

Cultivating a culture of entrepreneurship in Africa

When it comes to the promise of growth in Africa, progress has become less a question of what can be achieved and more of a question of what can't we achieve? Our potential as a continent is a living, growing force that is difficult to ignore.

By [Sihe Shabangu](#) 25 Jul 2017



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What we cannot afford to ignore though is the work that needs to be done to turn potential into success. We must start driving practical solutions to some of the more pressing challenges that have already had a hold on Africa for too long.

And unemployment needs to be first on the list. Looking at a sample of unemployment statistics from across Africa, it's clear we have a long way to go.

In Kenya, the rate of unemployment recently hit [a new high of 39.1%](#), according to the UN Human Development Index 2014. Meanwhile, Ghana's graduate unemployment rate is also exceptionally high - the [World Bank's latest report](#) on jobs in Ghana estimates that 48% of 15 to 24-year olds are unemployed. The current outlook in Uganda is also extremely troubling with [58% of people between 14 and 64 unemployed](#), according to the results of a National Housing and Population Census conducted by the Ugandan Bureau of Statistics.

The power of entrepreneurship

But the good news is that Africa is alive with entrepreneurial potential. [The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor](#) (GEM) provides a positive look at the total early-stage entrepreneurial activity (TEA) rate in a number of African countries. The TEA rate essentially measures the percentage of the population who are either nascent entrepreneurs or owner-managers of a new business. In Uganda this sits at 35.5% and in Ghana at 25.8%.

There's little doubt that through the support of entrepreneurs we can have a positive effect on unemployment and working poverty rates. [The EY Global Job Creation and Youth Entrepreneurship Survey 2015](#) revealed that 47% of entrepreneurs have plans to increase the size of their workforce. This compared to just 29% of larger corporations.

But despite this, the job creation expectation rate for many countries in Africa still remains quite low - in Ghana it is currently at 8.5% and in Uganda at 6.2%, according to GEM.

In light of this, we need to start questioning whether potential business owners are being equipped with the skills they need to achieve true business growth - the kind of growth that will start having a positive impact on the economic outlook for our continent.

And perhaps even more importantly - are we equipping our children to create job opportunities or simply to build careers?

It's time to think big

If we are going to achieve the level of impact we seek, we need to think bigger than just the funding of small businesses and focus on creating a true culture of entrepreneurship.

It was greatly encouraging to receive feedback from one of our Samsung Female Academy students in Ghana who speak about her own hopes to one day run a business. Comfort Pokua was raised by her grandmother after her parents passed away. Because she didn't have the money for secondary education, the academy programme was instrumental in opening new doors for the aspiring businesswoman.

On her journey she says she has learnt a lot about customer service and how to install and reassemble Samsung products. But most importantly, Comfort feels that she now has the skills needed to one day run her own company.

It's because of our desire to create more stories like this one that Samsung has implemented similar initiatives all across Africa. From Nigeria to Ethiopia, Ghana and South Africa, our engineering academies and technical programmes are helping to develop young talent into skilled professionals and future business leaders.

What we need now is to see the journey towards a culture of entrepreneurship starting much earlier on, with childhood development. We must find ways of ensuring that children who are just starting school in Grade 0 are encouraged and inspired to one day create jobs rather than just looking for them.

If we can start to nurture a true spirit of entrepreneurialism in Africa amongst our youth, we can take our vibrant potential and turn it into something powerful.

Source: African Media Agency.

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