



ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CENTER & INNOVATION HUB



UOK- ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CENTER & INNOVATION (EBCI)

MAGAZINE : INNOVATION AND BUSINESS

LABOR FOR THE FUTURE



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WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF THE EBCI MAGAZINE

EDUCATE. EQUIP. EMPOWER. INNOVATE. IMPACT.

We are proud to present the inaugural edition of the Enterprise Business Center & Innovation (EBCI) Magazine, a new platform to spotlight the voices, ideas, and initiatives emerging from our vibrant entrepreneurial community at University of Kigali.

This edition features stories and reflections from members of our first cohort - young entrepreneurs who are shaping the future of business through innovation, resilience, and a commitment to social change. From tech-driven solutions to community-based enterprises, their journeys offer insight into what it means to build with purpose in today's world.

As part of our ongoing mission to empower students and early-stage entrepreneurs, the EBC provides hands-on support, mentorship, and training. This magazine is an extension of that mission - a space to share knowledge, inspire action, and celebrate the impact being made across Rwanda and beyond.

We hope you enjoy reading, learning, and growing with us.

The EBCI Team,
University of Kigali



UNIVERSITY OF KIGALI AND EBCI: EMPOWERING THE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

WHERE AMBITION MEETS OPPORTUNITY

The University of Kigali (UoK) stands as one of Rwanda's premier private universities, proudly shaping future leaders since 2013. Fully accredited and globally connected, UoK offers a vibrant, diverse learning environment with over 8,000 students representing more than 30 nationalities.

With two dynamic campuses, six specialized schools, and a focus on market-driven, globally competitive programs, UoK is committed to academic excellence, innovation, and preparing students to succeed in a rapidly changing world. Here, ambition finds the opportunity - and learning has no limits.



Enterprise Business Center & Innovation: Turning Ideas into Action

Founded in 2024 under the University of Kigali, Enterprise Business Center & Innovation (EBCI) is dedicated to empowering students and young professionals in innovation, entrepreneurship, and business development with an objective to reduce the level of unemployment amongst the youth after graduation.

EBCI offers a dynamic platform where aspiring entrepreneurs can learn, connect, and grow through:

- Workshops and intensive training programs
- Incubation of ventures up to two years
- Pitch competitions to showcase innovative ideas
- Short courses focused on practical business skills
- Networking events with industry leaders and experts
- Internship opportunities

At EBCI, we believe in transforming ideas into real-world impact and supporting the next generation of visionary business leaders.

VICE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KIGALI – PROFESSOR GEORGE KIMATHI

In this edition, we proudly highlight Vice Chancellor of the University of Kigali Professor George Kimathi, a leading academic and innovator in higher education. With a Ph.D. in Applied Mathematics and extensive experience in teaching, research, and university leadership, Professor Kimathi has shaped institutions across Africa with his commitment to excellence.

A Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (UK) and a Certified Bioethicist, he has advanced ethical research practices, mentored countless students, and embraced innovations like AI in education. His work in big data analytics and academic administration continues to inspire the next generation of scholars.

Professor Kimathi is deeply committed to mentorship and the development of future scholars. He has guided many graduate students through the complexities of academic research, encouraging them to enthusiastically pursue their passions.



PROF GEORGE KIMATHI

VICE CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF KIGALI

DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH & INNOVATION - PROFESSOR FELIX MARINGE

We are proud to spotlight Professor Felix Maringe, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Institutional Development, Research, and Innovation at the University of Kigali. A globally recognized academic leader, Prof. Maringe brings decades of experience from senior roles in South Africa and the United Kingdom. He is the author of over 120 scholarly publications - including 13 books - and has garnered more than 5,600 citations for his contributions to the field.

Renowned for his expertise in educational leadership and research methodology, Prof. Maringe has successfully supervised 30 doctoral candidates and is a respected member of the South African Academy of Sciences. With a PhD in Educational Leadership and Management from the University of Zimbabwe and the University of Southampton, he continues to shape the future of higher education through innovation, research excellence, and institutional transformation.



PROF FELIX MARINGE

DEPUTY VICE CHANCELLOR
INSTITUTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH &
INNOVATION
UNIVERSITY OF KIGALI

MEET THE TEAM: ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION

The Enterprise Business Center & Innovation (EBCI) at the University of Kigali is powered by a dynamic and dedicated team committed to nurturing the next generation of entrepreneurs. With diverse backgrounds in business development, academic research, strategic planning, and innovation, our team brings a wealth of experience to support aspiring business leaders.

From organizing high-impact workshops and pitch competitions to offering personalized mentorship and startup support, each team member plays a vital role in creating an environment where ideas can grow into sustainable ventures.

