In the same vein I want every student to understand that innovation does not require perfection at the beginning. It requires the willingness to start.

I invite every student with an idea to believe in its possibility. Even if you do not have everything figured out today start with the problem. Ask questions. Build. Test. Learn. Then keep going.

The future will not simply be inherited by us. It will be shaped by what we choose to create today. Still the greatest innovation may not be the idea that changes the world overnight. It may be the simple idea that begins with one student who dares to ask: "What if we could do this better?"

Mr. Dennis Wanjuje

Chairman – Kabarak University Innovation Club



CRIW 2026 FOCUS

From Ideas to Impact:

Building a Resilient Regional Innovation Ecosystem

Central Rift Innovation Week 2026 is anchored on a simple but consequential question: *How do we move promising ideas from conception to solutions that improve lives, strengthen economies and transform communities?*

Innovation is no longer a peripheral conversation. It is increasingly central to how societies respond to complex challenges in health, agriculture, education, climate change, technology, manufacturing and enterprise. Yet ideas alone do not create impact. They require an enabling ecosystem where research connects with industry, innovators access appropriate financing, institutions support experimentation, policymakers create space for new solutions, and communities participate in shaping what works for them.

The 2026 edition therefore places the *innovation ecosystem* at the heart of the conversation. It recognizes that sustainable innovation is a collective enterprise involving universities, research institutions, government, private sector, investors, entrepreneurs, civil society and communities. Each has a role in creating the conditions under which ideas can mature, scale and deliver measurable value.

For the Central Rift, this presents both an opportunity and a responsibility. The region possesses significant intellectual, entrepreneurial, agricultural, industrial and institutional assets. Connecting these assets more deliberately can unlock new pathways for economic growth, employment, social development and regional competitiveness.

CRIW 2026 seeks to create those connections. Through dialogue, exhibitions, demonstrations, partnerships and practical engagement, the week provides a platform for innovators to be seen, researchers to connect with users, enterprises to discover opportunities and institutions to forge meaningful collaborations.

Ultimately, the ambition is bigger than celebrating innovation. It is about *building the systems that allow innovation to thrive and translating ingenuity into lasting impact.*

CRIW 2026 is a call to move from ideas to action, from action to solutions, and from solutions to impact.

Dr. M. N. Walekhwa, PhD, MBA, PGD
Editor, Innovation Pulse

Exploring Kenya's Cyber Decadence



Akhonya Alukwe Chrispus

Studies reveals that cyber decadence has been taking an increasing toll rise in our society in recent years' majority causing both social and economic decadence and rot in both human and computer systems. Major vivid examples of cybercrime in Kenya are sim swaps, Phishing, vishing, cybersquatting, software piracy and network intrusions, identity and credit card theft and, and many other evolving trends. There are a lot of vulnerabilities in our workplace and society today that are causing massive forms of weakness within, that attackers do exploits leading to an amplification of rot in society since systems security is

as strong as its weakest points. Organizations and societies should take preemptive measures against malicious attacks on technology and the human mind by attacking the systems themselves while staying within legal limits, which is the disciplined role of any data forensics investigator or penetration tester (Ghonge *et al.*, 2022).

Gambling Statistics

Another key finding is that several studies carried out in the USA and Sub-Saharan Africa reveals that 85% of adults have gambled at least once in their lives. In a 2017 survey conducted in sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya emerged as having the highest number of young people between the ages of seventeen and thirty-five (17-35) that gamble often (Wangari, 2017). Results in Africa alone conducted in 2019 show that Kenya is ranked number 3 in gambling after Nigeria and South Africa (Kibuacha, 2022). Chancellor and writer of World Bible College Columbus Ohio, Rod Parsley showed that ninety percent of lottery tickets and gambling are bought by those with low socio-economic background. General Council of the Assemblies of God highlight that gambling, both illegal and legal, is a phenomenon that is getting widespread and obtaining unparalleled acceptance, and Christians are called upon to examine this activity to identify the moral and ethical implication (Iglesias-Rodríguez, 2023).

A simple mathematical syntax/formula for one to win lottery/gambling in a country of 50 million population, where one has to buy tickets or try several chances as; $= 50 \text{ tickets weekly} \times 45,000 \text{ years where the } 50^{\text{th}} \text{ ticket after } 45,000 \text{ years will be the winner. That is if the entire population in a country consists of } 45,000 \text{ adults who are eligible to gamble.}$

Impacts of Technology on Gambling (Key Reasons for the Rise of the Vice)

Office automation coupled with the proliferation of the Internet of Things (IoT) and the drastic growth of cloud services has revolutionized the way people work and process events. As the

computing world becomes more sophisticated every day the number of possible entry points to the creation of E-Business and social sites across the globe has multiplied leading to more devices added to the market thus increasing the vulnerability of possible security breaches and social effects (Ghonge *et al.*, 2022). Nevertheless, the positive outcome still outweighs the negative implication but leaves a wider gap that needs to be addressed. Well-argued out, one must use technology with proper regard to the side effects like the ones explained below.

Increased availability of tips shared via increased chat groups like WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram is making it easier to access information about betting as betting companies oversell their services on the electronic markets (Vegni *et al.*, 2019). Integration of mobile wallets in most countries i.e. MPESA, Airtel Money in Kenya for online payments and betting platforms has increased the rate of mobile-based gaming and bookmarking. Digital age proliferation on cloud computing and virtualization seeking to virtualize all services and resources in making the world a global village making gambling sites locally available. Increased availability of licensed electronic cybercafes and betting shops that provide gambling platforms with support from legislative organs of government with a view to welcome sponsorship for sporting activities has fueled the vice, which never attains the purported objectives. There is a heightened increase of greed in online advertisements on the side of lenders and online easy loans with an enticement to the borrowers with lies to finance a lifestyle that the majority cannot afford through the deception of credits (Vegni *et al.*, 2019). This and many others form the basis of my argument that malware which should be affecting computer systems alone has traversed to filtrate human society.

Mr. Akhonya Alukwe Chrispus is Certified Ethical Hacker (CEH) and Lecturer in Department of Computer Science & IT, School of Science, Engineering & Technology, Kabarak University

Adoption of Low-Carbon Lighting among Small-Scale Traders: *An Innovation Pathway for Sustainable Enterprise*



Dr. Danice Awinda

Lecturer - Environmental Science

Small-scale traders constitute a significant component of Kenya's informal and micro-enterprise economy, yet many operate under energy constraints characterized by unreliable electricity supply, high energy costs and limited access to modern energy technologies. In this context, the adoption of low-carbon lighting technologies, particularly solar-powered lighting systems and light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs, represents an important technological innovation pathway for improving enterprise sustainability, energy efficiency and climate resilience.

Recent empirical evidence from small-scale traders in selected Kenyan markets provides an indication of the extent of this technological transition. Among 381 surveyed traders, 88.0% reported solar lamps or solar lighting systems as their principal lighting source, compared with 8.6% using grid electricity. Kerosene lamps, candles and generators accounted for less than 2% collectively. The dominance of solar lighting is particularly significant because it demonstrates the diffusion of a decentralised energy innovation within the small-enterprise sector. Similarly, approximately 65% of respondents reported using LED bulbs, illustrating substantial penetration of energy-efficient lighting technology.

