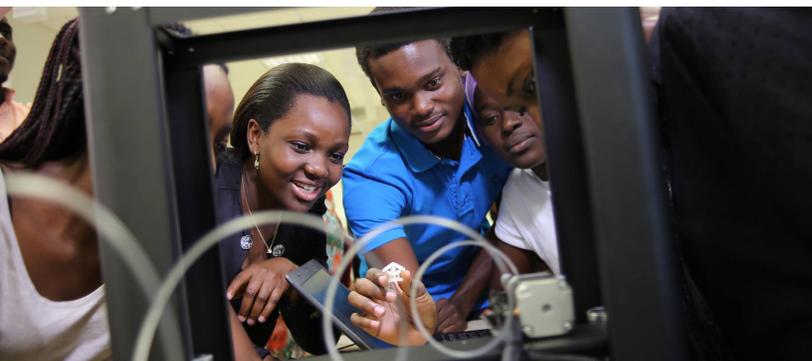


# Ashesi University's Entrepreneurship Ecosystem



Ashesi University was formed on a foundation of creative thinking and entrepreneurship, with a goal of educating ethical and innovative leaders. In preparation to become problem solvers and employment creators, entrepreneurship is integrated throughout the Ashesi curriculum.

From their earliest days on campus, students are immersed in activities designed to nurture an entrepreneurial spirit while building the courage needed to carry forward in their lives and work with an ethical mindset. The Ashesi Entrepreneurship Ecosystem includes the following programs and initiatives:



## Foundations of Design and Entrepreneurship

In this one-year course taken by all freshman, students launch ventures to gain real-world experience in business development. Course learnings are rolled into Ashesi's second year leadership course, providing a solid foundation for students' entrepreneurial studies moving forward.

## Ashesi D:Lab

The D:Lab provides students with training and practice in design thinking. By participating in design thinking processes, students are launched into critical thinking and step beyond their existing boundaries to create, innovate, and grow their ideas.



## Social Entrepreneurship

This elective course guides students through the process of building a social enterprise, from ideation to implementation. Student enterprises address one of two urgent challenges in Ghana and elsewhere in Africa: improving the quality of learning among primary school students and reducing corruption in day-to-day business and civic life.



## Entrepreneurship Capstone

This is one of the graduation options for a senior project and is fundamentally about how to start a scalable business. Scalable businesses are those that can be expected to develop into complex enterprises.



### Ashesi Enterprise Fund (AEF)

The AEF provides proof of concept grants and soft loans to student entrepreneurs to help them validate their business models, products, and services. With the right support, these early stage ventures have an opportunity to explore, build, launch, and pivot as necessary on the road to growth.



### Ashesi Venture Incubator (AVI)

The AVI is a one-year alumni venture incubation experience in collaboration with MIT D-Lab, with funding from USAID. Fellows build their business through the incubator's provision of coaching from local and global business leaders, business development sessions, and support services.

### Ashesi Start-up Launchpad (ASL)

The ASL provides hand-on support, guidance, and coaching to student incubator businesses. Engaging support from faculty and local and international business leaders, the ASL helps scale and improve students' promising ideas.



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I believe that identifying entrepreneurial types and nurturing their dreams to change lives and make a lasting impact in Africa is at the heart of what the ASL does. With our passionate and hardworking management team and advisory board, I know we will continue to make strides towards creating a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem here at Ashesi.

Edem Yegbe, CEO of the Ashesi Start-up Launchpad (ASL)

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### Entrepreneurship Partners Include



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## Design Thinking: an Integral Component of the Ashesi Education

Ashesi students are entrepreneurs who can see through challenges and build solutions. They are ethical and responsible and learn to see the short- and long-term effects of their decisions on society and the environment. They are also leaders who can communicate their ideas and work with teams to solve problems. Design thinking fosters these very qualities through its human-centered approach to problem solving. Across all our majors, there is an emphasis on teaching design thinking. “[At Ashesi, we] explore design thinking as a better approach to creating lasting, usable solutions,” says Gordon Adomdza, Lead of the Ashesi D:Lab. “We want to see Ashesi becoming a thought leader on design thinking in Ghana and Africa.”