Together, we are building a strong entrepreneurial ecosystem – one idea, one startup, and one student at a time.



Ruth Mbabazi

Coordinator, Enterprise Business Center & Innovation (EBCI)

Ruth Mbabazi is the visionary leader behind the Enterprise Business Center & Innovation (EBCI) at the University of Kigali. As Coordinator, she is dedicated to fostering a culture of entrepreneurship, innovation, and knowledge-sharing among students and young professionals.

With expertise in business development, startup incubation, and educational empowerment, Ruth plays a central role in guiding aspiring entrepreneurs, building strategic partnerships, and driving impactful programs that contribute to sustainable growth in Rwanda's innovation ecosystem.

MEET THE TEAM: ENERGIZING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INNOVATION



Goodwins Oduor

University Records & Archives Manager

Goodwins Oduor serves as the University Records & Archives Manager, where he oversees information management and ensures smooth access to both educational and business resources.

With a strong background in academic research, data management, and institutional support, Goodwins plays a key role in maintaining the integrity of university records and enhancing the efficiency of knowledge systems that support learning, innovation, and administration.

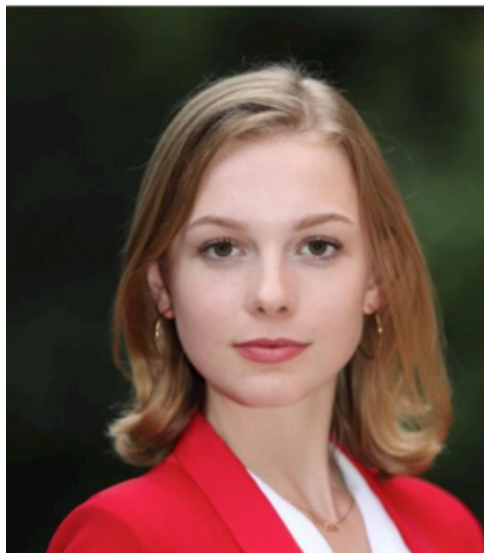


Noam Pistagnesi

Entrepreneurship Advisor (Volunteer)

Noam Pistagnesi is a dedicated Entrepreneurship Advisor at the Enterprise Business Center & Innovation (EBCI), where he provides mentorship and strategic guidance to aspiring entrepreneurs. With expertise in business strategy, startup funding, and innovation development, Noam supports students and young professionals in transforming ideas into viable ventures. His volunteer role reflects a strong commitment to inclusive economic growth and sustainable entrepreneurship in Rwanda and beyond.

SPECIAL MENTIONS

**Megan Sieroka**

Megan is an International Programs Manager with over four years of experience in international development and project management. She specializes in creating impactful, cross-cultural programs that promote socioeconomic growth. Megan has managed initiatives across Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, collaborating with over 40 institutions to support sustainable change.

She holds a Master's in Development Management (Applied Economics) from the London School of Economics and a Bachelor's in Global Development Studies and Political Science from Queen's University. Her expertise includes project cycle management, stakeholder engagement, and impact evaluation. Megan's accomplishments include doubling annual applicants and increasing female retention by 30% in entrepreneurship programs, and fostering partnerships that expand opportunities in education, health, and economic development. Megan is passionate about working with others to drive meaningful initiatives and contribute to lasting impact in the field of international development.

**Rosina Butera**

Rosina is an accomplished financial services wealth distribution professional with extensive Canadian and U.S. experience in strategic project delivery, relationship management and learning.

She has led many wealth transformation projects both from the product manufacturer and distribution sides of the business. Sample projects include: dealer front office solutions, product launches, national account programs as well as dealer and advisor programs.

Rosina has worked with many financial advisors with the focus on delivering on their value proposition to clients. Programs include use of data insights, marketing plans, and client segmentation.

She is recognized for building B2B distribution strategies focusing on the experience lens, with effective execution to enhance productivity growth and retention strategies. Her work has won awards for executional excellence.

At the heart of building strong relationships is her collaborative, responsive and encouraging style.

Rosina is a holistic problem solver with 360 view of business issues and placing emphasis on an agile approach to work, solution recommendation and measuring outcomes.

EMPOWER HER – SHAPING RWANDA'S FUTURE

ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHOPS BY THE ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CENTER & INNOVATION (EBCI)

UoK-Enterprise Business Center & Innovation in partnership with CECI brought together over 80 participants to celebrate International Women's Day. Under the theme "Empower Her: Shape the Future Generation," the Forum created a vibrant space for dialogue, inspiration, and action.