From an innovation systems perspective, the observed adoption represents more than replacement of one lighting device with another. It reflects a process of technological substitution, learning and adaptation in which users select technologies based on perceived economic value, reliability, accessibility and compatibility with their operating environments. Solar lighting,

for example, converts locally available solar radiation into electricity through photovoltaic cells and stores the energy for subsequent use. When coupled with LEDs, which have high luminous efficacy and relatively low power requirements, the resulting system can provide an efficient decentralised lighting solution for enterprises operating beyond the reach or reliability limits of conventional electricity infrastructure.

The environmental implications are equally important. The displacement of kerosene and generator-based lighting reduces direct combustion-related emissions, while the efficiency of LED technology reduces electricity demand for a given level of illumination. The climate benefit of such technologies is therefore realized through two interconnected mechanisms: energy-source substitution and energy-efficiency improvement. This positions low-carbon lighting as a form of distributed climate innovation, where aggregate environmental benefits emerge from decentralized decisions by individual enterprises.

However, technology adoption should not be equated with technology sustainability. Initial acquisition costs, product quality, battery durability, limited technical knowledge, lack of after-sales services and the prevalence of substandard products can constrain long-term utilisation. These challenges highlight the importance of the innovation ecosystem surrounding low-carbon technologies. Access to affordable financing, technical training, product certification, consumer information and maintenance services is essential for transforming initial adoption into sustained technological use.

The findings also have implications for Kenya's broader energy-transition agenda. Small-scale enterprises can function as innovation test beds and diffusion channels for decentralised renewable-energy technologies. Policies that support clean-energy financing, strengthen standards for solar and LED products, promote local technical capacity and integrate micro-enterprises into climate-finance mechanisms

could accelerate this transition. Enterprise associations and county governments can further facilitate technology diffusion through demonstration projects, bulk procurement schemes and targeted awareness programmes.

The widespread uptake of solar and LED lighting among small-scale traders illustrates how incremental technological innovations can generate simultaneous economic, social and

environmental benefits. Strengthening these innovations through supportive policy, finance, standards and research can transform low-carbon lighting from a simple energy-access intervention into a strategic instrument for building climate-resilient and sustainable enterprises.

The author is Lecturer of Environmental Science, in the Department of Physical and Biological Sciences, School of Science Engineering and Technology, Kabarak University

ENTREPRENEURSHIP, GOVERNANCE & CREATIVE ECONOMY

FROM HUSTLE TO HIGH VALUE: *Reimagining Entrepreneurship, Governance and the Creative Economy in the Age of AI*



By Dr. Emmy Kisang

What if Kenya's next economic revolution is not going to be built only in factories, farms and boardrooms but also in smartphones, studios, laptops, podcasts, fashion houses, gaming platforms, digital marketplaces and the minds of young creators?

The answer may already be unfolding before us.

Entrepreneurship is no longer simply about starting a business; it is increasingly about creating value in an economy where ideas, data, creativity and technology have become productive assets. The boundaries between entrepreneurship and the creative economy are disappearing. A university student can simultaneously be a content creator, graphic designer, consultant, online tutor, software developer and global freelancer. The smartphone has become not merely a communication device, but a micro-enterprise in the pocket.

Kenya's creative economy is therefore moving from the margins of economic policy to the centre of economic transformation. In 2026, the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Digital Economy described the creative economy as one of Kenya's fastest-growing sectors, driven by connectivity, innovation and demand for digital content. The Government has also highlighted the need to transform "talent into sustainable businesses and jobs." (ICT Authority)

But there is a catch: creativity without governance can become exploitation, while governance without creativity can become bureaucracy.

The real challenge is therefore to build an entrepreneurial ecosystem where innovation can flourish while entrepreneurs, creators and

consumers are protected. This requires a new generation of governance one that understands digital platforms, intellectual property, artificial intelligence, data protection, taxation, cybersecurity, competition and the changing nature of work. Artificial Intelligence makes this conversation even more urgent. AI is rapidly changing how businesses market, communicate, design, analyse information and serve customers. Kenya's emerging AI governance agenda seeks to balance innovation with responsible development, public trust, human capital development and protection of economic interests. (ICT Authority)

The question is no longer “Will AI replace entrepreneurs?” The more important question is: “Which entrepreneurs will learn to work with AI, and which will be left behind?” At the same time, access to finance remains a decisive frontier. In March 2026, Kenya announced a financing mechanism aimed at unlocking capital for indigenous digital platforms and startups, signalling a growing recognition that digital entrepreneurship requires more than internet connectivity—it requires patient capital, scalable infrastructure and supportive institutions. (ICT Authority). For universities, this presents a powerful opportunity.

The University of the Future should not only produce job seekers; it should produce problem solvers, opportunity creators and intellectual-property owners. Entrepreneurship education must move beyond writing business plans for marks and begin teaching students how to identify real problems, build prototypes, use AI responsibly, protect intellectual property, understand markets, mobilize finance and scale ideas beyond Kenya.

Kabarak University, therefore, has an opportunity to position itself at the intersection of knowledge, enterprise, technology and creativity. Our students should be challenged to ask: What problem can I solve? What value can I create? What Kenyan idea can become an African brand?

The creative economy also demands that we rethink what we call “work.” A photographer with a global clientele, a musician monetizing digital platforms, a software developer serving international clients from Nakuru, or a student running an online fashion brand is participating in the economy just as surely as someone operating a traditional shop.

The future belongs to economies that can convert creativity into intellectual property, intellectual property into enterprises, enterprises into employment, and employment into inclusive prosperity. Ultimately, entrepreneurship, governance and the creative economy are not three separate conversations. They are three sides of the same economic transformation.

Good governance creates trust. Entrepreneurship creates value. Creativity creates differentiation. Technology creates scale. Kenya's greatest resource may therefore not be what lies beneath the soil, but what lies between the ears of its people. The challenge for the next decade is simple but profound: Can we move from a culture of “hustling to survive” to a culture of “creating to thrive”?

That is where the real creative economy begins.

