

# SUN Business Network Highlights 2020



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**gain**  
Global Alliance for  
Improved Nutrition



WFP  
World Food  
Programme





# About SBN

Ending malnutrition in all its forms by 2030 is at the heart of all the SUN Movement strives to achieve, but this effort cannot belong to the movement alone. Instead, the SUN Movement has inspired a new way of working collaboratively, which it has mobilised in association with the governments of 62 SUN countries and four Indian states since its launch in 2010. This alliance has also united people across civil society, the United Nations, donors, businesses, and researchers to join the effort to realise this ambitious goal. A key division of the SUN Movement is the SUN Business Network (SBN), which aims to mobilise businesses worldwide to increase access to, and demand for, safe and nutritious foods among low-income consumers.

Co-convened by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), SBN operates at both global and national level in support of the SUN Movement and SUN country nutrition priorities, with a strong focus on country-level support and strategic partnerships that catalyse business action.

At national level, networks in Africa, Asia and Latin America are convening over 1,000 businesses, assessing technical, financial and other business support service needs for members, and advocating the role of business in addressing nutrition at country level.

Meanwhile, at global level, the SBN Global Secretariat acts as a focal point for engaging 25 multinational businesses in nutrition activities. Such activities include making workforce nutrition commitments and fostering global partnerships between investors and multinational companies to provide finance or technical assistance support to country networks and their business members.

“Being part of the SUN Business Network has been a good experience as we have been able to tap into expertise we would otherwise never have had access to”

*Khadija Churchill Mohamed,  
founder of Kwanza Tukule,  
SBN Kenya member*





# Letter from Co-conveners

The COVID-19 crisis has laid bare the fragility of global food systems and the importance of diet and health. The need for, and value of, the SUN Business Network (SBN) has never been greater, as we convene businesses to increase access to safe and nutritious foods among low-income consumers.

This review highlights the many outstanding achievements of SBN during an unprecedented year. Most notably, despite the hurdles presented by the pandemic, SBN expanded into 44 countries with over 1,000 business members. This growth was made possible by leveraging existing and new partnerships with governments, global members, donors, and the broader SUN Movement to support key initiatives including strengthening the resilience of SMEs to recover from the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we look ahead, 2021 marks the beginning of the third phase of the SUN Movement (2021-2026) which sets out an ambitious vision for a better aligned effort to scale up nutrition action across SUN countries. SBN will develop the next five-year strategy which will embrace the vision of the SUN 3.0 Strategy that puts SUN countries at the centre of the effort, with four strategic objectives:

1. Strengthen and sustain strong policy and advocacy environments at the subnational, national, regional, and

global levels to position nutrition outcomes as a key maker and marker of sustainable development.

2. Develop and align shared country priorities for action.
3. Build and strengthen country capacity to develop, prioritise, finance, implement, and track country priorities through strengthened technical assistance and knowledge management.
4. Ensure governance of SUN that promotes country leadership and responsibilities of government, aligns the resources of all Movement stakeholders behind country priorities, strengthens mutual accountability between Movement stakeholders and to those most at risk of malnutrition, with robust mechanisms to encourage and ensure such promotion, alignment and mutual accountability is realised.

We look forward to working within the broader SUN Movement to support and equip our country networks to achieve the goals of SUN 3.0.



Ritta Sabbas Shine,  
SBN Global  
Co-Coordinator,  
Global Alliance for  
Improved Nutrition



Emily Heneghan,  
SBN Global  
Co-Coordinator,  
World Food  
Program



# 1,069

**SBN BUSINESS MEMBERS GLOBALLY**

**776**   
members in Africa

**243**   
members in Asia

**25**   
members in Latin  
American

**25**   
multinational  
business  
members

# SBN National Progress

At a national level, we seek to support SUN Countries to develop national business engagement strategies and build nationally-led business networks to support SUN Country government nutrition strategies.

Our country networks are actively implementing strategies that mobilise the private sector to address the multiple burdens of malnutrition. These efforts continue to strengthen the SUN Movement's approach – as a multi-stakeholder, multi-sectoral movement for nutrition impact and results.

