

E4Impact- How to build African ideas into enterprises



There is no lack of entrepreneurship in Africa, but developing a great idea into a viable enterprise requires profound business expertise. Hence the great need for a practical action-oriented MBA education like E4Impact Foundation offers in Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast. The successful program – 185 entrepreneurs trained, 204 currently in ‘class’ – is ready to take the next step.

[E4Impact Foundation](#), a spin-off from the Catholic University of Milan, Italy, offers its Executive MBAs for African impact entrepreneurs in partnership with local universities in five African countries. With 40 days in class over 12 months the program is action-oriented and entirely focused on participants’ business ideas and ventures. The reward is both a local degree and a Master Degree by the Catholic University of Milan – as well as a multitude of methods to build ideas into enterprises. “We are ready to aim for a pan African level, offering 9 active MBA-programs in 2016”, says Mario Molteni, CEO of the E4Impact Foundation.

What is the big need among African impact entrepreneurship?

“Sub-Saharan Africa is a region with enormous potential. There is also a great number of informal micro enterprises that are not yet able to capture the opportunities. They have little or no structure and are rarely capable of dialoguing

with banks and financial institutions. They are thus shut-off from the capital, both human and financial, needed to expand to reach the SME scale.”



What is the struggle?

“Would-be entrepreneurs with a business idea struggle to find the structure and guidance to systematically test their idea in the marketplace. Small business owners often lack the business acumen necessary to dialogue with financial institutions and larger customers. Proven impact entrepreneurs struggle to identify partners with the skills necessary to apply their model to a new geographical context possessing the same social challenges.”

What is your offer?

“Our MBA program aims to attenuate these problems and weakens the probability of collapse of a new enterprise. The program is action-oriented; the focus of E4Impact MBA is on the practical aspects of being an entrepreneur. Our MBA is not an academic exercise, but applied learning where entrepreneurs are guided in verifying the feasibility of their business project and in drafting an investor-ready business plan.”

Applied learning?

“Our MBA program is as ‘hands-on’ as possible. With this in mind, we also provide for mentorship programs and a dedicated business coach, who as a consultant gives individual support in refining the Business Idea, developing the Business Model and the Business Plan. The MBA program focuses on the participants’ own business ideas. Each academic module works on a particular aspect of running a business (Strategy, Marketing, Accounting & Finance, Operations, HR). Being an entrepreneur is a hard job, but if you have a strong desire of creating something out of nothing, you’re already halfway. We help to go through the other half of the path.”

How are you moving forward in Africa?

“We started in 2010 in Kenya, now we are also in Uganda, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone with 185 entrepreneurs trained and 204 under training. Thanks to the creation of E4Impact Foundation in 2015 we will be able to offer the MBA in at least 16 African countries by 2020, bringing a greater impact on the continent: over 3,000 entrepreneurs trained, 500 new enterprises and thousands of new jobs in the formal economy.”

Which alumni are you most proud of?



“The list is long. I’d like to mention just a few. Stephen Eku, founder and CEO of Emigoh Ghana, specialising in dairy and juices processing. He managed to expand his business and his customer base tremendously, cooperating with a network of 3,000 retailers in the Accra region. Susan Oguya, founder and COO of M-Farm in Kenya, was nominated by Forbes among the 20 youngest power women in Africa in 2014. She is very successful with her agribusiness software solution for Kenyan farmers. Joseph Nkandu, founder and director of NUCAFE in Kenya, established a sustainable market-driven system of coffee farmer enterprises and organizations. He also managed to build a farmer owned coffee processing factory. His ‘Farmer Ownership Model’ was selected among the EU’s CTA Top 20 innovations that empower farmers.”