Dr. Emmy Kisang

Innovation Committee Member

PROGRAM

TIME	SESSION / ACTIVITY	LEAD PARTNERS
DAY 1 Tuesday, 15th September 2026 Financing Innovation, Intellectual Property and Enterprise Readiness		
08:00 – 08:30 AM	Arrival & Registration	CRIW Officials
8:30 – 8:40 AM	Devotional Thought and Opening prayer	Rev. Justus Mutuku, <i>Ag. University Provost</i>
08:40 – 08:50 AM	Remarks, Director - RIO	Dr. Phillip Nyawere
08:50 – 09:05 AM	Presentation: <i>Building a regional Innovation Ecosystem for impact</i>	Dr. Michael Walekhwa
09:05 – 09:35 AM	Financing Enterprise through Cooperative Models <i>Member savings mobilization, back-office digitization and credit access for youth and MSMEs</i>	Boresha DT SACCO
09:35 – 10:05 AM	Institutional Cooperative Financing for Staff and Student Enterprise <i>Payroll-based credit, seed savings schemes and enterprise on-lending</i>	Kabarak University SACCO
10:05 – 10:20 AM	Presentation: From Research to Commercialization – Creating Impact through Innovation	Dr. Phillip Nyawere
10:20 – 10:45 AM	Health Break and Innovation Exhibition	Catering Department
10:45 – 11:30 AM	Training: Intellectual Property, Technology Transfer and Commercialization <i>Patents, utility models, trademarks, industrial designs and freedom-to-operate for innovators</i>	Mr. Samuel Ziro Lewa KIPI
11:30 AM – 12:15 PM	Competitive Research Grants and the Path to Commercialization <i>Funding windows, proposal design, national research priorities and grant compliance</i>	National Research Fund
12:15 – 1:00 PM	Workshop: Enterprise Readiness and Hands-on Entrepreneurship Skills	ICT Authority
1:00 – 2:00 PM	Lunch Break & Innovation Exhibition	Catering Department
2:00 – 2:45 PM	Youth Forum: <i>Building Inclusive Models for Creative and Tech Startups</i> 1. Boresha DT SACCO 2. Kabarak University SACCO 3. National Research Fund	<i>Moderator:</i> Ms. Mercy Gachoka
2:45 – 3:30 PM	Interactive Session: <i>Funding Innovation, Access to Capital, Trade Finance and Partnership Working capital, asset finance, cross-border trade instruments and bankability</i>	Access Bank

TIME	SESSION / ACTIVITY	LEAD PARTNERS
DAY 1 Tuesday, 15th September 2026 Financing Innovation, Intellectual Property and Enterprise Readiness		
3:30 – 4:00 PM	Afya na Hadithi: The power of story in Health and Innovation	Ms. Sharon Ngugi
4:00 – 4:30 PM	De-risking Innovation: Insurance, Asset Management and Investment Readiness <i>Risk transfer, Insurtech, pension and structured investment for enterprise</i>	ICEA LION
4:30 – 4:45 PM	MSME Showcase and Market Access Clinic: <i>Participating MSMEs to be confirmed</i>	CRIW 2026 Secretariat
4:45 – 4:50 PM	Day One closing and preview of Day 2	Director - RIO
4:45 – 5:00 PM	Health Break & Networking	All Participants

TIME	SESSION / ACTIVITY	LEAD PARTNERS
DAY 2 Wednesday, 16th September 2026 Official Opening Ceremony		
08:00 – 08:30 AM	Arrival & Registration	CRIW 2026 Officials
08:30 – 09:10 AM	Keynote and Guest speakers pay courtesy call to the Vice Chancellor	
09:10 – 09:15 AM	Kenya National Anthem, East African Community Anthem, Kabarak University Anthem	School of Music & Media
09:15 – 09:25 AM	Devotional Thought and Opening prayer	Rev. Justus Mutuku, <i>Ag. University Provost</i>
09:25 – 09:30 AM	Remarks, Director, Research, Innovation and Outreach	Dr. Phillip Nyawere
09:30 – 09:35 AM	Remarks, DVC (Academic and Research)	Prof. John N. Ochola
09:35 – 09:50 AM	Welcome Remarks and official opening by the Vice-Chancellor	Prof. Henry K. Kiplangat, PhD, MBS, OGW
09:55 – 10:20 AM	Keynote Speaker <i>Intellectual Property as an Engine of Enterprise and Job Creation</i>	Mr. Allan Koskey <i>Chairman of Board, Kenya Industrial Property Institute</i>
10:20 – 10:40 AM	Guest Speaker <i>Financing Africa's Innovators: Access to Capital, Trade Finance and Pan-African Scale</i>	Mr. Ralph Chinedu Opara <i>Country Managing Director, Access Bank (Kenya) PLC</i>
10:40 – 11:00 AM	Guest Speaker	Mr. John Onyango <i>CEO, KIPI</i>
11:00 – 11:20 AM	Panel Discussions/Q&A Panelist: Building a Stronger Regional Innovation Ecosystem 1. Prof. Henry K. Kiplangat, PhD, MBS, OGW VC Kabarak University	Ms. Mercy Gachoka

TIME	SESSION / ACTIVITY	LEAD PARTNERS
DAY 2 Wednesday, 16th September 2026 Official Opening Ceremony		
11:00 – 11:20 AM	- Prof. Robert Gateru, VC Riara University - Mr. Allan Koskey, Board Chairman – KIPI - Mr. Ralph Chinedu Opara, Country MD, Access Bank (Kenya) PLC - Dr. Dickson Andala – CEO National Research Fund - DSL Representative - AMREF - Maureen Awuor	Ms. Mercy Gachoka
11:20 – 11:25 AM	Launch of Kabarak University Innovation Club [KABUIC] and Innovation Pulse Magazine	Prof. Henry K. Kiplangat, PhD, MBS, OGW
11:25 – 11:30 AM	Appreciation	Prof. Henry K. Kiplangat, PhD, MBS, OGW
11:30 – 11:35 AM	Photo Session & Exhibition Tour	University Photographer & MC
11:35 – 11:45 AM	Tea Break	Catering Department
<i>11:45 AM – 1:00 PM — Chapel</i>		
1:00 – 2:00 PM Lunch Break & Exhibition Tour		
Afternoon Session		
2:00 – 2:30 PM	AGRITECH Panel: Can Technology Transform Food Security & Rural Livelihood? <i>Precision agriculture, agri-Fintech and cooperative aggregation and value addition</i>	Boresha DT Sacco and Agri-innovators Moderator: Agritech lead
2:30 – 3:00 PM	HealthTech Panel: Reimagining Primary Health care with AI	Ms. Yvonne Okwara (AMREF)
3:00– 3:30 PM	FINTECH PANEL: Building Inclusive Digital Economies for MSMEs, Youth & Communities <i>Digital lending, mobile money, asset finance and embedded insurance</i> - NCBA - ICTA - Boresha DT Sacco - ICEA LION Group - KeNHA	Moderator: Fintech Lead
3:30 – 4:15 PM	INFRASTRUCTURE AND MOBILITY Panel: Innovation in Roads, Intelligent Transport Systems and Road Safety <i>Smart corridors, road asset management technology, materials innovation and safety analytics</i>	KeNHA
4:15 – 4:45 PM	Innovation Ecosystem Networking <i>Academia, industry, government and investor linkages</i>	Directors and Sponsors
4:45 – 5:00 PM	Tea Break and Closing Prayer	MC/Catering Department