12

Advanced Country Networks

13

In Progress Country Networks

19

Early Stage Country Networks

## TANZANIA

The SBN Tanzania team implemented a project on improving the nutritional quality of meals provided to children through school feeding programmes, increasing partnership between the Government, flour millers, and schools.

## PAKISTAN

SBN Pakistan and partners are conducting a pilot project with the [International Food and Beverage Alliance \(IFBA\)](#) to support the replacement of industrially-produced trans-fatty acids (iTFA).

## BANGLADESH

Established an SME platform at the sub-national level through its partnership with the National Association of Small and Cottage Industries, and the Chamber of Commerce. By the end of 2020, this partnership had established 5 committees and increased the network's membership base to 137 members.

## LAO PDR

In 2020, SBN Lao supported the government's National Nutrition Action Plan through the development of rice fortification standard setting and the design of a fortified food logo. SBN Lao also worked with association of millers to support their members to implement a rice fortification pilot project.

## KENYA

In September 2020, SBN Kenya launched their strategy alongside the launch of the National Nutrition Action Plan for Kenya. The strategy was developed via an inclusive process, and was also endorsed by Government.

## CAMBODIA

SBN Cambodia member, Danish Care Foods, was awarded the first runner-up prize in the [2020 SUN Pitch Competition](#) for their innovative ready-to-use therapeutic and supplementary food products aimed at addressing high levels of child malnutrition in the country.

## NIGERIA

2020 saw the sub-national roll-out of Nutrition and Food Safety training in Nigeria, implemented in partnership with State Chambers of Commerce. Beneficiaries of these trainings included members of the SUN Civil Society as well as representatives of the National SUN secretariat.

## SRI LANKA

During COVID-19, SBN Sri Lanka supported the Climate Change Adaptation Project to facilitate linkages between the private sector and farmer groups to solve supply chain issues and form long-term supply chain solutions.

## ZAMBIA

In October 2020, SBN Zambia launched the [Good Food Logo](#) aimed at helping consumers to make better food choices. This is the first front-of-pack certification mark to be introduced in a lower-middle income country and is specifically adapted to the Zambian nutrition context.

## MOZAMBIQUE

There was a strong focus on SME capacity building throughout the year. Members received group and one-to-one technical assistance to help them improve their nutrition offerings for their customer base and workforces.

## INDONESIA

SBN Indonesia has been supporting the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene programme through infrastructure development, the promotion of clean and hygienic lifestyles in schools, and sanitation programmes at work. The programme has reached up to 500,000 beneficiaries in just one year.

## PHILIPPINES

To address conflict of interest in the Philippines, the SBN team is tailoring the global SBN whistleblower mechanism, and will be the first national SBN to pilot this mechanism at country level.



# National Network Spotlight: SBN Kenya

SBN Kenya has

**106**  
members

**32%**  
of members are  
**women**

**87%** of SBN Kenya  
members are  
**SMEs**

The nutritional status of Kenya's population is critical, with poor access to healthy, safe foods and a lack of action to address this issue across many sectors. Of Kenya's 7.22 million children under 5 years old, nearly 1.8 million are stunted, and 794,200 are underweight. Meanwhile, 28% of adults between 18 to 69 years of age are either overweight or obese, with the rate of anaemia highest among pregnant women at 41.6% followed by children between 6 and 54 months, of which 26.3% are anaemic. In addition to the health crisis this poses, undernutrition will cost Kenya an estimated US\$38.3 billion in gross domestic product (GDP) losses by 2030. As the country seeks to meet its development agenda, including supporting Vision 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the SUN Business Network (SBN) in Kenya has been working hard to move the nation towards a more nutritious, sustainable future.

## STRATEGIC ACTION

In October 2020, the network [launched](#) the SBN Kenya Strategy for 2019–2023. This strategy recognises the role of

the private sector in making safe and nutritious food available and affordable, and will provide support in mobilising the private sector working in food systems to engage, in a structured format, in reducing the malnutrition burden in the country. The strategy outlines SBN Kenya's five strategic pillars: i) Finance for micro, small and medium enterprises, ii) Technical Assistance, iii) Workforce Nutrition, iv) Policies and Advocacy and v) Market and Demand. Specific objectives, intervention areas and key activities for each of these pillars have been defined based on inputs from network members and members of the secretariat.

