E4Impact project gives SMEs more than a chance

Initiative started to support start-ups grow into giants that can create jobs for youth and women has so far impacted 1,000 enterprises. Pages 263
**E4Impact initiative: Giving small business more than just a chance**

E4Impact is an initiative started to train impact entrepreneurs in Africa. Initiative is funded by The European Union, French Embassy and other partners.

**Thousands of new jobs**

E4Impact currently offers its programs in 12 African countries with a goal of training over 3,000 entrepreneurs and establishing 1,000 new enterprises and thousands of new jobs in the formal economy.

“**We help the entrepreneurs access finance, and also play a huge role in helping in digitisation of traditional business models. We also help in facilitating cross border trade and in job creation,**” says Frank Clinque, the General Manager, E4Impact Foundation.

**Coaching and mentorship**

In an economy that he says runs on the back of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) Governor Patrick Njoroge is one of the staunchest believers in the potential of E4Africa.

“An institution that provides space and helps SMEs grow is a timely one, and so an agreement between the CBK and E4Impact was way to go," says Dr Njoroge.

Kenya is a country famed for innovations.

It has had a growth of fintech firms, and E4Impact has collaborated with the CBK to help in up-to-date digitisation of such companies.

Dr Njoroge reminisces a hacket-erator competition in which, in 2019, Kenyan fintechs participated in Singapore, with two of the 15 finalists being Kenyan.

**Value addition**

And with a devastation on the economy thanks to the manuring Covid-19, Dr Njoroge says it is time that entrepreneurs gland their loins and go for the kill.

“We have a problem of climate change, and the negative effects on livelihoods have been exacerbated by Covid-19. We, more than ever before, need SMEs to shield livelihoods," he says.

Elizabeth Jebwot, a beneficiary of the first phase of the E4Impact accelerator programme, displays unique locally made crisps. Some of her products are using arrow root, others sweet potatoes, while others come from chia seeds. Still, some she makes from sukuma wiki, others from mango and yet others from millet.

“The aim is to localise as much as we can. Use local products and make these products from that, considering what our people eat. We do not need to keep on importing; we actually need to nationalise and market our staple food out there. MukiMo (a Central Kenya dish of mashed potatoes, pumpkin leaves and maize) would be a huge hit in the United States, for example, and don’t you think we could do better with such locally acclaimed traditional dishes in our top eateries than having ethnic food?”

Dr Njoroge says while entrepreneurs should jump onto the bandwagon and leverage on the growth of E4Impact, they should make sure that their ventures are people-centric, help in further protecting the environment as the world tries to cope with climate crisis.

He also insists that the smallest of entrepreneurial ventures should be supported to grow into giants that can rival global behemoths.

“It is by supporting that local tailor who is just getting started that we can one day see them become a globally recognised brand. But these businesses have to ensure that they also give customers good quality that ensures value for their money,” Dr Njoroge says.

**Going organic**

But the entrepreneurs should also be responsible and when doing business should consider going organic and also creating socially responsible businesses, says Henriette Geiger, Head of European Union Delegation to Kenya.

“People are prepared to pay a lot of money if they know that your product followed rules of social responsibility,” she says.

“No rights have been violated en route to production, then your customers will commit to buy,”

She says the European Union, the
将成为该国最大的贸易伙伴，并促进中小企业的发展。

世界最大的贸易伙伴，是通过E4impact的倡议而实现的。该倡议的目标是为中小企业提供培训和融资支持，以促进它们的发展。

在意大利，中小企业（SMIs）在经济增长中发挥了重要作用。意大利的GDP贡献了40%的GDP。意大利的SMIs是全球最大的贸易伙伴，并促进了中小企业的发展。

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