TIME	SESSION / ACTIVITY	LEAD PARTNERS
DAY 3 Thursday, 17th September 2026 <i>Innovator Pitching, Investment Readiness and Awards</i>		
08:00 – 08:30 AM	Arrival & Registration	CRIW Officials
8:30 – 8:45 AM	Devotional thought and Opening prayer	Rev. Justus Mutuku, <i>Ag. University Provost</i>
08:45 – 09:00 AM	Recap of Day 2	Dr. Emmy Kisang
09:00 – 09:10 AM	Remarks, Director – Research, Innovation and Outreach	Dr. Phillip Nyawere
09:10 – 9:25 AM	Pitching Briefing: Format, Rules and Evaluation Criteria <i>Each innovator: 5-minute pitch and 3-minute question-and-answer, maximum 10 slides</i>	Lead Judge and Coordinator, Innovators
09:25 – 10:15 AM	AGRITECH Pitching Competition <i>Structured pitches scored against the standard rubric</i>	Panel of Judges
10:15 – 10:35 AM	Tea Break	Catering Department
10:35 – 11:35 AM	HEALTHTECH Pitching Competition <i>Structured pitches scored against the standard rubric</i>	Panel of Judges
11:35 AM – 12:35 PM	FINTECH Pitching Competition <i>Structured pitches scored against the standard rubric</i>	Panel of Judges
12:35 – 1:00 PM	MSME Innovation Showcase <i>Participating MSMEs to be confirmed</i>	CRIW 2026 Secretariat
1:00 – 2:00 Lunch Break & Exhibition Tour		
Afternoon Session		
2:00 – 2:45 PM	Investor Masterclass: What makes an innovation investment ready? <i>Unit economics, financial modelling, risk transfer, due diligence and deal structuring</i>	Access Bank, ICEA LION and National Research Fund
2:45 – 3:30 PM	Panel: From Prototype to Product – Scaling Innovations to Market <i>Manufacturing, standards, distribution and IP-backed scale-up</i>	Commercialization Expert
3:30 – 3:45 PM	Showcase of top innovation	MC
3:45 – 4:05 PM	Innovation Awards and Recognition of Outstanding Innovators	Awards Committee
4:05 – 4:15 PM	Beyond CRIW 2026	Director – Research, Innovation and Outreach
4:15 – 4:20 PM	Vote of thanks, Coordinator Innovations	Dr. Andrew Kipkebut
4:20 – 4:40 PM	Closing Prayers and Tea Break	MC/Catering Department

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Mr. Ralph Chinedu Opara

Country Managing Director, Access Bank (Kenya) PLC



Mr. Ralph Chinedu Opara is the Country Managing Director of Access Bank (Kenya) PLC, appointed with the approval of the Central Bank of Kenya in September 2025. He joined the Kenyan subsidiary from the Access Bank Group office, where he served as Group Head of the Commercial Banking Division and grew it into the Group's largest commercial business, with a balance sheet exceeding USD 1.2 billion and risk assets above USD 1.3 billion.

He brings more than two decades of banking experience, including over ten years within the Access Bank Group, and is a Senior Member of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria. He holds advanced degrees in banking and international development, complemented by executive education from Harvard, Wharton, IMD and Cranfield. His track record covers large-scale portfolio management, cross-border growth and complex transformation initiatives across Africa, including the Access and Diamond Bank integration and the expansion of specialized desks with global development finance institutions.

At Access Bank Kenya, Mr. Opara is guiding the integration of the bank with the National Bank of Kenya through the Integration Management Office, with the objective of building a regionally connected institution that combines local trust with pan-African scale, supports regional trade and accelerates inclusive economic growth. His keynote will address the financing of Africa's innovators, access to capital, trade finance and the practical pathways through which banks and innovation ecosystems can jointly move ideas from concept to market.

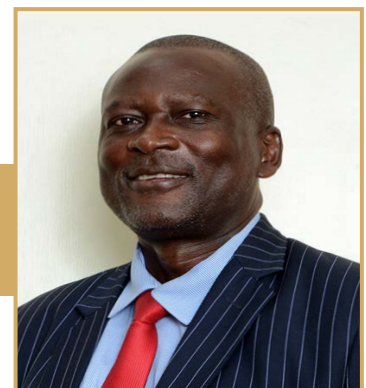
Mr. Ralph Chinedu Opara,

Country Managing Director, Access Bank (Kenya) PLC.

GUEST SPEAKER

Mr. John Onyango

CEO, Kenya Industrial Property Institute



Mr. John Onyango is the Managing Director of the Kenya Industrial Property Institute (KIPI). He holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) from the Strathmore Business School, Strathmore University, Nairobi.

An Associate member of Kenya Institute of Management (AKIM) and Member Institute of Directors (IOD), Mr. Onyango worked in the financial services industry in various roles both in Kenya and abroad before joining KIPI as Deputy Managing Director in 2007.

Mr. Onyango has participated in various trainings including the Advanced Management Course by the IESE Business School, International Graduate School of Management University of Navarra, Barcelona , Spain, and Management of Intellectual Property Offices and Result-based Management both conducted by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).

Others are Strategic Leadership Development Programme at Kenya School of Government (KSG), Corporate Governance, Change Management and Performance management.

Mr. John Onyango,

CEO, Kenya Industrial Property Institute - KIPI



INNOVATION IN ACTION:

IDEAS WITH THE POWER TO CHANGE LIVES

At Kabarak University, innovation is increasingly becoming a pathway through which students transform knowledge, creativity and research into practical solutions for society. Through the Innovation and Business Incubation Centre, innovators are supported to identify real-world problems, develop and refine solutions, build prototypes, validate their ideas and explore opportunities for commercialization and growth. Here we present some of the innovation's success stories of Kabarak University;



Cyprian Kiplagat

1. KalenjinAI

Taking Indigenous African Languages into the AI Era

For too long, Africa's indigenous languages have been missing from the digital world, leaving rich voices, stories, and cultures unheard by modern AI.

Now, KalenjinAI is giving African languages a digital voice—using AI to create speech, translation, and educational tools that bring language and culture to life.

This is more than preserving a language; it is about preserving identity, empowering communities, and building an AI future where African voices are heard and represented.



Margaret Njonjo

2. RespiraMate

Innovating for Better Respiratory Healthcare

A challenge in respiratory healthcare became an opportunity to create something new.

Margaret Njonjo developed RespiraMate, a technology-driven innovation designed to address challenges in respiratory care. Her journey began by recognizing a real need and asking how technology could provide a practical response.

From an initial idea, RespiraMate is being shaped through collaboration with healthcare professionals and users, helping to refine the solution around real-world needs.



Victor Mutua

3. Financial Hub

Empowering Better Financial Decisions

For many people, managing money is a daily balancing act. Should I save or invest? How should I manage my expenses? What is the best financial decision for my small business? Finding clear, reliable and practical financial information is not always easy.

It was this everyday challenge that inspired Victor Mutua to develop Financial Hub, a digital innovation designed to help individuals and entrepreneurs better understand their finances and make informed decisions.

At its core is a simple idea: access to the right information can lead to better financial choices.



Nathan Kiprop

4. AgriMind360

AI for Smarter Agriculture

Every day, Kenyan farmers make decisions that can shape an entire harvest—often while navigating unpredictable weather, limited information, and changing conditions.

Seeing an opportunity to make those decisions smarter, Nathan Kiprop developed AgriMind360, bringing AI, data, and digital technology to the heart of agriculture.

More than a technology solution, AgriMind360 is a story of university innovation reaching beyond the classroom to empower farmers, strengthen productivity, and help shape a smarter future for agriculture.



Dennis Wanjuje

5. InnoTrack

Tracking Innovation from Idea to Impact

Great innovations can easily get lost when no one can see where they are, what they need, or how close they are to making an impact. As universities and innovation centres generate more ideas, turning those ideas into lasting solutions requires more than creativity—it requires visibility, guidance, and support at every stage.

Recognizing this gap, Dennis Wanjuje created InnoTrack, a platform designed to follow an innovation's journey from a spark of an idea through incubation, prototyping, validation, commercialisation, and impact.

