

The MBA that gives hands-on experience



The Executive MBA in Impact Entrepreneurship is one of the innovations in learning offered by Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi.

By Desire Mbabaali

Elias Aryanyijuka, one of the students pursuing the Executive MBA in Impact Entrepreneurship, says this MBA was what he needed to boost his Tours and Travel business.

“I completed my undergraduate in 2010, but did not have interest in pursuing any postgraduate programme because being in private business, I was much more interested in earning money. To me, upgrading was a wastage of time,” he recounts.

However, a friend told him about that programme, especially how it works conveniently for self-employed people. “I knew that was just what I needed. The beauty with it is that it is tailored for entrepreneurs, more so, young entrepreneurs ready to have their businesses grow and create a social impact. I saw that this was in line with what I wanted for my tours and travel business. At the time when I enrolled, my business was one year old,” he says.

Like Aryanyijuka, Carina Juilfs, a German national and student on the MBA also needed something practical and hands-on. “I needed a course where one moment you learn and the other implement what you have learnt. That is what the E4Impact MBA does,” she says.

The difference

Aryanyijuka notes that whereas most MBAs are generic, this is tailored to each person’s business or business idea. “What you study is personalised to one’s business something you cannot find with many other MBAs. You do not learn anything else apart from your business or your business idea. When I am answering questions, I answer as the business owner using practical examples of what is going on in my business,” he says.

Juilfs also compares this to courses where focus is put on case studies other than one’s business. “Throughout the classes, I have personally developed a social business idea that is currently at the start up stage. I have been taught how to package it and from September to date, I have been pitching my idea to investors and been getting more networks,” she says. She also notes that in addition this MBA is flexible, giving one time to implement what they have learned, since classes run over the weekends and online.

Eligibility

Like in any other postgraduate course, one must have an undergraduate degree. “One must also have a business that is already running, or an idea that can be developed throughout the course of study,” Aryanyijuka says. After enrolling, students are given a timetable of how the different classes will run, videos and other learning materials, plus assignments to go implement in the field. Some of the issues handled on the course are; business analysis, marketing, business ethics and business development, among other things.

Mulwana Kizito of SEFA Organic, and an alumni of the MBA shares that if one has been in business before, the course makes them realise the mistakes they have been making.

“For example, I had been a project manager in one business, and did not know about my duty for a long time, but when we learnt about project management, I saw all the business mistakes I had been making,” he says.

Furthermore, Aryanyijuka shares that, “I was poor at records management, but in our first class, this was one of the major areas of emphasis. After learning, I

implemented this. My staff at office were wondering and surprised about what was happening and to me, this was a big achievement. When we learned about branding, I had to rebrand my company and right now, I am reaping big,” he says.

How it is conducted

The MBA is structured as a training camp where each course directly responds to a concrete need that arises while implementing a start-up or scale-up strategy. The duration of the programme is 12 months and it is structured into three class training periods for lessons and exercise; six weekends from Friday to Sunday. In total, the student spends 45 days in class in a space of 18 months.

The process. All MBA candidates apply their business projects and participate in the Business idea competition and selected on the base of the quality of their business projects. Guided by lecturers and mentors, who scrutinise these, a business idea and its draft are created and participants pitch their projects to a jury. Participants then proof their business models after which, they are ultimately challenged and validated, weaknesses fixed, and strengths optimised. It all ends with participants pitching their work to a panel of international investors and partners in the Business Plan Competition.

Rewards

The MBA in Impact Entrepreneurship is awarded by the School of Economics of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan, Italy and Uganda Martyrs University.

Impact. Statistically, 642 entrepreneurs have been trained, 33 per cent women entrepreneurs. Additionally, 73 per cent of the E4Impact Alumni have running businesses.

VITAL VOICE

The Executive MBA in Impact Entrepreneurship, also known as E4impact is an initiative by ALTIS Graduate School Business and the Society of the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan, Italy in 2005 to forge fast growing countries' sustainable development through Impact Entrepreneurship, working with local universities in different countries such as Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi. The

Daily Monitor

goal is to develop a new generation of entrepreneurs able to couple economic success with social impact, build universities' capacity to run self-sustainable programmes on social entrepreneurship and foster an international entrepreneurial ecosystem.

Undertaking the MBA helps guide active and aspiring entrepreneurs to start-up or scale-up their businesses through; transforming their business ideas into a business plans, develop business skills necessary for new ventures and link them with an international network of potential partners and investors to grow their businesses.

Felix Idraku, Cordinator E4Impact MBA, Uganda Martrys University