With powerful keynote speeches, two engaging panels, 12 women entrepreneurs showcasing their innovations, and dynamic breakout sessions, the event highlighted the importance of financial literacy, inclusive leadership, and climate-resilient entrepreneurship.

By connecting women leaders, students, institutions, and financial actors, the Forum marked a meaningful step toward building a more equitable and empowered future for women in business.



FINAL PITCH COMPETITION – A CELEBRATION OF INNOVATION AND TALENT

ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHOPS BY THE ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CENTER & INNOVATION (EBCI)

The Enterprise Business Center & Innovation proudly hosted a vibrant Pitch Competition, marking a true celebration of innovation, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit.

The event brought together nearly 90 enthusiastic participants in a dynamic and inspiring atmosphere. Seven talented contestants took the stage, delivering impressive pitches that reflected the ambition and creativity of Rwanda's next generation of business leaders. Supported by a strong panel of judges, a lively audience, and outstanding event coordination, the competition exceeded expectations.

From engaging presentations to meaningful networking, the day was filled with energy, collaboration, and opportunity. The professionalism of the speakers, the enthusiasm of the participants, and the seamless event flow made it a resounding success.

This Pitch Competition not only showcased emerging talents but also strengthened the EBCI's mission to inspire, empower, and connect young entrepreneurs. It was a true testament to the growing entrepreneurial spirit that defines our community.



EMPOWERING CAREERS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHOPS BY THE ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CENTER & INNOVATION (EBCI)

The Enterprise Business Center & Innovation in partnership with CT Hub, East African University and HireME Afrika started the year with a dynamic workshop designed to empower students and young professionals. The session focused on building strong CVs, navigating the HireME Afrika platform, and cultivating the mindset needed to pursue entrepreneurship.

Participants left with practical tools for job applications, deeper insights into digital career platforms, and renewed motivation to transform ideas into business opportunities. The event also fostered valuable networking, allowing future entrepreneurs to connect, collaborate, and begin building supportive peer communities.



SOCIAL IMPACT OUTREACH PROGRAM

ACTIVITIES AND WORKSHOPS BY THE ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CENTER & INNOVATION (EBCI)

In a powerful initiative aimed at creating lasting impact, 35 teen mothers received training in fundamental business skills, including how to write a business plan in their local language and how to manage basic costing. As they prepared to complete their tailoring course, this training helped equip them with the tools to start their own businesses and build independent futures for themselves and their children.

This program was made possible through the collaboration between the University of Kigali – Enterprise Business Center, Equity Bank Rwanda, RSMO.

The initiative reflects a strong commitment to youth and women empowerment, social inclusion, and job creation, laying the foundation for long-term change and economic resilience in the community.



EBCI IN MOTION : STORIES OF IMPACT

The Enterprise Business Center & Innovation, in partnership with Equity Bank, hosted a dynamic workshop under the theme “Educate. Empower. Innovate. Impact.”

Led by Ruth Mbabazi and officiated by Prof. George Kimathi, the event equipped students with the skills to become startup trainers and future business leaders across Rwanda.



EBCI: SHAPING THE FUTURE, TODAY

Through the Enterprise Business Center & Innovation at the University of Kigali, in partnership with the Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village Alumni Program, I had the privilege of mentoring aspiring entrepreneurs as they developed impactful ventures from the ground up.

These passionate changemakers are working on projects in fields like education technology, e-commerce, solar-powered solutions, art and culture, hospitality, agribusiness, and emotional intelligence.

Using a peer-to-peer mentoring model, we foster collaborative learning, shared experiences, and mutual growth - empowering young leaders to learn from one another while building a strong foundation for success.

At EBCI, we see beyond statistics - we invest in people, passion, and purpose.



MENTORSHIP AT EBCI

The University of Kigali hosted an engaging mentoring session in collaboration with Agahozo-Shalom Youth Village Alumnis, bringing together passionate students and experienced mentors to explore pathways in entrepreneurship. The session highlighted the Alumni's strong enthusiasm for business innovation and the importance of hands-on learning.

This promising exchange laid the foundation for a meaningful partnership between Einstein Rising and the University of Kigali, aimed at nurturing and supporting the next generation of Rwandan entrepreneurs.



EBCI : ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

At the University of Kigali, we are proud to support environmental sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. As part of a collaborative initiative, we're encouraging each household to plant five fruit trees—strengthening local biodiversity, promoting food security, and contributing to climate resilience.

This impactful project, led by our partner CECI in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and APEFA Rwanda NGO, was implemented in Kicukiro District, Masaka Sector, Ayabaraya Cell (Nyamico and Nyamyijima villages).