The strategy was launched in support of the government's [Nutrition Action Plan](#), during the 3rd National Nutrition Symposium which was attended by high level government officials drawn from the national and the county/sub-national level, as well as nutrition champions from the national assembly and county first ladies association. The 3rd National Nutrition Symposium was organised by the







Division of Nutrition and Dietetics under the Ministry of Health with technical and financial support from the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Association (SUN CSA) members, including Nutrition International, Feed the Children, the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition and UNICEF and World Food Programme.

As Leah Kaguara, GAIN Country Director and Convenor of SBN, explains, “tackling malnutrition is a team effort – requiring business leaders to work in partnership with the Government, civil society and consumers to make sure that safe, nutritious food is available and affordable to everyone.” Members of SUN CSA, SBN Kenya and the UN in Kenya work collaboratively to tackle malnutrition by working with communities and health workers, supporting enhancement of food systems for improved diets, through supporting the national and county Government on policies and programme intervention.

### REVOLUTIONISING THE URBAN FOOD SYSTEM

One of SBN Kenya’s members, [Kwanza Tukule](#) – Swahili for ‘first, let us eat’ – is a young business-to-business enterprise with a particular focus on serving southern Nairobi’s low-income consumer households and workplaces. This enterprise provides high quality, nutritious and affordable plant-based protein, such as pulses and beans, to food vendors adjacent to the industrial parks, with the aim of improving the nutritional status of consumers in these low-income areas.

Kwanza Tukule also partners with local farmers who produce pulses and street food vendors to accelerate access to affordable and quality food in the informal areas of Kenya. The business model aims to provide food vendors with a ‘one-stop-shop’ platform for all their needs.

Kwanza Tukule provides a great solution to food vendors, using technology, efficient supply chains, and green energy, such as biogas made from their own food waste, to prepare pulses in bulk, which are delivered directly to the street vendors. “By supplying in bulk we shorten the supply chain from the farmer to consumer, and we can also take advantage of economies of scale, reducing our own costs and costs for the vendors”, notes Khadija Churchill Mohamed, founder of Kwanza Tukule, which has already attracted a customer base of around 300 food vendors across Nairobi.

Khadija had to do a lot of learning on the job and part of that has been facilitated by her participation in the SBN Kenya. Khadija believes that the SUN Business Network has been hugely impactful to her and her business as she has been able to share knowledge through the forums, as well as access calls for proposals and trainings which have already helped her grow her partnerships and business.

“The beauty of our engagement with partners is that we are a true start up and being part of the SUN Business Network has been a good experience as we have been able to tap into expertise we would otherwise never have had access to,” continues Khadija, who believes that the forums organised by the SUN Business Network are an excellent avenue for businesses to take the lead and facilitate discussions, allowing other sectors to learn from the businesses.

Since the launch of its 2019–2023 Strategy, SBN Kenya is committed to continue supporting SMEs like Kwanza Tukule through capacity development and financing links so that they can scale their businesses and grow their impact on nutrition.



# A Year of Resilience

As movement and social restrictions came into effect in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, a new set of challenges emerged for national networks to engage and convene members and other stakeholders. However, the networks remained determined despite these logistical setbacks, and substantial efforts were made in engaging with existing and prospective member businesses.

Most notably, in a bid to understand the challenges facing SMEs as a result of the pandemic, and how these enterprises could best be supported in overcoming those challenges, two global SME surveys were conducted in May and November 2020 across 17 SUN countries. Over 300 SMEs reported being impacted by the pandemic, mainly via decreased sales, difficulty accessing inputs, and difficulty accessing financing.

Following these surveys and their results, SBN resolved to leverage existing and new partnerships with governments, development partners, SUN networks and the broader investment community to support SMEs in strengthening their resilience and recovering from the shock of the COVID-19 pandemic. This proved critical in the successful provision of technical assistance to support SMEs in adapting their business models for long-term resilience and accessing financial support, including emergency funds to meet immediate short-term financing needs. Gender disparities in the impact of COVID-19 on SMEs revealed the importance of considering the differences of

women-owned firms when designing future interventions. Such consideration will be critical to ensure equality in opportunities and outcomes for these firms moving forward.

