

Creative Solutions for Social Innovation: A View from Africa

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- By 2040 Africa will be the most populous continent in the world
- African countries are extremely young; over half the population is under the age of 20 in many countries
- Black African countries struggle to obtain funding for their companies
- Investors coming to Africa are almost unheard of, you have to come to America if you want to obtain funding
- Legal - Many countries struggle to have access to legal resources, for example there are only ~2,600 lawyers in Uganda, a country of 40+ million; bribery and corruption are also rampant in many African countries
- Financial - Women who took out loans more often paid back their loans and interest; they are responsible and also have entrepreneurial spirit; when they're paying for a product they are also very honest in their feedback
- Educational - Kids got trapped in school overnight due to a flood and spent their entire night learning new things on school tablets that they had; in their native languages, they called them "tablets for the curious"
- Scalability is an issue for several reasons, such as socioeconomic and cultural considerations (different values and customs from the West), 50+ languages in one country, etc.
- Africa has fewer stories; it doesn't have the same written history as the West, there's no Charles Dickens; there's a lack of stories of hope
- Entire ecosystem is lacking, not at all as supportive as, say, Silicon Valley
- Some structural barriers, like visas and export taxes making it cheaper to ship to UK than to Congo, need fixing
- Most people simply don't know these African companies exist - need to reach outside of your comfort zone if you want people to learn and know about you
- In this world, the one common thread we all share is our humanity and desire to solve common problems that we all face as humans

On Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a lifestyle

Coming up with new solutions never stops

When you sleep, you should dream about how you can change the world

The importance of changing your message to resonate with the audience

You have to tell a really compelling story

Talk about the people first

Communities and relationships FIRST

In the United States, too many people are comfortable with the way things are

Examples: health care and politics

But the people who do seek to escape the norm are on truly different levels, comparable to Joan of Arc

On Corruption

When it comes to corruption, just do a good job all the time and have integrity; do not succumb.

Sure, you will miss out on opportunities, but if you give in, you lose your own moral standing

Work with your strengths

Work with your strengths since everybody has their own strengths

Africa doesn't have nearly the same resources as Silicon Valley

But it has its differentiators, for example some countries in Africa have even stronger mobile penetration than the US

Don't try to make Snapchat w 250m users

Build a business that makes \$2mil

Snapchat model doesn't work in Africa

Also you shouldn't be giving things to people, you should be building a business

Don't get too caught up with technology

Unique features of Kenya, Ghana, Uganda

Kenya likes being early adopters; it's like the whole country is a fad. Something to improve upon is that the country needs to get women more involved.

In Ghana, nonprofits have to pay 25% of their money to the government while companies (like phone operators) in cahoots with the government can evade paying. On the other hand, bountiful local resources, inc. labor - Ghanaian engineers are super smart!

Ugandans are very resilient people, and it's not at all uncommon for a lawyer with taxi business on the side or a CEO to also sell bananas. However, many people in the country still need external validation, for example from the media.

😊 "If you want to see how creative Africa is, just look at all the ways people have come up with to be corrupt!"