Together with UoK students, we are taking action toward a greener, healthier future.



LAUNCH OF UOK ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CENTER & INNOVATION

The University of Kigali proudly celebrated the launch and watch party of the Enterprise Business Center & Innovation, in partnership with Queen's University !

This dynamic collaboration empowers young entrepreneurs, connects academia with industry, and fosters innovation across Rwanda and Africa. We're building a bold new space where ideas grow, businesses start, and futures are shaped.



STRENGTHENING ENTREPRENEURSHIP CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

The Enterprise Business Center & Innovation (EBCI) at the University of Kigali is proud to collaborate with the Embassy of the Republic of Korea and KOICA in advancing entrepreneurship, innovation, and knowledge exchange.

This growing partnership reflects a shared commitment to empowering young minds, supporting entrepreneurial education, and fostering cross-cultural collaboration. Through joint initiatives, resource sharing, and mentorship -including the valuable contribution of James (Yong-jeong Ha), a dedicated KOICA volunteer-we are equipping students with the tools they need to become impactful leaders and innovators in Rwanda and beyond.

Together, we are building a strong foundation for sustainable development and inclusive growth.



PARTNERS OF THE ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CENTER & INNOVATION

BUILDING A STRONGER ECOSYSTEM THROUGH COLLABORATION



Queen's
UNIVERSITY



Dunin-Deshpande
Queen's INNOVATION CENTRE



FRIENDS OF THE ENTERPRISE BUSINESS CENTER & INNOVATION

ENTREPRENEURSHIP IS A COLLABORATION.



MEET OUR MENTORS

**Pascale Avenvuka Mbu-Letang**

Industry : Healthcare, skill development, NGO
Located in South Africa

Pascale is the founder of Sabaoth General Trading and creator of SGT Hair Butter, a clean, organic hair and skincare solution inspired by African heritage. After 25+ years in the workforce, she turned her passion into purpose — offering families safe, culturally rooted beauty alternatives.

**Charlotte Ajiko**

Industry : Founder EIAG - Agriculture/Agribusiness
Located in Uganda

Charlotte Ajiko is an award-winning agripreneur and mentor dedicated to sustainable agriculture and youth empowerment. She supports young innovators through global platforms like the Clinton Global Initiative University, Tony Elumelu Foundation, and Jim Leech Mastercard Fellowship, helping shape Africa's next generation of entrepreneurs and changemakers.

**Mubarak Amode**

Industry : E-commerce
Located in Nigeria

Mubarak is a passionate changemaker with a background in Agricultural Economics and a strong interest in sustainability, tech, and innovation. As co-founder of CampusNex, he's committed to building impactful, accessible solutions for his community.

MEET OUR MENTORS

**Emmanuel Mugwaneza**

Industry : Agriculture

Located in Rwanda

Emmanuel Mugwaneza is an agricultural expert and CEO of Lamina Group Company Ltd in Rwanda, focused on reducing postharvest losses in horticulture. With a background in tea production, he brings strong skills in food quality, project management, and sustainable agribusiness.

**Ian Mutoro**

Industry : Information Technology

Located in Kenya

As a dynamic professional combining healthcare, data science, and entrepreneurship, I'm dedicated to driving transformative changes in patient care through technology. With a strong foundation in machine learning and leadership, I excel at developing innovative solutions and leading teams to turn data-driven insights into impactful healthcare advancements. Passionate about fostering innovation, I continuously explore new frontiers in technology to enhance healthcare delivery and outcomes.

**Victoria Anuoluwapo Adewuyi**

Industry : HealthTech

Located in Nigeria

Victoria Adewuyi is a MasterCard Scholar and Political Studies undergraduate at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. Passionate about politics, public policy, and international relations, she speaks four international languages—two with certified proficiency. Victoria is a highly motivated communicator with strong organizational skills and a drive to create meaningful impact wherever she goes.

**Jean Desire Habiyambere**

Industry : ICT, Technology Commercialization, Food Tech and Agritech

Located in Rwanda

Jean Desire Habiyambere is a certified Project Manager and Data Analyst with 4+ years of experience in project execution, data analysis, and business process improvement. Passionate about Big Data and machine learning, he brings a results-driven, collaborative approach to advancing organizational growth.

INFORMATION CENTER – UOK EBCI

EBCI HAS LAUNCHED ITS INFORMATION CENTER !

We're excited to introduce a new online space created especially for students, young professionals, and aspiring entrepreneurs in Rwanda. The Enterprise Business Center & Innovation, part of the University of Kigali, now offers a dynamic digital hub where you can stay connected, informed, and empowered.

