

About us

As part of the Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, the Milken Innovation Center's work focuses on developing market-based solutions to Israel's greatest challenges as it transitions from a start-up nation to a global nation. Our goal is to accelerate economic growth, build human capital, and cement Israel's role as a pioneer in addressing global challenges in water, food, education, health, and energy with solutions that others can replicate.

The Blum Lab for Developing Economies is part of the global network of Blum Centers for Developing Economies based at the University of California-Berkeley enabling interdisciplinary problem solving in key areas of energy, health, technology, food, water, health and other challenges to sustainable development. From more information: www.milkeninnovationcenter.org

Fellows Programs

In 2020, we combined the Israel Fellows and the Global Fellows program, merging the orientation and specialized training for both Fellows groups. Fellows also participated in a credit course at the Hebrew University on Financial Innovation and a workshop on Project Finance Mechanics. Our current Fellows include:

- Hadar Zar Aviv at the Ministry of Environmental Protection with a project on the economic costs of water pollution
- Marina Lubanov at the Israel Innovation Authority with a project on financing Israeli pilot projects in developing economies
- Maya Shaton conducting research at the Israel Tax Authority on fiscal policies that impact Israel's high-tech sector as a macroeconomic accelerator
- Merav Kaplan at the Ministry of Finance, Office of the Chief Economist on a project about the financial viability of the Israeli pensions
- Michael Waweru at Israeli company AvenueGT with a project to build the financial infrastructures to support small holder farmers in Kenya
- Sigalit Lidai at the Start-up Nation Central with a project on designing financial tools needed to support Israeli development projects in Latin America
- Tosin Gbadegesn at Gigawatt Global working a mini-grid solar project in Nigeria



Resilient operations during Pandemic

In addition to their projects in their Fellowships, two Fellows have been working on COVID 19 response projects (at the Ministry of Finance on financing for businesses and at Start-Up Nation Central on Israeli technologies that can be useful in international pandemic responses). We also

posted an [Op-Ed article](#) in *Haaretz* on financial technologies that may be used to help with the development of tracking and testing, therapeutics, and vaccines.

In January we held our annual [Alumni Conference](#) in memory of our Alumna, Tal Lecker, featuring a presentation and discussion by Prof. Eyal Winter, Institute for Advanced Studies, Center on Rationality, Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



Fellows Alumni Training, January 2020

Financial Innovation Labs

The Milken Innovation Center released an important new Lab report, entitled “[Accelerating Agritech Solutions in Israel, California, and Developing Economies.](#)” This report followed a Lab conducted through the California Israel Global Innovation Partnership in 2016. The Lab report identifies the effectiveness of Israeli technologies in addressing global Sustainable Development Goals in Israel, California, and the developing economies, and the financial tools needed to fill critical gaps.

The Lab report is particularly important and relevant in the time of Covid-19 which is covering the globe with shutdowns, quarantines, sickness, and deaths, shaking global supply chains to their core. Food losses (ranging from 20-50 percent in the developed economies and higher in the developing economies) are soaring, transportation linkages to markets for over 25 percent of global supply that must cross international borders are stalled or closed altogether, and new approaches to inclusive production and financial collaboration among large multinational corporations and small-holder farms are more important than ever. We will see the adoption of new packaging technologies, new solutions to reduce harvest and post-harvest waste, an increasing focus on regional production, processing, and consumption, and new growing technologies to lower labor and health risks. The sudden, but long-term nature of the global pandemic and its impact on food supply, nutrition, and health bring new importance to the recommendations contained in this report – pressing us to find ways to accelerate the adoption of agritech solutions for world health and the health of the world.



Updates about Projects

- The Kidron-Wadi El Nar River which runs from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea and carries about 14 million cubic meters of raw municipal sewage is being cleaned up with pipes, tunnels, and treatment facilities through Israel and Palestinian areas as a result of over a decade of planning and development work, including innovative financial structuring and modeling by the Milken Innovation Center. As [reported in Haaretz](#) this month, the project will open up one of the most important tourism assets in the region, providing recreation, heritage, and education opportunities for international tourists to the region, and creating economic development opportunities for residents across all borders. The project will also create a steady supply of treated water to feed date palm plantations in the Jericho area. See more background (reports/videos) on project [here](#).
- Following planning work on new impact investment strategies, the Keren Hayesod launched the [KH Impact Fund](#) in 2020. Milken Innovation Center conducted workshops for the planning and design of the new program and Glenn Yago of the Milken Innovation Center serves on the KH Impact Fund's Investment Advisory Committee.

Updates about Recent Events

- Briefing of USAID Administrator Mark Green at Ministry of Foreign Affairs related to signing of USAID-MASHAV (Israel's Agency for International Development Cooperation) MOU. Focus on pipeline development for transactions supporting development objectives using pay-for-results for transaction origination and application of blended finance capital structures for food, water, health, energy water projects. August 19, 2019
- Hosted 18 members of California Legislative Delegation to Israel. December 2 sessions on the California Israel Global Innovation Partnership with Amnon Shashua, CEO, Mobileye (Jerusalem); December 3, Program on Economic Development and the Palestinian Technology Sectors with Yadin Kaufman (Sadara Ventures), Rowan Alawi (Tech Entrepreneur), Marwan Meqbil (Palestinian Internship Program); Yusef Seroji, Gigawatt-Global Palestine (Berkeley MDP grad); and Khaled abu Al-Kehir, Pitchpoint (Ramallah); and December 5 Briefings at Start-Up Nation Central (Tel-Aviv) with Daniela Kandel on Innovation Bridges, Cleantech Policy and Program Development with Gil Shaki, Israel Innovation Authority, Dr. Yael Harman, Renewable Energy and Water, Ministry of Energy; and Health Policy with Prof. David Chinitz, Hadassah Medical School-Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- "DevTech and Innovative Finance: Accelerants for SDG Solutions," IFC- Milken Institute Fellows Training Lecture, George