More than a tracking system, InnoTrack gives universities and innovation centres a clearer view of what is moving forward, what needs support, and how ideas can become solutions that make a difference.



Allan Manthi

6. LifeTrack

Digital Mental Healthcare & Practice Management

What happens when mental healthcare needs to continue beyond the consultation room?

Allan Manthi and Michelle Akinyi saw an opportunity to bridge that gap with LifeTrack, a digital solution connecting mental health practitioners and clients throughout the care journey.

By bringing practice management and client engagement together, LifeTrack helps practitioners coordinate care, streamline their work, and stay connected with clients when support matters most.



Jakes Mogambi

7. Project Anonymous

Privacy-First Mental Health Support

For many young people, academic pressure, financial challenges, relationships and uncertainty about the future can become overwhelming. Yet fear of judgement or concerns about privacy can make seeking help difficult.

Jakes Mogambi is addressing this gap through Project Anonymous, a privacy-first platform that provides a safe first doorway to mental-health support.

Built around Understand, Connect, Navigate and Protect, the platform offers trusted information, guided self-reflection, responsible AI-assisted guidance, peer support and pathways to professional care.

At its heart, Project Anonymous aims to make the first step easier, helping young people find the right support when they are ready.

Because sometimes, finding help begins with having a safe place to ask, “Where do I start?”



**Freobell Kiplangat
Cheruiyot**

8. SafePIN™

Mobile Payment PIN Protection & Security

You enter your PIN in seconds. But can you be sure no one is watching?

As mobile payments become part of everyday life, a simple PIN can become an easy target for prying eyes, social engineering and unauthorized access.

SafePIN™ was developed to tackle this everyday vulnerability by adding an extra layer of protection to how PINs are entered and authenticated, making sensitive information harder to observe, capture or misuse.

The idea is simple but powerful: keep mobile payments secure without making them complicated.



Braven Kulei

9. SmartHerd

Smart Livestock Management System

For a farmer, knowing what is happening in the herd can make all the difference. But keeping records, spotting health problems early and tracking individual animals is not always easy.

Braven Kulei saw an opportunity to change this with SmartHerd, a digital solution that puts important livestock information at the farmer's fingertips.

From animal health and breeding to productivity and herd records, SmartHerd helps farmers turn everyday farm information into better decisions.

It is a simple idea with a powerful goal: help farmers know their herds better, manage them smarter and build more productive farms.



Ondara Mildred Moragwa

10. ZINDUA

Pharmacies as Gateways to Early Detection

What if a visit to the pharmacy could help detect a serious illness early?

For many Kenyans, pharmacies are the first and most accessible point of care. ZINDUA, meaning “awaken” or “trigger,” builds on this opportunity by helping pharmacists identify warning signs of conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, tuberculosis and selected cancers.

Rather than replacing diagnosis, ZINDUA helps pharmacists spot the signs, start the conversation and connect patients to the right care.

The vision is simple: turn everyday pharmacy visits into opportunities for earlier detection and intervention.

INNOVATION TO COMMERCIALIZATION

From Innovation to Commercialization: Building an Entrepreneurial Mindset

Innovation should not end with an idea, a prototype, a research paper, a competition, or a project report.



Dr. Faith Yator
*Deputy Director, Kabarak
University TVET Institute*

Innovation should solve problems and create value. When an innovation solves a real problem, we should ask: How can we take this idea beyond the classroom, laboratory, or competition and make it useful to society? This is where commercialization and entrepreneurship come in.

For students, researchers, staff, and institutions, we need to move from an “innovation for display” mindset to an “innovation-for-impact” mindset. We should ask: “What can we do with this innovation beyond the classroom, laboratory, exhibition, or competition?” This simple question can change how we think about innovation.

Innovation is more than winning

Today, students and researchers participate in innovation competitions, exhibitions, hackathons, science fairs, and research conferences. These platforms encourage creativity and allow people to showcase their ideas. But what happens after the competition? A good prototype may receive applause and then be forgotten. A research project may earn a good grade but never reach the people who need it. An innovation may win a trophy but never become a product or service. Winning is good, but creating lasting impact is better.

We should therefore ask:

- i. What problem does the innovation solve?
- ii. Who needs the solution?
- iii. Will people use it?
- iv. Will people pay for it?
- v. Can it be produced at a reasonable cost?
- vi. Can it grow and reach more people?
- vii. Can it create jobs or income?
- viii. Can it become a sustainable business?

These questions help us move from innovation to commercialization.

From “Can we build it?” to “Who needs it?”

Innovators often ask: “Can we build it?” An entrepreneur asks another important question: “Who needs it, and how can we create value from it?”

Not every innovation needs to become a business. Some innovations may be created to solve social, environmental, educational, or community problems. However, when an innovation has clear market potential, we should think about how it can be turned into a product, service, or enterprise.

The journey can be viewed simply as: Problem → Idea → Prototype → testing → Product/Service → Market → Business → Growth → Impact.

Each stage is important. A prototype shows that an idea can work. Testing shows whether people actually need it. A business model shows how the innovation can generate value and sustain itself.

The customer matters

One major difference between an academic project and a business is the customer. In school, a project may be successful because it meets its objectives and receives a good grade. In the market, the customer asks: “Does this solve my problem well enough for me to use or buy it?” This question should be asked early.

Innovators should talk to potential users, listen to their needs, test their ideas, and improve their products based on feedback. A good innovation is not only about what the inventor wants to create. It is about what people need.

Having a good idea does not automatically mean having a successful business. To commercialize an innovation, we need to understand:

- i. Who is the customer?
- ii. What problem are we solving?
- iii. What value are we offering?
- iv. What makes our solution different?
- v. How much will it cost?
- vi. How will we make money?

These questions help turn an idea into a practical business opportunity. The Institutions of learning have an important role in helping innovations move from ideas to real world solutions, they build the entrepreneurial mindset and mentor them to enterprises. Innovation should not end with competitions and exhibitions. Promising ideas should be supported from testing to mentorship to Incubation to partnerships to funding and finally to commercialization

Students and researchers should also learn about customers, markets, business models, intellectual property, finance, marketing, and enterprise development. The goal should be to ensure that a promising idea does not end when the competition ends. An entrepreneurial mindset is not only about starting a business. It is about *seeing opportunities in problems and finding ways to create value*. This mindset can be developed in classrooms, laboratories, workplaces, innovation hubs, and communities.

We should celebrate innovation competitions, exhibitions, research projects, and prototypes.

But we should also ask:

What happens after the applause?

- i. Does the innovation reach the people who need it?
- ii. Does it become a useful product or service?
- iii. Does it create jobs?

The real success of innovation is not simply having a good idea. It is turning that idea into something useful, sustainable, and impactful.

Every problem can be an opportunity. Every good idea can be a starting point and every prototype can become something more.

The challenge is to move: *From classroom to community. From laboratory to market. From prototype to product. From idea to enterprise. From innovation to impact.*

That is the entrepreneurial mindset!

Dr. Faith Yator D.