Our online center is designed to give you easy access to the tools and information you need to succeed - whether you're looking for scholarship opportunities, internships, jobs, business grants, upcoming pitch competitions, and networking events.

You'll also find updates on upcoming training sessions, hands-on workshops, inspirational talks, and community events designed to help you grow personally and professionally.

Whether you're just starting your journey or looking to expand your network and skills, the EBCI website is here to guide you every step of the way.

www.ebcinfo.com

Your Gateway to Opportunities, Learning, and Growth

**Welcome to
the
Information
Center**

Created and managed by the Enterprise Business Center

About Us



OP-ED SERIES

The University of Kigali Enterprise Business Center (UOK EBC) doesn't just educate; it empowers. We don't just equip; we inspire. We don't simply teach entrepreneurship; we cultivate African leaders of tomorrow. We foster a transformative learning experience that ignites innovation and leaves a lasting impact.

This Op-Ed series is a testament to that commitment. It's a platform where the voices of our students and contributors resonate with confidence, sharing their unique perspectives and experiences. Here, you'll encounter the raw energy of brilliant minds, the insightful reflections of seasoned professionals, and the compelling narratives of those who are shaping the future of Africa.

Within these pages, you'll discover:

- The innovative spirit: Learn about the groundbreaking ventures born within the UOK EBC, showcasing the ingenuity and entrepreneurial drive of our students.
- The power of mentorship: Explore the vital role mentorship plays in nurturing talent and fostering leadership skills. Hear directly from both mentors and mentees about the transformative impact of this vital relationship.
- The challenges and triumphs: Engage with candid accounts of navigating the complexities of the entrepreneurial landscape, celebrating successes and learning from setbacks.
- The broader African context: Gain valuable insights into the unique opportunities and challenges facing entrepreneurs in Africa, and how the UOK EBC is contributing to sustainable development across the continent.

This is more than just a collection of Op-Eds; it's a journey—a journey into the hearts and minds of those who are actively shaping a better future for Africa. Enjoy the diverse perspectives and powerful stories within this Op-Ed series. Prepare to be inspired. Prepare to be challenged. Prepare to be moved.



PLANTING SEEDS OF CHANGE: HOW AFRICA IS GROWING ITS FUTURE ENTREPRENEURS

Imagine a continent brimming with bright young minds, not just waiting for opportunities but actively creating them. That's the exciting story unfolding across Africa, where a fresh education approach takes hold. Instead of just textbooks and exams, schools are now weaving in the spirit of entrepreneurship, equipping students to be job creators instead of job seeker. Think of it like planting seeds – nurturing young talent so they can grow their own businesses and build a stronger future for everyone.

At the heart of this inspiring change are places like enterprise business centers and incubation hubs like UoK EBCI. They're like greenhouses for new ideas, offering practical tools and guidance from experienced mentors to students and recent grads who have a spark to build something of their own. This proactive mindset is taking off here in Rwanda, a country that sees the power of entrepreneurship as key to its growth.

You know how sometimes a university can feel a bit disconnected from the real world of work? That's a challenge many developing countries face, with lots of young people struggling to find jobs after graduation. Organizations have pointed out that a big part of the problem is a lack of those practical business skills and access to finance to get started. That's where these enterprise centers and hubs shine. They're like vibrant workshops, offering everything from how to write a solid business plan to connecting students with seasoned professionals who can offer advice. They even help with those crucial first steps of finding seed funding and building networks – those connections that can open so many doors. And guess what? It's actually working! Research shows that when universities include entrepreneurship programs, more students start businesses and more graduates find meaningful work. Studies have found similar success stories in other African countries, emphasizing how important it is for different groups to work together to make these efforts even bigger and better.

Of course, it's not always smooth sailing. Finding the funds to get started is still a big hurdle for many aspiring entrepreneurs with brilliant ideas. Plus, keeping these centers running for the long term often depends on consistent financial support from various sectors. To really spread this success across Africa, it is important to develop supportive frameworks and increase investment in things like infrastructure and training. Think of it as laying the groundwork for a continent of creators. So, in the end, weaving entrepreneurship into education through these enterprise centers and hubs is proving to be a real game-changer for Africa's economic future.

By giving young people the skills and support they need to chase their dreams, these initiatives aren't just creating jobs – they're fostering a spirit of innovation, a can-do attitude, and real economic progress. If we keep investing in these vital programs and working together, the future for Africa's young people looks brighter than ever. It's about empowering a generation to build their own tables, not just wait for a seat at one.

