

Pitch to inspire entrepreneurs and bright energy ideas that open up access to energy in Africa and beyond

Akon and Hardwork debut new song on pitch that will feature in music video celebrating potential of renewable energy

Global music star Akon joined Shell to shine a light on the power of innovative options for access to smarter energy by unveiling Africa's first human and solar powered football pitch at the Federal College of Education, Akoka, Lagos. The new pitch is the latest initiative from Shell's #makethefuture programme, which puts bright energy ideas into action to bring benefits to local communities around the world.

(Photo: <http://photos.prnewswire.com/prnh/20151210/294903> )

The football pitch was refurbished by Shell using more than 90 underground tiles that capture kinetic energy created by the movement of the players. The tiles are the invention of a young British entrepreneur and founder of Pavegen, Laurence Kemball-Cook, who has been supported through Shell LiveWIRE. The kinetic energy is then stored and combined with power generated by solar panels to operate the new floodlights. This bright energy idea allows the students to play at night and provides a safer and more secure space at the heart of the community.

Music superstar and solar entrepreneur Akon joined Shell to officially open the pitch and continue his commitment to teaching young Africans the importance of harnessing the power of Africa's renewable energy. The singer is spearheading, through Akon Lighting Africa, a large scale effort to develop solar-powered solutions that will provide African communities with access to clean and affordable sources of electricity. As part of the celebration at the Federal College of Education, Akon and DJ artist Philip "Hardwork" Constable debuted their new song "Tell Me We're OK" in an exclusive performance on the pitch before its release in 2016. The innovative football pitch will feature in the upcoming music video.

Osagie Okunbor, Country Chair, Shell Companies in Nigeria & Managing Director of The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Ltd (SPDC) said, "Shell makes a significant contribution to energy solutions for Nigeria, and we are committed to supporting the Nigerian economy and its people. We need bright energy ideas. Some of these will come from Shell but naturally, others will come from outside our business. So it's crucial that Shell supports energy entrepreneurs, and we hope that this pitch will inspire more entrepreneurs and young people to help us make a smarter energy future."

Akon commented, "New, reliable and smarter energy solutions play a major role in driving human progress in Africa. Projects like this innovative football pitch draw attention to the major opportunity that Nigeria as well as the whole of Africa have if we look to better harness new technologies and the continent's abundant renewable energy resources. That is why Hardwork and I will feature this pitch in our upcoming video for "Tell Me We're OK" because I want young people, whether they are in Lagos, Los Angeles or London to think about how they too can help us make the future."

Shell LiveWIRE is an international programme that has been a catalyst for young entrepreneurs to develop enterprising ideas into viable and sustainable businesses for more than 30 years. The LiveWIRE programme was launched in Nigeria in 2003, and since then it has trained more than 6,000 youths in enterprise development and management, of whom more than 3,000 have been provided with business start-up assistance.

Laurence Kemball-Cook, Pavegen founder and CEO and Shell LiveWIRE UK Young Entrepreneur of the Year Finalist in 2011, said, "Our work with Shell has been pivotal to Pavegen's growth. We got involved with Shell LiveWIRE and Shell Springboard, and both programmes have really helped us transition from a start-up to a small company with a 25-strong staff and global IP. I'm grateful for all the support Shell has given us, and hope we can continue to grow in the smart city future."

Siji O. Olusanya, Provost of the Federal College of Education, Akoka, added, "We have more than 10,000 student teachers, who will benefit from this innovative solution to light our football pitch. They will be the next generation of teachers across Nigeria and can use their first-hand experience of this pitch to inspire their pupils that they too can work towards developing bright energy ideas that could make a real difference to their community, Nigeria or even the world. Not only our students but the community that surrounds us will all get to benefit from this pitch for years to come."

To find out more about how Shell supports bright energy ideas, search #makethefuture on Google.

Notes to Editor:

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