One Nigerian entrepreneur, Ifeoluwa Omotayo, remains dogged in growing her business beyond the pandemic. Her technology-driven social enterprise – Soupah Limited – suffered a severe impact from COVID-19, with losses of up to 53%, but Ifeoluwa saw potential to pivot the business into other markets and develop the use of digital solutions to cope with the new reality. By procuring USSD codes and selling fresh produce, Soupah has survived the pandemic and is ready to continue growing in the years to come.

***“Entrepreneurship isn’t a walk in the park! However, when you do it for the right reasons, it makes the journey worth it. Seeing the impact of our business on the farmers, and on the people now able to afford healthy food and seeing the smiles on the faces of customers makes the journey worth it.”***

***Ifeoluwa Omotayo, Soupah Kitchen Limited, Nigeria***





# SBN Global Engagement

Outside of the national networks, SBN has engaged 25 global members in its efforts to eradicate malnutrition worldwide. These members are food and non-food companies who are not headquartered in a SUN country. Our global members are committed to (1) provide technical assistance to country networks and their members (predominantly SMEs), (2) implement workforce nutrition policies, and (3) improve actions to address malnutrition in all its forms, including tackling overweight and obesity.



## Business accountability

SBN launched a survey in May 2020 to identify and evaluate the use of existing reporting tools to assess the impact of businesses in seven key categories: (re) formulation, marketing to children, labelling, employee health and wellbeing, food safety, food loss and waste and food affordability. The survey was a monumental step forward in improving and aligning business accountability mechanisms. Survey results can be found [here](#).

## Work force nutrition

In 2020, global members explored opportunities to pilot the [Nutrition at Work Handbook](#), and have committed to reporting on their workforce nutrition programmes annually using the digital workforce nutrition alliance scorecard. Ahead of the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit, SBN Global members participated in the Workforce Nutrition N4G Pledge webinar (see [here](#)) to set pace to developing their pledges.



## B2B tool platform

Launched the B2B technical assistance online platform that links SMEs to SBN Global members based on the alignment of the SMEs' support needs and the global members' expertise on fortification, product reformulation, food safety, nutrition labelling and marketing (see [here](#)). During 2020, 132 technical assistance offers were made to national SBN members.



## Sponsorship

Our global members and partners generously supported the SUN Pitch Competition.

**Cargill** awarded the **Enable Access to Good Nutrition Prize**, a cash prize of US\$10,000 to Poulta Inc. of Pakistan for its commitment to improving accessibility to healthier foods through greater market access, collaborative partnership, consumer education, and new delivery channels.

**Royal DSM** awarded the "3A nutrition", a cash prize of US\$10,000 to Limpho of Mozambique, an SME that produces delicious, affordable, widely accessible, and aspirational nutritious food.

**AGREA** awarded a mentorship package to SANAVITA, an outstanding SME that offers an exciting and promising investment proposition.



# SUN Pitch Competition

From the  
**500  
SMEs**

that initially  
applied from  
across  
**24  
countries**

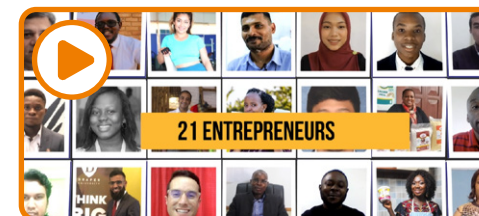
**21**  
were  
finalists

to compete in the **2020  
Global SUN Pitch  
Competition**, seeking  
combined investment

worth  
**US\$ 12  
million**



**1,085**  
live views



## PITCH OVERVIEW

As the largest providers of food in Africa and Asia, SMEs are critical in shaping local food systems and bringing nutrition to those who need it. However, the growth of these SMEs is highly constrained by a lack of access to finance, and as such agri-food SMEs remain largely untapped for developing and scaling up market-based solutions that could improve the consumption of safe and nutritious food.

