



Innovating for a hunger-free future

Our mission is to connect and enable food system changemakers, innovators and entrepreneurs to create and scale impactful solutions.



ABOUT

Achieving 'Zero Hunger' remains one of the world's greatest challenges. Its scale and complexity requires new approaches. Innovative solutions based on new research, technologies, and business models, have already demonstrated their potential, improving livelihoods and food security for millions of people. Building on this momentum, WHH promotes and applies innovation as a key lever to end hunger, fostering creativity, experimentation, and collaboration to develop practical solutions for real-world challenges. Our innovation work has been recognized among the best in Germany with the **TOP100 Innovation Award**, highlighting our commitment to transforming food systems in the Global South.

OUR APPROACH

Together with our wide range of partners (communities, governments, entrepreneurs, researchers, funders, and investors), we identify and advance promising solutions for 'Zero Hunger'. WHH combines scientific insights, entrepreneurial approaches, and community-rooted knowledge to develop, test, and scale innovative products, services, and ventures. Driven by curiosity, courage, and a strong culture of learning, we continuously explore and refine new approaches to improve livelihoods and strengthen food systems. Our dedicated **Innovation Unit** helps catalyze and coordinate these efforts, connecting innovators with the networks, knowledge, and funding needed to turn promising ideas into practical solutions with lasting impact.

OUR INNOVATION PILLARS



OPEN INNOVATIONS & ECOSYSTEMS: As ecosystem builders, we award and showcase transformative innovations and build platforms around them to unlock new partnerships & investments. **Flagship initiative: \$1m Global Food System Challenge**



BUSINESS INNOVATION: As business promoters, we support entrepreneurs, Start-Ups and SMEs through consultancy, network and access to catalytic financing. **Flagship initiative: HERIZON Women Entrepreneurship Program**



TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION: As technology facilitators, we encourage and enable the use of innovative digital technologies for the benefit of our target communities. **Flagship initiative: Digital Literacy Circles**

Connecting innovators, partners and opportunities to accelerate food system solutions.

THE CHALLENGE

Many promising ideas addressing food system challenges never reach their full potential. Innovators often lack the visibility, networks, and support needed to test, refine, and advance their solutions. At the same time, systemic challenges such as post-harvest losses, irrigation, and market access cannot be addressed by single actors alone. Transforming food systems requires collaboration between communities, entrepreneurs, researchers, investors, and institutions. Without strong innovation ecosystems that connect these actors, many impactful ideas struggle to move beyond early experimentation.

OUR APPROACH

We strengthen open innovation ecosystems that connect ideas, actors, and opportunities around shared food system challenges. We create structured spaces where communities, entrepreneurs, researchers, and partners can identify problems, test solutions, and advance promising innovations. Through innovation challenges, partnerships, and collaborative platforms, we help surface new ideas and support their early validation. By convening diverse stakeholders and facilitating collaboration, we connect innovators with the knowledge, networks, and opportunities needed to move promising solutions toward real-world impact.

OUR FOCUS

- **Sandboxing:** Testing and refining new ideas within WHH for rapid experimentation & learning.
- **Awards & Competitions:** Identifying, awarding and supporting promising food system innovators.
- **Platforms:** Building networks for connecting innovators with ecosystem actors and investors.

OUR PORTFOLIO (SELECTION)



Seeding The Future Global Food System Challenge

Hosted by WHH and sponsored by the Seeding the Future Foundation, it awards up to \$1M annually through Seed, Growth, and Grand Prizes to scale impactful, sustainable, and inclusive solutions to transform food systems.



Innovation Lab

WHH's internal Innovation Challenge where WHH country teams and their partners develop and test innovative solutions for system change. The most promising ideas receive seed funding and tailored support.



The Zero-Hunger Innovation Platform

Hosted by WHH and Circle Innovation, this platform brings together communities, entrepreneurs, and ecosystem actors in East Africa to test innovations, build evidence-based models, and scale food system solutions.

Enabling start-ups and social businesses to drive Zero Hunger solutions.

THE CHALLENGE

Millions of smallholder farmers face persistent barriers to achieving secure and resilient livelihoods due to limited access to finance, weak market linkages, and fragmented value chains. Increasingly, entrepreneurs, start-ups, and SMEs are developing promising products and services to address these challenges. However, many enterprises struggle to move from early promise to sustainable growth. Many fall into the so-called “valley of death”, the critical stage between pilot and scale, where limited access to finance, weak market connections, and gaps in business capabilities prevent promising ventures from reaching their full potential and impact.

OUR APPROACH

WHH works to unlock the potential of private sector innovation to create sustainable livelihoods, jobs, and resilient food systems by supporting purpose-driven enterprises that combine commercial viability with measurable social impact. Our approach goes beyond financing alone. We help enterprises strengthen their business fundamentals, improve investment readiness, validate market demand, and connect with the partnerships, capital, and technical support needed to grow. By linking entrepreneurship with ecosystem collaboration and field-level relevance, we help promising solutions move from pilot stage to scalable impact.

OUR FOCUS & ROLES

- **Enabler** – Unlocking impact through capacity building, technical support to Start-ups & SMEs.
- **Connector** – Building bridges between enterprises, investors, governments, and NGOs.
- **Collaborator** – Scaling ventures and integrating them into programs.
- **Catalyst** – Providing early-stage support and catalytic capital.

OUR PORTFOLIO (SELECTION)

HERIZON

HERIZON Program

Business acceleration program supporting 41 women-led SMEs

Together with SHONA, WHH is implementing the Herizon project, an ambitious initiative to accelerate women-led businesses in East Africa.



Agsol Start-up

Solar-powered micro mills for off-grid rural communities

Agsol offers a highly efficient and scalable alternative to conventional diesel mills to off-grid farming communities.



Toothpick Start-up

Bio-herbicide innovation increasing maize yields up to 70%

With their revolutionary bioherbicide technology, Toothpick combats the highly invasive parasitic striga weed in maize farms across Africa.

Unlocking the potential of digital technologies for vulnerable communities.

THE CHALLENGE

Rapid advances in digital technologies and artificial intelligence offer powerful opportunities to improve agriculture, nutrition, and rural livelihoods. Yet many communities in the Global South (particularly in rural and remote areas) remain excluded from these benefits. Limited connectivity, low digital literacy, and solutions that are not designed for local realities continue to hinder adoption. The digital divide also exists within countries—between urban and rural populations, generations, and men and women. As a result, many digital innovations fail to reach the people who could benefit from them most, limiting their potential to drive inclusive and sustainable development.

OUR FOCUS

- Closing critical literacy- and data gaps for smallholder farmers (actionable & locally relevant)
- Improving access to essential services (health, education, agriculture, markets & financing)
- Enabling AI-powered scalable solutions for vulnerable communities (inclusive & locally sustained)

OUR PORTFOLIO (SELECTION)



Digital Literacy Circles (DLCs)

DLCs are community-based trainings in local languages that help farmers, health workers, refugees, and other rural users build confidence using smartphones and digital services through practical, hands-on learning.



Agricultural Service & Extension Apps

These mobile apps provide smallholder farmers with practical guidance on farming practices, productivity, and market access, helping them improve their yields, incomes, sustainability and market inclusion.



Child Growth Monitor App (CGM)

The CGM App uses AI and smartphone technology to measure children's height and support early detection of malnutrition, enabling health workers to identify risks early and intervene sooner.