

Grant boosts entrepreneurial training through African Leadership Academy

The African Leadership Academy (ALA) has received a multi-million rand grant from the PMI Educational Foundation (PMIEF). The grant expands on PMIEF's current partnership with the ALA, which seeks to introduce students to project management through the Build-in-a-Box curriculum.



Photo by Yan Krukau via www.pexels.com

The curriculum is a portable toolkit that provides content and teaching materials that allows ALA student facilitators to run professional Entrepreneurial Leadership camps in their home countries.

The curriculum is based on BUILD, a unique framework for teaching youth entrepreneurship to fight unemployment and engage them to lead solutions to local problems. ALA works with its students to find partner organisations that they can work with to run a successful and impactful camp in their respective countries.

Students enrolled in ALA's flagship two-year programme have led and facilitated over 60 Build-in-Box camps for over 2,000 of their peers in cities like Port Elizabeth, Nairobi, Accra, Harare, Bamenda, Kinshasa, and Lagos.

Entrepreneurs by necessity

Projections by the United Nations show that the world population will hit 10 billion by 2055. Approximately 95% of this growth will occur in low and middle-income countries. In particular, the population of sub-Saharan Africa is projected to double by 2050. As of 2022, 40% of Africa's population was under 15, making it the youngest continent.

According to the African Development Bank (ADB), the continent sees some 12 million students graduate each year and compete for three million jobs – resulting in sub-Saharan African youth becoming entrepreneurs by necessity and not by choice.

ALA's strategy is to train its students in entrepreneurship and project management and enable them to go into communities to train more young people to run and manage businesses. Successful start-ups will create much-needed employment and contribute to the GDP.

“By partnering with ALA, we have equipped over 1,700 emerging African leaders with project management skills in the recent year and are excited about continuing our relationship. Through ALA, we will work to transform Africa by developing a powerful network of young leaders who will work together to address Africa's greatest challenges, achieve extraordinary social impact, and accelerate the continent's growth trajectory,” says Dr. Ashley Forsyth, executive director at PMIEF.

“We're truly excited to collaborate with such an exemplary and impactful organisation.”

It starts in the classroom

Working with PMIEF, ALA is able to integrate project management skills into their STEM, entrepreneurial, or social impact programming and curricula so that the young people participating can apply these newfound skills to be more successful.

Quoting Henry Ford, MD of PMI Sub Saharan Africa, George Asamani says, “A country's competitiveness starts not on the factory floor or the engineering lab. It starts in the classroom. Passion, attitude, and character are one side of the enterprise coin, and having a program that sharpens the leadership and project management skills required to become entrepreneurs definitely helps and yields better results. The program is well-integrated with the industry, and PMI South Africa Chapter volunteers often provide the required support and participate with students in their projects and serve as mentors.”

“The programme's approach is well aligned to this year's World Youth Skills Day theme - skilling teachers, trainers, and youth for a transformative future. Entrepreneurship has been a driver of global economic growth, and Africa should be no different.”

In the long term, knowledge of project management skills is vital to creating more strategic and collaborative professional future partners and leaders.

The Class of 2023 has 126 students, more than half female, and drawn from 38 countries enrolled in the two-year diploma. In the traditional sense, the diploma replaces Grades 11 and 12. ALA combines a world-class faculty and unique instructional methods to create a robust student-centred curriculum that is designed to equip the youth with knowledge and inspiration to act as agents of change on the continent.

ALA is an accredited Cambridge International Examinations (CIE) test centre, the world's most popular international examination for high school students and A-Levels, and is widely accepted as proof of academic preparedness for entry into universities.

PMIEF announced more than R92 million worth of global grants this year to help youth-focused non-profits shape the next generation of leaders. These grants will enable recipient organisations to bring project management skills to an additional 2.1 million youth in 2023.

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