African universities are interested in connecting. Universities welcome this programme. Another cause they usually don’t do MPA Programmes to initiate a new or a different sector of the market been a great opportunity for them to network with each other, exchange students, professors, develop research programmes – it is, in fact, an opportunity for universities to network outside of Africa.

The third reason is the link with University in Italy because it makes it possible the exchange of students and professors, so it also another great opportunity to network outside of Africa.

A: First of this programme fill a gap. There are programmes are specifically tailored red for African countries; Kenya, Uganda, Sire Lyon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia and Signal. But the original idea comes from our program in Italy. But, these programmes have already done 27 Editions of the program and trained 700 students who have been able to create 3500 jobs across Africa. We are still looking to develop new MPA programmes in new countries, and after Sudan will be Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Gabon.

Q: What is the meaning of E4?
A: It is entrepreneurship for impact. It comes from Italy history. In aftermath of World War Two, Italy was totally destroyed and it was rebuilt by small and medium enterprises which generated a lot of jobs and wealth for a lot of people who almost lost everything. This whole idea is that only medium enterprises can really drive development in this country, and we think about entrepreneurship as an engine for sustainable growth. Small and medium enterprises have an affection and sentiments towards their communities and will not do anything wrong that harm the local community. So, there is a kind of connection between society and business in this context. And that makes them sustainable and this is not the case when we are speaking about big enterprises, because they are somewhat disconnected from the local communities. But entrepreneurship comes from the local communities and so care for the local communities and so they think they do not only contribute to the wealth of the company but also to the local communities.

Q: Q: Maybe the Professor can first give us a brief idea about the MBA programme?
A: The MBA programmes that we have in Africa is for African entrepreneurs like in Sudan because the idea is that you are contributing to sustainable development in your country. It is adapted to the African context but drawn from a programme we have for entrepreneurs in Italy but of course we adapted to fit different contexts, like Sudan. But the original idea comes from a programme in Italy. But, these programmes are specifically tailored red for African entrepreneurs.

Q: To what extent has this program assisted in attracting global entrepreneurs to Africa?
A: First of this programme fill a gap. There are so many academic programmes for entrepreneurs not only in Africa but also in Europe. So, for any university in Africa is a great opportunity to do or a different sector of the market because they usually don’t do MBA Programmes to attract entrepreneurs to Africa. This is the first reason why universities welcome this programme. Another reason is because of the Pan African Network. African universities are interested in connecting with each other because they have their own MBA programmes, so they also join the network with other African universities. So, universities in Kenya, Uganda, Sire Lyon, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Ethiopia and Signal is a great opportunity for them to network with each other, exchange students, professors, develop research programmes – it is, in fact, an opportunity for universities to network outside of Africa.

Q: How did you find the response in Sudan compared to the other seven African countries?
A: The response in Sudan has been great, actually beyond our expectations. We received a lot of applications for our MBA Programme and we were very excited because these are people who have been able to create 3500 jobs across Africa. We are still looking to develop new MPA programmes in new countries, and after Sudan will be Rwanda, Zimbabwe and Gabon.

We signed an MoU with the African Union because the AU considers this programme as one of the tools that assist in African integration.

There is also another thing which is very modern and that is there is a kind of friendship between our countries and people like to speak about Italy and there is a kind of connection between our two countries that made thing much easier than in other countries.

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Q: Now development is strongly linked with the private sector, so how can the MBA programme assist in this context?
A: It basically gives entrepreneurs the tools, the networks and access to international relations and help in the growth of their business to the next stage. The MBA programme is very practical it gives the tools necessary to establish a business that is successful, so it is not about a theory in management but about giving entrepreneurs the tools they need to get the enterprise in right direction and the tools they need to develop and the programme for the service they intend to offer to the market in a way that really fit the market. This is one side of the story. The other side is the networking if you join an MBA programme you will have access to local institutions and inves- tors, suppliers and distributors which enable your business to grow, in case we provide a platform for networks for investors this will give you the opportunity to present your business to investors. Then there is the international networking components which have two sides, the first side of the story is networking with other entrepreneurs, and so every year we have an MBA programme in the seven African countries and now plus Sudan and in every country we have entrepreneurs. That means you have a business in Sudan and thinking of doing business in Ethiopia, Uganda or Kenya the MBA programme can put you in touch with other entrepreneurs. So, you share this platform and if you want to export or import this will put you in contact with entrepreneurs in that target country in which the MBA programme work. The other side of the story is the international network which allows our entrepreneurs to come to Italy for one week every year and as many times as you like. They visit companies in Italy and also in many countries in an attempt to establish links and connections to work with the European market, importing or exporting and also understand how the business work in Italy and the European Union. There is also the component of how to organize business in Italy and to have a vision of how business work. These are the reasons that why we think the MPA can contribute to development.

Q: So, also indirectly you are also assisting in African economic integration?
A: Yes, this is a big word but we like to think that we are a little seed in the African Union because we have signed an MoU with the African Union a couple of years ago, because the AU consider this programme as one of the tools that assist in African integration.

Interview by Alula - Marwa – Hafiyaa / Photo: Alsir Mukhtar

The Response in Sudan has been Great, Actually beyond Our Expectations

The launch of the Global MBA First Edition in Sudan on 29th September 2018 represented a new gate for Sudanese aspiring entrepreneurs to develop their business and marketing skills. Sudan Vision took this opportunity and interviewed Prof. Fabio Pettroii, Director of Programme of the E4 Impact Foundation. The interview was attended by E4 Impact Foundation’s Co-Founder Fabrizio Lobasso, the Italian Ambassador in Sudan who made some valuable contribution.