RUTH MBABAZI
COORDINATOR OF EBCI



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INFORMATION ACCESS IN THE ERA OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, social entrepreneurship plays a pivotal role in bridging the information divide exacerbated by artificial intelligence (AI). As AI technologies advance, they often create barriers to access, particularly for marginalized communities. Social entrepreneurs are uniquely positioned to address these disparities by leveraging innovative solutions that enhance information accessibility.

These entrepreneurs harness AI to develop platforms that democratize access to knowledge, ensuring that everyone, regardless of socioeconomic status, can benefit from digital resources. Initiatives focusing on education, healthcare, and financial services empower individuals and communities, fostering inclusivity and social equity.

Moreover, social entrepreneurs advocate for ethical AI practices, emphasizing transparency and accountability. By promoting open-source technologies and community-driven projects, they challenge the monopolistic tendencies of tech giants, ensuring that AI serves the public good.

As we navigate the complexities of the AI era, it is crucial to support social entrepreneurship initiatives that prioritize information access. By doing so, we can cultivate a more equitable society where knowledge is a shared resource, enabling individuals to thrive and contribute to their communities. Embracing this vision will pave the way for a future where technology uplifts rather than divides.

GODWINS ODUOR OSIMBO



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: PROFIT WITH A PURPOSE

Social entrepreneurship is a powerful approach that combines business principles with a mission to address social and environmental issues. Unlike traditional profit-driven businesses, social enterprises aim to create long-term, sustainable change while also remaining financially viable. Many successful companies are proving that it's possible to do good and be profitable at the same time. Brands such as TOMS Shoes, which donates a pair of shoes for every pair sold, and Patagonia, which invests part of its profits in environmental initiatives, show that businesses can thrive while creating a positive impact. The key is to develop a business model that integrates social responsibility into the core of its activity, rather than addressing it as an optional afterthought. Whether it's ethical sourcing, fair wages or sustainable practices, companies can align their financial success with meaningful contributions to society.

Rwanda has established itself as a leading social entrepreneur in Africa, with innovative businesses tackling major social and environmental issues. One notable example is Africa Improved Foods (AIF), a social enterprise that produces highly nutritious food to combat malnutrition. AIF works in partnership with local farmers, ensuring fair trade and sustainable agriculture, while providing affordable food to vulnerable communities. The company's model demonstrates that social enterprises can drive economic development, improve health outcomes and create jobs, while remaining profitable.

While social entrepreneurship offers incredible opportunities, it also comes with unique challenges. It can be difficult to find ethical supply chains, secure funding and reconcile mission and profitability. However, with growing consumer demand for responsible business, social enterprises have a competitive edge. Many consumers are prepared to pay more for sustainable and ethical products, making impact businesses more appealing than ever.

In the face of persistent global challenges such as climate change, inequality and poverty, social entrepreneurship is more relevant than it has ever been. Governments, investors and consumers are increasingly supporting companies that contribute to positive change. By leveraging innovation, ethical leadership and strategic growth, social entrepreneurs are redefining what it means to succeed in business. Ultimately, social entrepreneurship proves that profit and purpose are not mutually exclusive - they can go hand in hand, creating a better world while ensuring the company's long-term success

NOAM PISTAGNESI
ENTREPRENEURSHIP ADVISOR



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: A JOURNEY OF IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Growing up in a rural community where poverty, poor healthcare access, lack of education, and poor nutrition were everyday realities, I developed an unshakable desire to create solutions that could address these systemic challenges. These experiences fueled my passion for entrepreneurship, not just any kind but social entrepreneurship. This approach goes beyond conventional business strategies; it empowers individuals to solve problems in their communities while restoring dignity and enabling others to live fulfilling lives.

As a Program Coach for the Jim Leech Mastercard Foundation Fellowship at the Dunin-Deshpande Innovation Centre at Queen's University, I often connect deeply with social entrepreneurs. They face the unique challenge of balancing sustainability and impact while ensuring their business models remain economically viable. Many novel social ideas struggle at this intersection, but witnessing these entrepreneurs navigate this puzzle at the end of 8 months and pitch their ventures alongside for-profit businesses is both inspiring and fulfilling. It makes me remember September 2022 at the Baobab summit in Kigali Rwanda when the Resolution Project awarded us a grant for Nugget Poultry. At the time, we had not yet cracked the code of financial sustainability, but with persistence and innovation, we did and have since grown exponentially.

This journey reinforces my belief that social entrepreneurship is a powerful tool for lasting change, proving that impact and profitability can coexist.

EMMANUEL NATURINDA
AWARD WINNING SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR
PROGRAM COACH, DDQIC



HOW AGRI-TECH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS ARE REAPING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

"Let's sow the seeds of change today and reap a harvest of prosperity and sustainability for all."

