

## **Transformative education: Change, Growth and Empowerment**

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Entrepreneurship is a major source of employment, economic growth and innovation, promoting product and service quality, competition and economic flexibility. The culture of entrepreneurship in Kenya holds promise for the youth, enabling them to be drivers of employment creation.

According to a January 2013 report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 80 per cent of Kenya's 2.3 million unemployed people are 15-34 years old. There are about 500,000 youth who graduate from various tertiary institutions every year. However, due to the sluggish economic growth, corruption and other factors, a large percentage remains unemployed. During the country's budgetary 2014/2015 address, the government is committed on building on the continuous youth support initiatives. This was aimed to encourage entrepreneurship, innovation and creativity of the young people through The Uwezo Fund, Youth Enterprise Development Fund and Women Enterprise Fund which will be rationalized into an efficient and well capitalized fund to sustain the ever growing demands of our youth and women.

Currently, youth entrepreneurs are grappling with a number of challenges. 'Lack of capital at the early stage' is a commonly cited problem by entrepreneurs in East Africa, but the underlying problem especially for many later stage startups are: challenges with teams, skills, management of funds and experience. In particular, investors find most business plans are poorly developed and many teams lack any track record or experience relevant for their business model. (GSMA 2014).

Business schools have introduced entrepreneurship as a unit in their courses or programs. A good example is Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore's ALTIS Postgraduate School of Business and Society which has partnered with local universities in Africa such as Tangaza University college (CUEA) among by having a hands on approach to learning new skills where they implement immediately/directly to their businesses. This has strengthened the leadership and management skills of SME's hence leading to thriving business environment, thereby impacting their communities by promoting employment hence empowerment. Incubators and accelerators are also partnering with business schools to create a networking environment, easy access to funding (investments), collaborations with cooperatives and for budding startups. Some of these hubs include iHub, Mlab, Center For Social Impact among others.

I am a benefactor of the entrepreneurship programmes in the business school and business growth hubs. The impact that Mfarm has had to date on its 15000+ small scale farmer households include:

- 2x increase on their economic status,
- better access to health care,
- access to better education for their children,
- 4x employment (casual labor) within their farms
- and reinvestment in farm lands for production of quality yields (agribusiness).

### **Conclusion**

Entrepreneurship is at the center of technological research, scientific exploration, product creation and market transitions. Thus, entrepreneurship education program need to be accorded the necessary attention and support by all the institutions for immediate improvement in its overall performance in Kenya.