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## **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual CAMTech Uganda Medtech Hack-a-thon spurs global health innovation and co-creation**

*Mechanical suction, neonatal care and E-Health tools win top prizes in Mbarara*

**Mbarara, Uganda, 2 September 2015** – The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual CAMTech Uganda Medtech Hack-a-thon brought together over 200 participants and mentors from more than 30 universities and organizations from across Africa, North America and Asia for a weekend of ideation, innovation and co-creation. Held at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST), the 48-hour event invited students, engineers, entrepreneurs, clinicians and end-users to collaborate and develop affordable medical health technologies that address identified clinical pain points in Uganda and around the world.

[The Consortium for Affordable Medical Technologies \(CAMTech\)](#) is a global network of academic, corporate, and implementation partners whose mission is to build entrepreneurial capacity and accelerate medical technology innovation through an open innovation platform. CAMTech innovators who come from public health, engineering and business work with end-users in low-and middle-income countries (LMICs) to develop disruptive innovations that have the potential to achieve widespread public health impact. [CAMTech Uganda](#) is administratively housed at MUST and exists to support local innovators to transform their ideas into solutions that can revolutionize the health outcomes of people living in Uganda and across the globe. The event was organized through support from Massachusetts General Hospital Global Health, with additional sponsorship from the Uganda Communications Commission, Africell and Coca-Cola.

Participants worked around the clock to pitch healthcare problems, form teams, prototype solutions, and develop business models before presenting their ideas to a panel of judges from public health, engineering and business, reflecting CAMTech’s cross-sector approach to innovation.

“We had an overwhelming number of applications this year, and that zeal to participate in the hack-a-thon was reflected in the energy throughout the event,” said CAMTech Uganda Country Manager Dr. Data Santorino. “There was a strong sense of entrepreneurship among the participants, evidenced by the quality of their innovations and business plans.”

Prior to the hack-a-thon, CAMTech Uganda held three multi-disciplinary workshops addressing human centered design, entrepreneurship and best practices for success during and after the hack-a-thon. CAMTech Uganda also organized clinical site visits to four different Ugandan hospitals where participants were able to hear from healthcare workers about the challenges they face caring for patients.

A total of 47 teams presented novel technologies that addressed critical health care pain points, including lack of suction devices to challenges in neonatal and trauma care. This year's hack-a-thon awarded \$3,000 USD (approximately 10.5 Million UGX) in prize money to the following teams:

**First Place \$1,000 USD:** Team MOSES: Mechanically Operated Suction and Evacuation System, a low-cost suction device used in medical facilities where electricity and traditional suction pumps are not reliable or readily available.

**First Runner-Up \$750 USD:** Team Vein Finder, a low-cost tool that uses infrared light to improve the visibility of veins and assists clinicians with treating infant cannulation.

**Second Place \$500 USD:** Team Medicare, an e-system that uses a mobile platform to enable patients needing emergency care to communicate quickly and effectively with nearby hospitals and that also provides health information to the general public.

**Third Place \$250 USD:** Team Haem, an easy to use calibrated patient mat (mama mat) that helps to reduce the occurrence of maternal hemorrhaging.

“Our win at the hack-a-thon was very unexpected but came as a direct result of the environment that CAMTech creates at their events,” said Bharadwaj Swarna, a member of the team MOSES and a participant at several previous CAMTech hack-a-thons. “We were able to work with two doctors on our team who provided great mentorship and real-world insight. It’s all about the people that CAMTech brings together at each hack-a-thon that really creates value and helps us build great products.”

In addition to this year's winners, CAMTech Uganda and CAMTech will offer all hack-a-thon participants several post-hack-a-thon opportunities, including:

- \$1,000 USD to the team that makes the most progress with their innovation 30 days after the event.
- A one week post-hack-a-thon mentorship opportunity for teams to work with Philippa Ngaju Makobore from the Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) in the CAMTech Uganda Co-Creation Lab, a rapid prototyping facility that provides innovators with resources to continue moving their ideas forward.
- Innovation consultation opportunities with Dr. Kevin Cedrone (PhD from Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and a previous CAMTech Hack-a-thon winner.
- A mechanical design workshop in the Co-Creation Lab led by Mr. Michael Wollowitz, CEO of Tangible Designs during the month of September.

- Engagement, mentorship and collaboration with global and local experts from health, business and engineering and technology through the [CAMTech Online Innovation Platform](#).

CAMTech Director Elizabeth Bailey emphasized the importance of providing teams with ongoing mentoring and support after the event, since the hack-a-thon is often just the beginning of the innovation cycle.

“Right after our first hack-a-thon, we learned that we had sparked something very special in all of these young minds, and that it was our responsibility to keep that spark alive by continuing to offer more resources and opportunities,” said Bailey. “The process of developing a medical technology is often long and hard, and we want to help keep the momentum in place by creating more incentives that inspire and encourage our innovators to continue driving their ideas forward.”

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CAMTech Uganda is part of the Consortium for Affordable Medical Technologies (CAMTech) and is administratively housed at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST). CAMTech Uganda has built an innovation ecosystem at MUST that includes monthly Innovation Cafes to discuss challenges in health and an Innovation Office that helps innovators transform their ideas into concepts. CAMTech Uganda’s Co-Creation Lab, a rapid prototyping facility, enables innovators to develop functional prototypes that have since attracted funding from various donor agencies and investment groups.

The Consortium for Affordable Medical Technologies (CAMTech) is a global network of academic, corporate, and implementation partners based at Massachusetts General Hospital's Center for Global Health. CAMTech's mission is to build entrepreneurial capacity and accelerate medical technology innovation to improve health outcomes in low- and middle-income countries. CAMTech's approach enables *co-creation* where innovators across public health, engineering, and business engage with LMIC end-users to develop disruptive medical technologies to achieve widespread public health impact. Since 2012, CAMTech has brought together over 2,000 innovators from more than 516 clinical, academic and commercial organizations to participate in medtech hack-a-thons, award programs and entrepreneurial-building initiatives. These efforts have helped spawn over 350 new technologies addressing intractable problems such as newborn asphyxia, post-partum hemorrhage and cervical cancer. CAMTech’s initiatives, including its newly launched [Online Innovation Platform](#), help connect and support a global community of innovators working to improve health in developing and emerging markets.