Agri-tech social entrepreneurship is revolutionizing agriculture by merging technology with social impact, addressing challenges like climate change and unfair markets for smallholder farmers. These entrepreneurs develop innovative models prioritizing community well-being and environmental health alongside profit, ensuring access to sustainable technologies, bridging the digital divide, and promoting financial inclusion.

The text highlights the potential of AI-powered crop monitoring, IoT-based irrigation, and blockchain for supply chains. These technologies empower farmers to increase productivity, reduce waste, and access broader markets. The benefits extend to economic development through job creation and poverty alleviation, achieved through precision farming reducing harmful inputs.

However, obstacles remain, including initial costs, digital illiteracy, and inadequate infrastructure. Overcoming these requires strategic partnerships between social enterprises, governments, and philanthropic organizations, offering affordable financing and training. Governments play a crucial role by supporting R&D, building infrastructure, and incentivizing sustainable practices.

In Rwanda, for example social enterprise APEFA uses SMS-based platform to enable farmers to manage their farms, access finance, and market their produce. This supports greater productivity, income, and food security.

NSHIMIYIMANA APHRODICE

**DDIQ-UOK EBCI FELLOW & FOUNDER
NUTRI-SOLUTIONS FARM
(CHICKEN EGGS INCUBATION)**

**BACHELOR OF SCIENCE WITH
HONOURS IN FINANCE**



SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AFRICA'S BEVERAGE INDUSTRY

Social entrepreneurship is transforming industries across Africa, and the beverage sector is no exception. With a growing population and increasing demand for innovative products, social entrepreneurs are leveraging this space to address societal challenges while building sustainable businesses.

In Africa, the beverage industry is uniquely positioned to create social impact by promoting health, creating jobs, and supporting local agriculture. JOY UBUZIMA, an energy beverage brand founded in Rwanda, exemplifies this trend. By sourcing ingredients like moringa and ginger from local farmers, the company not only produces a healthy, natural product but also empowers rural communities. This approach aligns with the principles of social entrepreneurship, where profit meets purpose. Moreover, the African beverage industry faces challenges such as limited access to clean water and energy.

Social entrepreneurs are tackling these issues by adopting eco-friendly production methods and investing in renewable energy. These efforts not only reduce environmental impact but also set a precedent for sustainable business practices. As the industry grows, collaboration between governments, the private sector, and social entrepreneurs will be key. By prioritizing social impact alongside profitability, the African beverage industry can become a model for inclusive and sustainable development, driving economic growth while improving lives across the continent.

**JEAN BAPTISTE MERRYL
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FINANCIAL LITERACY: THE KEY TO UNLOCKING ECONOMIC POTENTIAL FOR WOMEN AND YOUTH

For too long, financial literacy has been viewed as a niche topic, relevant only to economists and Wall Street titans. But the reality is that financial literacy is a fundamental life skill, particularly crucial for women and youth. Empowering these demographics with the knowledge and tools to manage their finances is not just a matter of individual well-being; it's a vital catalyst for economic growth and societal progress. The stark truth is that financial illiteracy disproportionately affects women and young people, leaving them vulnerable to economic instability, predatory lending practices, and missed opportunities for wealth creation. We can't afford to ignore this disparity. According to Africa Business 2025, bridging the gender gap in economic participation alone could boost the continent's GDP by a staggering 25%, or 8 trillion dollars annually. This statistic underscores the immense economic potential that remains untapped when women are excluded or ill-equipped to navigate the financial landscape.

Global organizations like the OECD have long recognized the critical link between financial education and empowerment. As early as 2013, the OECD highlighted the urgent need to address financial literacy among women and youth. The G20 Leaders echoed this sentiment, acknowledging the importance of providing these groups with access to financial services and education. The global consensus is clear: investing in financial literacy for women and youth is an investment in a more equitable and prosperous future. So, what specific areas should we focus on Budgeting and Money Management: This is the cornerstone of financial stability. We must equip Youths with the ability to track their income and expenses, create realistic budgets, differentiate between needs and wants, and prioritize saving a portion of their earnings regularly.

- **Saving and Investing:** Beyond simply saving, it's essential to understand the importance of emergency funds and explore various savings vehicles.
- **Debt Management:** Not all debt is created equal. Understanding the difference between "good" and "bad" debt, strategies for avoiding high-interest loans, and effective debt repayment strategies are critical to avoiding financial pitfalls.