The SUN Pitch Competition, aims to showcase nutrition-related investments from SMEs that can catalyse innovation in local food systems and improve the affordability and accessibility of nutritious and safe foods for low-income consumers across Africa and Asia. Launched in 2018, the SUN Pitch Competition harnesses innovative solutions for improved nutrition by connecting SMEs in emerging markets with technical assistance and investors.

Following the success of the 2018 SUN Pitch Competition, which took place in 7 countries in Africa and Asia, the 2019-2020 SUN Pitch Competition spanned

24 countries and received over 500 applications.

## SPONSORS

The 2019/2020 SUN Pitch Competition was proudly sponsored by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), the UN World Food Programme, Cargill and Royal DSM, with the support of AGREA, Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs (ANDE), BoP Innovation Centre (BoPInc) and Food Industry Asia (FIA).

## PITCH WINNER PROFILE

Emerging as the overall winner of the 2020 SUN Pitch Competition and receiving a cash prize of US\$20,000 for the most innovative solution for improved nutrition was BabyGrubz from Nigeria. This SME develops nutritious complementary foods for infants. "I feel really grateful that our contributions towards improved family livelihoods and child survival are recognised and rewarded. This is a welcome pat on the back for us at Baby Grubz," enthused Oluwaseun Sangoleye, who started this enterprise to make natural baby cereal from locally-sourced ingredients.

Sangoleye will also receive further mentoring from BoP Inc. on how to digitise her business, a critical skill to ensure resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. "Interestingly, I had already signed up to BoP Inc's newsletters and have been actively following their trainings and webinars for about 4 years now. It is a dream come true for me. I believe that BoP Inc has done extensive research into emerging markets such as ours and has data driven insights coupled with technology to help us drive our next steps forward.

Danish Care Foods (DCF) was awarded US\$10,000 as the first runner up of the competition. This enterprise makes ready-to-use therapeutic and supplementary food products, including wafer snacks, to treat malnutrition in children. The company's unique produce range incorporates only locally-available ingredients, including wild-caught fish, and is affordable for low-income consumers.

The second runner up prize of US\$7,000 was presented to Mealimeter, another Nigerian SME. Mealimeter links hospitals,

offices and schools with nutritious meals by providing food and vending machines, and connecting customers with the country's best nutrition-focused chefs and small businesses through a mobile app.

The Royal DSM '3A Nutrition Award' was won by Limpho Produtos Alimentares from Mozambique, which judges commended for turning broken rice, a waste product, into a nutritious product to help meet the nutritional needs of low-income consumers in the country.

The Cargill Prize for Innovations to Enable Access to Improved Nutrition was awarded to Poulta Inc from Pakistan, which uses technologies including blockchain, artificial intelligence and internet-of-things to disrupt the poultry industry by establishing a data-driven monitoring system for industry-wide use.

Tanzanian company Sanavita was the winner of GAIN's Food Technology Innovation Prize and AGREA's mentorship prize. The company uses solar dryers to process nutrient-dense crops into staple food products with the aim to end hunger in Tanzania.





SEP  
2019

## STAGE 1: AUGUST 2019 – MARCH 2020

AUG  
2019

National pitch competitions run in collaboration with a local business accelerator to shortlist finalists for the Global SUN Pitch Competition

OCT  
2019

NOV  
2019

### DECEMBER 2019:

Virtual SUN Pitch Competition  
(Botswana, Burundi, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lao PDR, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Philippines, Rwanda, Senegal, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Zambia)

DEC  
2019



9<sup>TH</sup> MARCH:  
Bangladesh  
Nutristar

MAR  
2020

## STAGE 2: MARCH – JULY 2020

Business development and nutrition training of shortlisted finalists

sponsored by  
SBN, GAIN, WFP, Royal DSM, Cargill

with the support of  
FIA, ANDE, AGREA, Bopinc

followed by the  
SUN Deal Room, an investor matchmaking platform,  
organised by SBN and Bopinc



### 12<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER:

NutriPitch  
The Nourish Nigeria Challenge  
Lishe Accelerator  
(Tanzania SUN Pitch Competition)

### 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER:

Indonesia  
SUN Pitch Competition  
Mozambique  
SUN Pitch Competition

JAN  
2020

### 13<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY:

Pakistan  
SUN Pitch Competition

FEB  
2020







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