**Seminar for African Entrepreneurs**

University of Ngozi, Burundi

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**GOAL OF THE SEMINAR**

Understand why entrepreneurship is very important for the African continent and give students tools to find and analyze business opportunities.

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# Day 1

## Description

The first class tries to explain the characteristics of the entrepreneurial activity and the main qualities of the entrepreneur. It also tries to find different motivational points of views to connect with the student and to make students see entrepreneurs are everywhere in the normal life.

## Duration

2 hours

## Material

* Projector
* Classroom with chairs
* Videos of African Entrepreneurs
* Slides with entrepreneur definition and characteristics

## Content

The content of the class is divided in three main blocks described below:

### Block 1: Definition and characteristics of an entrepreneur

First we introduce the definition of entrepreneurship given by the Harvard Business School:

“*Entrepreneurship is the pursuit of opportunity without regard to resources currently controlled*”.

We discuss about the two most important parts of the definition:

1. Pursuit of opportunities: we make emphasis in the fact that opportunities are not necessarily business but also social opportunities. An opportunity is usually a problem that needs to be solved.
2. Resources controlled: we mention one of the most important characteristics of the entrepreneur is his motivation is the resolution of the problem, not the resources he needs/has to solve it.

Then, we analyze different characteristics usually present in entrepreneurs:

* **Nonconformist**: there is something that needs to be changed.
* **Ambitious**: something big can be achieved.
* **Tenacious**: hard tasks are not a problem, but a challenge.
* **Visionary**: the entrepreneur can see something other people can’t.
* **Convincing**: he’s good using words to convince other people about his vision.
* **Good leader**: he’s good working and leading people.
* **Likes execution**: he likes trying his ideas without spending a lot of the time thinking or planning. He prefers validating by doing: “Fail often, learn fast”.
* **Passion for businesses**: he like the process involved in the creation of a business like working with money, planning strategies and defining business models.
* **Deals well with uncertainty**: the entrepreneur understand there are many things that will change in the process of growing the business, so he’s not worried about finding solution on-the-go.
* **Fast learner**: multiple mistakes will be made during the development of the business, but the entrepreneur has the capacity to learn from each one of those mistakes to improve his future work.
* **Not afraid to take risks**: entrepreneurs are open to take risks by doing something different, something that nobody else has done before. Failing is just the way they learn.

### Block 2: Videos of African entrepreneurs

After analyzing the definition and main characteristics on the entrepreneur, we ask to the students “Why entrepreneurs are important?”. This question has many possible answers, so we present different videos to understand the importance of the entrepreneur in our life and especially in Africa.

#### Video 1: “William Kamkwamba – TED Talk 2009”

This is a talk given by William Kamkwamba at Ted Kenia on 2009. During his talk William explains how he created a windmill when he and his family were starving to dead and how that changed his life. With this video we try to demonstrate why entrepreneurship may change their lives.

#### Video 2: “Evans Wadongo – Light it up”

This video shows an example of a social entrepreneur. Given a problem during his childhood where Evan had to study using kerosene lamps causing problems with his vision, he decided to create solar powered lamps. With this video we try to show how entrepreneurs can help their communities.

#### Video 3: “Ngozi-Okonjo Iweala – TED Talk 2007”

Ngozi-Okonjo Iweala explain different investment opportunities in Africa, particularly in Nigeria where she works as Minister of Finance. The main points of her talk are:

1. Aid isn’t bad for Africa, but it’s not the solution either. Africans are the owners of their own continent.
2. Africa is a continent, not a country. Investors must analyze the context of each country to find incredible investment opportunities.
3. Africans must create small business that attract the attention/money of the foreign investors and thus create thousand of new job opportunities.

### Block 3: Stories of close entrepreneurs

Finally, the teacher asks to the students to think about entrepreneurs they know. They can be small businessmen who created a restaurant or a small shop, people selling things in the market or any other person developing an entrepreneurial activity.

Students form a circle of chairs and the teacher seats among them listening the stories. The point is to make the students talk to each other, not to the teacher. They must try to find close stories about people they know personally. The point of this activity is to make students see entrepreneurs are everywhere.