*Innovation champion & Member, KABU
Business Incubation and innovation committee*

OUR PARTNERS IN INNOVATION

POWERING CRIW 2026

KIPI's years of partnership with Kabarak University in promoting research and innovation for national socio-economic development

By John Onyango

The Central Rift Innovation Week (CRIW), organised by Kabarak University, has grown into a premier annual regional platform dedicated to research and innovation commercialization and multi-sectoral collaboration. Serving as a critical catalyst for innovation-led growth across Kenya, this flagship event perfectly aligns with the core mandate of the Kenya Industrial Property Institute (KIPI).

We, as KIPI, play a central role in driving national technological advancement by administering and safeguarding industrial property rights.

Our mandate, as provided for under the Industrial Property Act, No. 3 of 2001 and the Trade Marks Act, Cap 506, is to promote inventive and innovative activities, facilitate the acquisition of technology through registration and regulation of patents, utility models, technovations, industrial

designs and trade marks. Beyond these statutory functions, we actively nurture an inventive culture across academic institutions, the *Jua Kali* sector, and micro, small and medium enterprises/industries (MSME/Is) to foster innovations that spur socio-economic development.

This shared mission was vividly demonstrated during our engagements with Kabarak University during the previous editions of CRIW. For Instance, delivering a keynote address in the 2025 edition, our Board Chairman, Allan Kosgey, reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting institutional innovation in accordance with the Government's Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA).

Chairman Kosgey specifically spotlighted the Inventor Assistance Program (IAP)—a collaborative initiative launched in partnership with the World Intellectual Property Organization



Allan Kosgey, KIPi Board Chairman, participating in a panel discussion during the 2025 CRIW at the Kabarak University, Nakuru

(WIPO)—which pairs resource-constrained inventors with volunteer patent attorneys to transform raw academic ideas into legally protected, commercial assets.

These past collaborations yielded profound lessons. Foremost was the realization that while university innovators generate ingenious technological solutions, they frequently face vulnerability due to premature public disclosure and limited IP literacy.

By intervening early with dedicated IP training, we have helped bridge the gap between laboratory ideation and commercial viability. This synergy has significantly enhanced inventiveness at the Kabarak University, encouraging researchers to adopt a commercial mindset and pursue patent protections that ultimately attract investment.

In this year's Edition of the Central Rift Innovation Week, which is the 5th and is taking place from September 15–17, 2026, there is immense anticipation to deepen this partnership. Anchored on the theme *“Transforming Ideas into Impact: Innovating for a Better Tomorrow,”* this three-day forum provides an ideal stage to translate policy dialogue into concrete action.

We are eagerly looking forward to conducting hands-on IP clinics, mentoring student and faculty inventors, and expanding access to programmes like the IAP. Together, this continued alliance will ensure that grassroots breakthroughs are safely patented, scaled, and deployed to solve real-world community challenges.



OUR ECOSYSTEM

ICT Authority at the Central Rift Innovation Week: From Ideas to Impact

Innovation thrives when ideas are given the opportunity to be developed, tested, showcased and connected to the people and institutions that can help them grow. For the ICT Authority, the Central Rift Innovation Week has become an important platform for bringing together innovators, researchers, students, academia, industry and government to strengthen Kenya's innovation ecosystem.

ICT Authority has participated in the Central Rift Innovation Week since its inaugural edition in 2022, working with Kabarak University and other ecosystem actors to support innovators and strengthen innovation and entrepreneurship capacity in the region.

Starting with Capacity Building

ICTA's engagement with CRIW began in 2022 with a focus on one of the most fundamental needs of emerging innovators: **building the knowledge and skills required to turn ideas into viable enterprises**. During the inaugural Central Rift Innovation Week, ICTA facilitated a **full-day Innovation and Entrepreneurship Training**, providing participants with practical knowledge to help them understand innovation, entrepreneurship and the journey from an idea towards a sustainable venture.

This initial engagement established an important foundation for the relationship between ICTA and Kabarak University.

Creating Opportunities for Innovators

The partnership continued to grow in subsequent editions of CRIW. In 2023, ICTA, through the Huduma WhiteBox Programme, which provides innovators with a platform to pitch their ideas directly to government, access technical assistance and receive training to strengthen their innovations and enterprises, partnered with Kabarak University to support selected innovators from the Central Rift Valley to attend and exhibit their innovations at CRIW. The 2023 experience demonstrated the value of giving innovators a platform not only to display their solutions, but also to interact with potential customers, partners, mentors and other ecosystem players.

For the participating innovators, the exposure translated into tangible outcomes. Meira Education, for example, emerged as the first-place winner in the Education category, while other WhiteBox-supported innovators received recognition in the Information and Communication and Industrial and Allied categories.



From Training to Commercialisation

By 2024, ICTA's engagement had evolved further, reflecting the changing needs of innovators. CRIW 2024, held under the theme **"Data Innovation and Entrepreneurship,"** provided an opportunity for ICTA to facilitate targeted sessions on innovation, technology and entrepreneurship. ICTA contributed to the Programme through training on developing Minimum Viable Products and applying the Lean Business Model



ICTA at CRIW 2026: Deepening the Partnership

As ICT Authority participates in **Central Rift Innovation Week 2026**, the Authority looks forward to deepening this longstanding collaboration. ICTA's participation as a sponsor provides an opportunity to move beyond attendance and strengthen its contribution to the wider CRIW ecosystem. In addition to continued engagement through WhiteBox, ICTA can bring together expertise from across the Authority to address some of the practical digital challenges facing innovators, entrepreneurs, students and the wider community. Areas of engagement include **digital literacy, cybersecurity and e-government innovation**, creating opportunities for departments across ICTA to interact directly with the Central Rift innovation ecosystem.

As CRIW enters another edition in 2026, ICTA is proud to remain part of this journey.

The Authority sees regional innovation platforms such as CRIW not simply as annual events, but as important components of Kenya's broader innovation ecosystem—platforms where talent is discovered, ideas are strengthened, partnerships are formed and solutions with the potential to create economic and social impact are given room to grow.

ICT Authority looks forward to continuing to work with Kabarak University, innovators and ecosystem partners to transform ideas into impact and to contribute to an innovation ecosystem where promising solutions from every part of Kenya can find the support and opportunities they need to scale.

Canvas, helping innovators translate their ideas into more structured and commercially viable propositions.

ICTA also used the platform to introduce innovators to government initiatives that support innovative products and solutions, including the Huduma WhiteBox Programme and opportunities available to entrepreneurs seeking to scale their ventures.

At the close of CRIW 2024, ICTA emphasized the need for innovators to continuously refine their solutions and pitches, remain ready for investors and strategic partners, and think beyond the Kenyan market towards opportunities across Africa. ICTA also reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Kabarak University innovators through the WhiteBox mentorship Programme.