International Finance Corporation-Milken Institute Scholars Training, George Washington School of Business, Washington, D. C., February 27, 2020

Washington University School of Business, Washington, February 27, 2020

- “How Israel Water Innovation Works in the U. S.,” Glenn Yago, Dean Amhaus (Wisconsin Water Center), Gili Elkin (Colorado Innovation Fund), AIPAC Policy Conference, March 1, 2020
- Impact investment Workshop: [Financing Food-Energy-Water Systems, Learning Lab](#), Glenn Yago led a workshop with the Solidaridad-Aspen Network for Developing Entrepreneurs in Johannesburg, South Africa, August 2019. The Learning Lab provided an in-depth opportunity to study cases of successful technology and financial solutions in developing economies.
- “What is High Yield? The Global Environment for Innovative Finance,” Stanford Law School, Glenn Yago guest lecture for class taught by Richard Sandler and Prof. David Mills, January 6.
- Building Bridges/Creating Impact: Israeli Innovation and World Change –Michael Milken (Milken Institute), Mitch Julis (Canyon Partners), Eugene Kandel (Start-Up Nation Central), moderated by Glenn Yago, sponsored by the Milken Institute and the Blum Lab for Developing Economies, January 13, 2020.
- “How can we work together? Building Co-Innovation Teams for SDGs”, Glenn Yago, Faculty Salon, Blum Center for Developing Economies, February 3, 2020
- “Reinventing Development Finance: Building Long-term Stability” Milken Institute Middle East and Africa Summit, February 11, 2020 (panelists included Adam Boehler, CEO, U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, Neveen El Tahri, Chair, Delta Investments (Egypt), Hassan Damluji, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Stephen Groff, Governor, Saudi National Development Fund, Frederic Samama, Amundi Asset Management
- “Africa and Israel: A Strategic Partnership for the Future,” Hon. Lois Frankel (US Congress); Amb. David Kahir Gacheru (Kenya), Dr. J. Peter Pham (U. S. State Department), Glenn Yago (moderator) AIPAC Policy Conference, March 1, 2020
- “Exploring Coronavirus Innovation: Roadmap to Action in Israel and Around the World,” Glenn Yago with Eugene Kandel, Start-up Nation Central; Alec Ellison, Our Crowd, and Suzanne Barton, Chair, Delaware Pension Board and Chair, Jewish Community of Delaware Endowment Fund, Investment Institute, May 7, 2020

- Glenn Yago with the Nigerian delegation from the TETFund with Hebrew University Faculty in Jerusalem “Agritech Development Partnerships for Growth and Impact,” Blum Lab for Developing Sustainable Development Goals and opportunities for partnerships between



Tertiary Education Fund-Nigeria Delegation, Israel National Academy of Sciences, November 17, 2019

Israel and Nigeria. November 2019. Economies workshop with the Nigerian TETFund Delegation representing major Nigerian Labs and Universities. Glenn Yago presented Israel’s progress in

agritech developments to global Sustainable Development Goals and opportunities for partnerships between Israel and Nigeria. November 2019.

- Spring Teaching: Development engineering seminar with the Blum Center for Developing Economies at the University of California-Berkeley. Participated in student and faculty workshop, including Prof. Alice Agogino and Dr. Yael Perez to development engineering and financial solutions for agritech, energy and water challenges. MDP-Haas School of Business MBA Course on Innovative Finance for Development.

Upcoming Events

- Glenn Yago, “Innovative Finance Development Trends,” Risk Management-Navigating Amidst Global Disruptions, 2020 Annual Treasurers Roundtable, July 14, 2020 SAAC Speaker Series Webinar, Global Fellows Program Opportunities and the Role of IT in Sustainable Development, sponsored by the Global Association of Masters in Development Practice and the Blum Lab for Developing Economies and the UN’s Sustainable Development Solutions Network – July 17, 2020. The webinar will focus on the digital deployment and the dissemination of 5G technology and the promotion of policies and programs that support blended finance and impact investing.
- “The Impact Revolution: Building the Investment Pipeline for an Inclusive Economy,” Milken Institute Webinar, July 22, 2020, Sir Ronald Cohen, Chair, Global Steering Group for Impact Investment, Portland Trust; co-founder director, Social Finance UK, USA and Israel, and co-found/Chair, Bridges Fund Management and Big Society Capital; Rene Karsenti, Senior Advisor/Former President, International Capital Market Association, Former Board Chair, International Finance Facility for Immunization, Honorary Director General, European Investment Bank; Julie Monaco, Managing Director, Global Head Public Sector Coverage, Corporate and Investment Bank, Citi.
- “Investing for Impact in Emerging and Frontier Markets,” Milken Institute Webinar, August 11, 2020, co-sponsored with Blum Lab for Developing Economies, USAID and MASHAV-Israel Cooperation and Development Agency.