Through a variety of courses and programs, design thinking becomes more than a skill held by Ashesi students; it becomes a mindset for creative problem solving.



## In Global Competitions and Awards, Ashesi Students and Alumni Shine

- **UNICEF Innovation Fund**

In 2018, The Fund granted \$100,000 to NubianVR, a startup founded by Jonathan Dotse '13 and Kabiru Seidu '14. With UNICEF's support, NubianVR will develop virtual reality education content for Ghanaian schools.

- **Forbes Africa 30 Under 30**

Kofi Genfi '16 made the 2018 Forbes Africa 30 Under 30 list for his work in developing artificial intelligence and mobile money payments through his startup, Cyst.

- **L'Oreal Brandstorm International Competition**

After winning the 2018 L'Oreal Brandstorm national and regional competitions for their futuristic hair braiding device, a trio of Ashesi juniors excelled in the global finals held in Paris, France. “We represented ourselves, Ashesi and Africa to the root in confidence and style,” said Obaayaa Gyapong '20.

- **World Bank Development Report 2019 Competition**

Justice Essuman '19's competition-winning paper details how startups can help curb youth unemployment. Justice's paper was one of three winning submissions out of 600 entries in the competition to propose real-life examples of how actors can take advantage of opportunities created by technology and the future of work.

- **Global Retail Challenge**

A team of Ashesi students proposed solutions for e-waste in Ghana at the 2018 Global Retail Challenge. The team traveled to Montréal, Canada for the finals, where they presented their business model to Retail and Circular Economy experts.

- **Dutch Embassy New Business Challenge**

In 2018, Ashesi students and alumni were chosen as Ghanaian finalists in the Dutch Embassy New Business Challenge. As finalists, the team traveled in the Netherlands and Ghana for workshops, professional training, and coaching.

## Alumni Ventures Advance Africa

Whether Ashesi graduates join existing organizations or start their own, they act as job creators who carry forward entrepreneurial thinking in everything that they do. Ashesi maintains a goal for 20-25% of alumni to start their own business within ten years of graduating. Graduates' enterprises span Africa, offer new technologies, and support inclusive development.



### Filling Africa's future women's leadership pipeline Yawa Hansen-Quao '07

At Ashesi, Yawa (sitting) became the first female student government president in Ghana's history. Next, she founded Leading Ladies' Network, whose for-profit women's career coaching arm funds mentorship programs for thousands of women and girls. "I want to provide [the women of Africa] the stepping stones to success, to prepare them to participate at every leadership table," says Yawa.



### Promoting peace and security Mutaru Mumuni Muqthar '07

After earning a master's in International Terrorism and Global Crime, Mutaru founded the West Africa Centre for Counter-Extremism (WACCE), which focuses on countering the foundations of violent extremism and radicalization in vulnerable communities. In 2017, he was named a Mandela Washington Fellow for his contributions to promoting peace and security.



### Treating entrepreneurship as a lifestyle Kofi Genfi '16 and Pinamang Genfi '17

Graduating a year apart from each other, siblings Kofi and Pinamang lead businesses that are steadily gaining significant footholds in their respective industries. Kofi is the co-founder of Cyst, a software innovation company focused on providing high-end tech solutions for its users through artificial intelligence. In 2018, Kofi made the prestigious Forbes Africa 30 Under 30 list for his work for his work in advancing innovative technology solutions across Africa.

Pinamang is CEO of TAAG Fashion, a women's shoe line, and Marshmallow Gifts, a gift concierge service. Growing as a business owner, she credits Ashesi for imparting a broad knowledge base. "In running a start-up, you need to know a bit of everything, and Ashesi's liberal arts system has been helpful because it exposed me to a bit of every field," she shared.

## JOIN US

To learn more about Ashesi's Entrepreneurship Ecosystem and how you can partner with us, contact us at 206.545.6988 or [foundation@ashesi.org](mailto:foundation@ashesi.org).

**Ashesi University in Ghana · Ethical Leadership and Innovative Thinking for a New Africa**

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