COLLABORATION DRIVES **IMPACT**



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER - DSL

Transforming Businesses Through Technology, Innovation and Automation

Mr. Bernard Kiplagat

We are delighted to be part of Kabarak University's journey towards greater innovation and digital transformation and to build on our existing client relationship through a new strategic technology collaboration. DSL Systems and Solutions Limited is an ICT ERP solutions provider serving organizations across the Academic Sector, Public Sector, Private Sector and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). As a Microsoft Partner specializing in Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) and ICT solutions, DSL Systems brings extensive expertise in transforming business processes, integrating institutional operations, improving access to information and enabling data-driven decision making. Our engagement with Kabarak University is part of a broader vision to create partnerships with organizations that are looking to rethink how technology can transform their operations and service delivery. We are actively expanding our technology portfolio and market reach beyond traditional ERP implementations into emerging areas that are shaping the future for business. These include ERP transformation, Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration and adoption, business process automation, intelligent digital platforms, data analytics, workflow automation, cybersecurity, cloud solutions, and other innovative ICT services. Our objective is to help organizations identify processes that can be simplified, automated, digitized or enhanced through intelligent technology. We invite organizations across different sectors to explore opportunities for partnerships with DSL Systems



whether the need is to automate repetitive business processes, upgrade existing Systems, integrate Systems, improve customer experience and employee experiences, harness data for decision making, we are positioned to work to work alongside our clients to design solutions that address the specific business needs.

We believe the future of technology is not simply about implementing systems; it is about creating smarter organizations. Our approach is therefore centered on understanding business challenges first then applying the right combination of technology and innovation to deliver measurable results. As we strengthen our collaboration with Kabarak University and engage with new clients and strategic partners, DSL remains committed to innovation, excellence and continuous transformation. We welcome organizations seeking to leverage technology as a strategic enabler of growth, efficiency competitiveness and sustainable development. Let us collaborate to innovate, automate and transform the way business is done.

**Mr. Bernard Kiplagat is the Director,
DSL Systems & Solutions Ltd**





Systems & Solutions Limited

Your Business Automation Partner

Innovative Systems | Smarter Solutions | Greater Possibilities



Your
Business
Automation
Partner



1. ABOUT US

DSL Systems & Solution limited (DSL) is a private firm, and Microsoft Certified Partner company, incorporated under the Companies Act (CAP 486) of the laws of Kenya in 2013.

The company is based in Nairobi, Kenya with a client base that spans across multiple industries. Our team consists of young and energetic consultants equipped with a deep industry specific knowledge and skills of the business automation software solutions. We provide ourselves as a highly customer-centric and agile solutions provider, extremely attentive to customer needs and highly committed to solving the problems in the communities we operate.



3. OUR CLIENTS



Universities & Colleges

Africa International University; Kabarak University; St Paul's University; Daystar University; Pan-Africa Christian University; Kirinyaga University; Chuka University; Moi University; Tangaza University College; The Presbyterian University of East Africa; Rongo University; Egerton University; Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science & Technology; (JOUST); KEMU University; Dedan Kimathi University; Kenya Highlands University; RVIBs College; Imperial College.



Public Sector

Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions; Sports Kenya; Kenya Maritime Authority; Agriculture and Food Authority; The Business Registration Services; Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KEMFRI); National Youth Service; Kenya Year Book; Ministry of Housing (MOH); Council of Legal Education; Media Council (MCK); Warehouse Receipt System Council; Kenya Leather Development Council.



Private Sector & NGOs

Sovereign Group of Companies; Association of Sisterhoods Kenya; Akili Dada; Ampath Plus Uzima; Smart Africa; Mara Elephant.



2. OUR PRODUCTS:

1



Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central Modules:

- ✓ Financial Management System
- ✓ Academic Management System
- ✓ Procurement Management System
- ✓ Human Resource Management System
- ✓ Payroll Management System
- ✓ Hostel & Catering Management System
- ✓ Library Management System
- ✓ Health Unit and Hospital Management System
- ✓ Fleet Management System
- ✓ Projects Management System
- ✓ Contracts Management
- ✓ Marketing & CRM

2



Web Portal & Mobile Application

- ✓ Students Portal
- ✓ Staff Portal
- ✓ E-Recruitment Portal
- ✓ E-Suppliers Portal
- ✓ Student Online Application Portal
- ✓ Research & Grants Management Portal
- ✓ Thesis Management Portal

3



Microsoft Dynamics 365 Finance and Operations

4



Business Intelligence

5



EDMS

6



Cloud Support and Integrations



4. OUR PARTNERS



Microsoft



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Nextgen Mall, 3rd Floor Unit 01
Mombasa Road - Nairobi!



+254 751 814 321



info@dsl.ke



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ABOUT BORESHA DT SACCO

Boresha Deposit Taking SACCO was registered on 31st August 1976 with initial Share Capital of **Kshs. 60,000**. The vibrant and fast-growing SACCO has 95,000 active Members strong and Asset base of **Kshs.15 billion**. Savings/Deposits is **Kshs. 10.5 billion** while Loan book is Kshs. 12.4 billion. The Society is a Tier One SACCO, regulated by SACCO Societies Regulatory Authority (SASRA). The Area of operation Republic of Kenya with Base in **Baringo County**. The SACCO has however expanded to **Uasin-Gishu, Nakuru, Nandi, Laikipia and Elgeyo/Marakwet and Trans-Nzoia** Counties – Total of **19 Branches**. Continuous investment in Robust Technology by the Sacco has ensured that members are served effectively and efficiently in all the Branches and beyond.

Membership is open to All; Salaried Members in National and County Government, Business Community and MSMEs, Farmers, Employees of private firms & institutions and Kenyans in Diaspora. Membership has impressively grown from the initial **10 Members** at inception to the current 95,000 Members strong. The SACCO offers more than banking services and facilitates economic change for prosperity by empowering Members and the Community at large. The SACCO exists to improve people's living standards having stood the taste of time as stable and reliable Society. Members have success stories about the Society and are proud that the SACCO has enabled them build great homes, ventured into business and educated themselves and their children.

The financial impact caused by the SACCO is felt within communities in the region and beyond. We economically empower members through all inclusive products and Services using the latest Technology and strategic Branch

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Network. The SACCO is stable and has stood the test of time as a reliable Financial Provider of Choice. Members attest the positive change that the SACCO has caused and are proud of the efficiency and array of all inclusive quality Savings & Loan products and Services offered. The SACCO operates a Members Welfare fund scheme that gives bereaved Members funds for funeral expenses hence according a decent send off for departed Members and their immediate families. In addition, upon demise of a principal

Member, Savings/Deposits is doubled and paid to the next of kin. The deceased Member loan is also written off against the Welfare Fund.

Boresha DT Sacco is an economic hub in the region. We have lived to the core-mandate of affording Customer friendly Savings and Credit Financial Services to Members and the unbanked in the Community. The Economic change and prosperity have been realized. Members are encouraged to Save Regularly, Borrow Wisely & Repay Promptly. Member Centricity, Integrity, Innovation, Professionalism, Teamwork and inclusivity are our Core Values.



Join Boresha SACCO.....
Financial Provider of Choice
since 1976!

DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND OUTREACH AT A GLANCE

The Directorate of Research, Innovation and Outreach (RIO), established in 2017 within the Division of Academic and Research, is mandated to oversee and strengthen research, innovation and outreach activities among faculty and students. The Directorate is led by Dr. Phillip Nyaware.

The Directorate undertakes the following key functions:

- **Outreach Activities:** Supports faculty and student outreach through an internal outreach fund and external partnerships, focusing on digital literacy, public health awareness, legal aid, career and life counselling, and dissemination of research and innovation outputs.
- **Linkages:** Establishes partnerships

with industry, communities, NGOs and government agencies through MoUs, agreements and cooperation for conferences, exhibitions, outreach and research activities.