When the class comes to its end, we give the students a task for the next class:

Talk with some of the entrepreneurs you mentioned and ask them why they started: to change their lives? to change something in their community? to help their families or countries?

# Day 2

## Description

The second class is aimed to make student start thinking about problems they can solve using limited resources. One of the most important points discovered during the first day is the fact that African students think they don’t have resources to start. During the second and third day we’ll analyze mechanisms to start developing entrepreneurial projects with very limited resources.

## Duration

4 hours

## Material

* Projector
* Envelopes
* Elastic bands
* Clips
* Color paper
* Straws

## Content

The content of the second day is divided in two blocks described below:

### Block 1: Creation of a product with limited resources

The teacher asks the students to form groups of 3-4 people depending on the size of the class and after that, he gives each group an envelope containing some resources like elastic bands, clips, straws and color paper sheets. After this, the teacher asks each group to create a product that solves a real problem using those resources.

In order to make the process easier for the students, the teacher gives a first example using an elastic band. The elastic band is presented as a product aimed for people living in Ngozi where the rain is present many days of the year and the shoelaces get dirty when they touch the ground. The elastic band is placed around each shoe in order to make the shoelaces stick to the shoes.

This is a very simple example that shows a very basic (and not important) problem that can be solved with the resources presented.

While thinking about the product they want to create, the must prepare a presentation covering the following points:

1. **Problem**: What’s the problem the product is solving?
2. **Market**: How is the person or group of people having that problem and willing to pay for a solution?
3. **Solution**: How the product solves the problem?
4. **Competition**: Is there any other alternative to the product? While the product is better?
5. **Business model**: How is the product going to generate money? They need to propose a pricing model.

Once the presentation is finished, they must present it to the class.

Some examples of products created by students are:

* **Multi-color hair bands**: The elastic bands has different colors so they can be combined to create a multi-color hair band for women with long hair that want to look different every day.
* **Anti-copy paper**: Students can copy during exams by exchanging their paper sheets containing the solutions. However, the presented product use color paper so each column in the class use a different color and the teacher can detect if the students have exchanged a sheet of paper.
* **Set to create your own toy**: The product consists in an envelope and some materials. Kids will find inside the envelope a paper sheet with instruction to create different toys like paper airplanes using the provided materials. This product is aimed to be a really cheap toy for millions of kids in Africa with no resources to buy expensive toys in the market.

### Block 2: Identifying real problems

This block starts with the teacher playing the video where Vinod Khosla, one of the founders of Sun Microsystems and now a venture capitalist in Silicon Valley, explain in a class of Stanford (April 24, 2002) that every big problem is a big opportunity, and with no problem to solve there is no opportunity.

The point of this video is to make the students understand that a really interesting approach to find valid business opportunities is to detect problems in our society and normal life.

After this, the teacher presents the technique of “Brainstorming” where given certain question each member of the group can propose an answer or idea and the rest of the group can’t make any comment about the idea. Every answer or idea proposes is valid regardless of how simple it can sound. The group creates a list of the proposed answers.

After explaining the technique, each group use it to complete the next task proposed by the teacher:

*“Create a list of 15-20 different problems present in your normal lives like. Some examples are the lack of enough hospitals in Burundi or the bad quality/speed of the access to the Internet in the university.”*

During the time the groups are preparing the list, it’s recommended the teacher helps each group, one by one, by asking an example of a problem they have proposed. Probably, the teacher will find many of the proposed problems are not very specific, so he’ll need to help the group to propose more specific problems. For example, “education is not good” is a very broad problem. Instead, the teacher can propose something like “education in Ngozi lacks preparation to use office software like Word or Excel that is very useful in the working life nowadays”.

When every group has finished the task, they mush chose one of the problems and present it to the class. It’s very common the students will choose a really ambitious problem. That’s good but the teacher must work with them to simplify it in order to choose a small part of the overall problem they can start solving with very limited resources.