- **Editorial:** Oversees the publication of the University's academic journals, including the *Kabarak Journal of Research and Innovation*, *African Journal of Commercial Law*, *Kabarak Journal of Law and Ethics*, *East African Community Law Journal*, *Journal of Information Systems in Eastern Africa*, and *Kabarak Journal of Medical, Pharmaceutical & Allied Sciences*.
- **Conferences:** Hosts annual international research conferences that provide platforms for presenting and publishing

research across diverse disciplines.

- **Grants:** Provides annual internal research grants to faculty as pilot funding, complemented by support from both internal and external funders.
- **Resource Mobilization:** Engages strategic partners to support RIO objectives and builds the capacity of staff and students to mobilize equipment, personnel, partnerships and funding.
- **Scientific and Ethics Review:** Through the NACOSTI-accredited Scientific and Ethics Review Committee, promotes adherence to acceptable scientific and ethical standards through capacity building and research review.

- **Innovation and Business Incubation:** Oversees the Innovation and Business Incubation Centre, the internal innovation fund and the annual Central Rift Innovation Week, supporting the identification and commercialization of intellectual property.

Our Impact

Through these roles, the Directorate creates an enabling environment where ideas become innovations, research becomes solutions, and partnerships create lasting impact—advancing Kabarak University's contribution to knowledge and society.

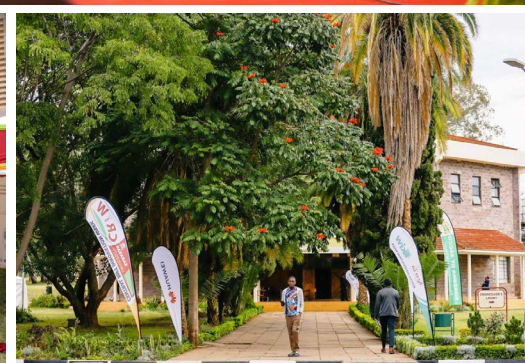
By Caroline Kipkoros

DRIO - Administrator

CRIW THROUGH THE YEARS

MOMENTS OF INNOVATION







CELEBRATING IMPACT

CRIW 2026 INNOVATION AWARDS



Best Innovation



Best Social Impact Innovation



Best Student Innovation



HealthTech/AgriTech/FinTech Recognition



Best Startup Pitch



Partner/Sponsor Awards

FROM CRIW TO ACTION

Turning CRIW Connections into Partnerships, Products, Investment and Impact

The lights may go down, the exhibition stands may come down, and participants may return to their institutions, businesses, laboratories and communities even as CRIW 2026 comes to a close. But one question remains: What happens after the week?

The true success of the Central Rift Innovation Week (CRIW) should not be measured only by the number of people who attend, exhibition stands, presentations delivered, or ideas pitched. These are important indicators of engagement, but they are only the beginning. The greater measure of success is what follows.

A promising conversation should be on partnership. A promising innovation should attract investment while an invention should move towards intellectual property protection. Where prototypes have been developed, it should find a market. For the winning innovators, mentorship and incubation should now be the next step. These steps should be carried out in collaboration with our partners. Challenges identified during the

week should inform policy or institutional action. CRIW must therefore be more than an event but a launchpad for sustained action.

Connection to Action

Innovation thrives when the right people connect at the right time. CRIW brings together students, researchers, entrepreneurs, industry leaders, investors, government agencies, development partners and other stakeholders around a shared purpose: transforming ideas into impact. But it is good to note that connection alone is not enough.

Every meaningful engagement should have a pathway forward. Who will follow up? What action will be taken? What resources are required? What partnership can be developed? What opportunity can be pursued? This is why CRIW should leave behind an Outcome Dashboard that captures the commitments and opportunities emerging from the week.

CRIW Outcome Dashboard

Outcome Area	What We Will Track
Partnerships	New collaborations, MoUs, institutional and industry partnerships
Investment Leads	Investor engagements, funding opportunities and investment-ready innovations
IP Opportunities	Innovations requiring protection, registration, licensing or technology transfer
Market Linkages	Connections between innovators, customers, industry and distribution channels
Policy Actions	Policy recommendations, regulatory engagements and institutional responses
Incubation & Mentorship	Innovators identified for incubation, coaching, technical support and enterprise development

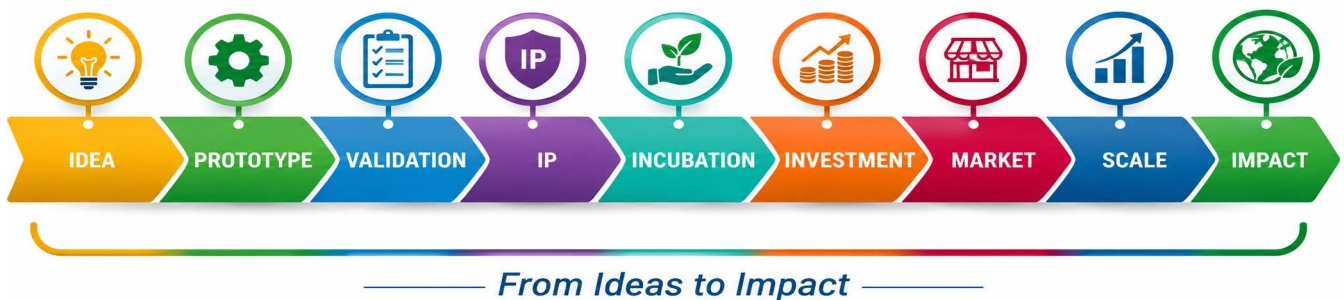
This dashboard is not simply a reporting tool. It represents a commitment to follow through.

From Pitching to Progress

A successful pitch should not end when the presentation ends. It should trigger questions such as: *What is the next step? Who can help? What resources do we need? What market should we explore? What technology requires further development?*

Similarly, an investor meeting should create a pathway towards due diligence. A promising

innovation should be connected to intellectual property support. A researcher with a market-relevant technology should be linked to industry. A student entrepreneur should have access to mentorship and incubation. In this way, CRIW can help create a continuous pipeline as shown below:



The objective is not to move every innovation through every stage. Rather, it is to ensure that promising ideas are not lost because there is no pathway beyond the event.

Accountability after CRIW

The period after Innovation Week is therefore just as important as the week itself. The commitments made during CRIW should be documented, assigned to responsible persons or institutions, followed up and periodically reviewed. Partnerships should move towards

concrete activities while investment leads should be nurtured. Market connections should be strengthened with policy recommendations being communicated to relevant decision-makers.

This creates a culture in which innovation is not celebrated only when it is new, but supported throughout its journey towards impact.

Dr Phillip Nyawere, PhD

Director; Research, Innovation and Outreach





Ideas | People | Partnerships | Impact

CRIW MAGAZINE

*"Transforming Ideas into Impact:
Innovating for a Better Tomorrow."*



CRIW 2026 PARTNERS



Moral Code As members of Kabarak University family, we purpose at all times and in all places, to set apart in one's heart, Jesus Christ as Lord. (1 Peter 3:15)

info@kabarak.ac.ke

Kabarak University

kabarakUniversity

@KabarakUniv

www.kabarak.ac.ke