Finally, the teacher gives the students a task to complete for the next day:

*“Think about the resources and partners you need and the activities you have to do in order to solve the selected problem.”*

# Day 3

## Description

The objective of the third day is to provide students with a technique that allows them to quickly analyze business opportunities in a structured way. The problem presented is the fact that every business changes constantly at the beginning, so a business plan document is a too rigid way to document the characteristics of the projects since theme are changing every day. The alternative presented is the Business Model Canvas technique.

## Duration

4 hours

## Material

* Projector
* Post-its
* Multiple Business Model Canvases printed on A3 sheets.

## Content

The content of the second day is divided into three blocks described below:

### Block 1: Presentation of the Business Model Canvas technique

The Business Model Canvas is a strategic management template for developing new or documenting existing business models. It is a visual chart with elements describing a project value proposition, infrastructure, customers, and finances.

In order to explain the different concepts present in the Business Model Canvas and the way it should be used we present a 2 minutes video created by the organization behind the Business Model Canvas. It can be found in their website or in Youtube:

http://www.businessmodelgeneration.com/

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\_embedded&v=QoAOzMTLP5s

This video explains the 9 different blocks of the Business Model Canvas:

1. **Value proposition**: The collection of products and services a business offers to meet the needs of its customers. A company's value proposition is what distinguishes itself from its competitors.
2. **Customer segments:** Various sets of customers can be segmented based on their different needs and attributes.
3. **Channels:** A company can deliver its value proposition to its targeted customers through different channels. Effective channels will distribute a company’s value proposition in ways that are fast, efficient and cost effective.
4. **Customer relationships:** To ensure the survival and success of any businesses, companies must identify the type of relationship they want to create with their customer segments.
5. **Key activities:** The most important activities in executing a company's value proposition.
6. **Key resources:** The resources necessary to create value for the customer. They are considered an asset to a company, which are needed in order to sustain and support the business.
7. **Key partners:** In order to optimize operations and reduce risks of a business model, organization usually cultivate buyer-supplier relationships so they can focus on their core activity. Complementary business alliances also can be considered through joint ventures, strategic alliances between competitors or non-competitors.
8. **Cost structure:** This describes the most important monetary consequences while operating under different business models.
9. **Revenue streams:** The way a company makes income from each customer segment.

### Block 2: The “Burundi’s World Cup of Football” Business Model Canvas

The teacher presents a fictional project that will be used to create a first Business Model Canvas. The example used is the organization of a World Cup of Football in Burundi. All student sit around a desk in order to participate in the creation of this Business Model Canvas with the guidance of the teacher.

In order to help the teacher, you can find below some bullet points with possible content to fill in this Business Model Canvas:

1. **Value proposition**: Football live in stadium, football live in TV, Traditional merchandise, music.
2. **Customer segments:** Local fans, global fans, TV viewers, football teams, advertisers.
3. **Channels:** TV, Fifa.com, Radio, Newspapers
4. **Customer relationships**: “We love football”
5. **Key activities:** Organization, safety, ticket sales, TV distribution
6. **Key resources:** Brand, football players, stadiums
7. **Key partners:** FIFA, Advertisers, football clubs
8. **Cost structure:** Safety, Infrastructure, People
9. **Revenue streams:** Ticket sales, Video rights, Merchandise

### Block 3: Preparation of a Business Model Canvas

Finally, the teacher asks the students to use the list of problems created during the previous class. Each group must select a problem from the list and create a Business Model Canvas proposing a business model that solves the selected problem.

The teacher must provide each group with a Business Model Canvas printed in a A3 sheet and post-its to fill in the document with their ideas.

It’s very likely that the students will find really complex solutions to the problems, involving multiple and expensive resources that’ll be difficult for them to get in a real situation. Once the first version of the Business Model Canvas is finished, the teacher will help each group to simplify it in order to propose a project that is viable for the students to start in the real life.

Each group must select a member to present the Business Model Canvas to the class and the other students must help him improve it.

It’s very important to emphasize students, especially in Africa, will object they don’t have resources to start a project. The teach must work with them in order to simplify their projects to make them viable with minimum resources. Even if they don’t have money to start a project, they have their time, knowledge and connections.