- **Entrepreneurship and Income Generation:** Fostering an entrepreneurial mindset and providing the skills to create multiple income streams are key to building financial resilience and independence. This includes equipping aspiring business owners with the basics of starting and managing a business, as well as financial planning for entrepreneurs.
- **Financial Independence and Long-Term Planning:** Youths need to learn how to set achievable financial goals and plan for the future, including retirement planning strategies like pensions, insurance, and long-term investments.

Ultimately, the goal is to empower youths to build generational wealth and secure a financially stable future for themselves and their families. By prioritizing financial literacy for women and youth, we can unlock their full economic potential, foster greater financial inclusion, and build a more equitable and prosperous society for all. It's not just a smart investment; it's a moral imperative.

WILMOT JARRY

FINANCIAL LITERACY ENTREPRENEUR

**MASTERS OF EDUCATION
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EMPOWERING RWANDA THROUGH SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Social entrepreneurship is a transformative force, a powerful blend of business innovation and a mission to address the pressing social and environmental challenges of our time. Unlike traditional businesses fixated solely on profit, social enterprises bravely strive to create long-lasting, positive change in communities. They tackle critical issues through sustainable solutions, leaving a legacy of progress rather than just a balance sheet. Innovation is the lifeblood of social entrepreneurship. It fuels the development of creative solutions to seemingly intractable problems like poverty, unemployment, and the looming threat of climate change. Consider the impact of businesses promoting eco-friendly packaging, fostering financial literacy for underserved populations, or championing fair-trade products. These ventures not only help communities thrive but also weave sustainability into the very fabric of their operations.

Many social enterprises are also embracing circular economy models, ensuring resources are used efficiently, minimizing waste, and maximizing positive impact. But social entrepreneurship is about more than just clever ideas. It's about empowering people. These enterprises create jobs, offer vital skill development programs, and improve access to essential services. Crucially, they understand that sustainable impact is achieved when local communities are actively involved in decision-making and implementation. Supporting women entrepreneurs or small-scale farmers, for instance, can be a game-changer, helping them achieve economic independence and longterm success, rippling outwards to benefit entire families and communities.

For social enterprises to truly flourish, they require strong leadership, robust partnerships, and, of course, financial backing. Governments, investors, and established organizations all have a vital role to play in supporting these crucial initiatives. With the right resources and a steadfast commitment, social entrepreneurship can drive meaningful progress, building a more equitable and resilient society for all. It's time we recognized and unleashed the full potential of this transformative force.

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SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE CULINARY WORLD

The kitchen is not just a lab to innovate recipes that please our taste buds, but it is a place where communities might come together, where smiles are put on the faces of each human. That is the beauty of food; it is something so simple yet so meaningful and close to the hearts of millions of people. The culinary industry is a beacon of hope to tackle some of the pressing issues of society, mainly hunger, especially for the homeless, the needy, and so many others. This is where the term social entrepreneurship comes in.

Despite the fact that the world today, especially for businesses, is predominantly profit-driven, the necessity for businesses to practice some sort of social entrepreneurship, where they endeavour to contribute towards the growth of society, has become evident. And for the food service industry, it could play a crucial role in this agenda.

Most restaurants in Kigali, due to the nature of the income levels of the population, are not able to meet their desired numbers in terms of customers each day. This, therefore, means the chefs might have over-prepped for the expected number of guests, and the food and ingredients are then put to waste, finding their way to the bins. Restaurants could, however, leverage this opportunity to be heroes to their communities. How? you may ask. The fact that there are numbers of street children, orphans, the unattended sick in hospitals, and those that live in poverty, a free meal would leave a mark on their hearts and a smile on their faces. Therefore, instead of putting food to waste, restaurants could provide meals to these individuals, which also creates an empathetic image of these establishments on their brand.

In a nutshell, there is so much the food service industry players could leverage from social entrepreneurship through giving back to the community, by supporting local farmers' produce and thus their businesses while also reducing the carbon footprint of these restaurants, the donation of meals to the needy, hiring and training individuals in culinary skills, especially underprivileged youths and formally incarcerated individuals, and so many practices of social entrepreneurship to ensure the growth of the businesses while the community also grows.

Like the great Chef Massimo Bottura once said, "When a restaurant becomes a place of healing, learning, and community, it serves far more than food."

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SOWING SEEDS OF CHANGE: SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE

For too long, the image of agriculture has been rooted in tradition: vast fields, seasonal cycles, and a reliance on natural resources. But in a world facing escalating challenges of food security, climate change, and limited land availability, we need fresh perspectives and innovative solutions. Social entrepreneurship, a powerful blend of social impact and economic ingenuity, offers a promising path forward, particularly through initiatives like Agro Bio Innovation.

Agro Bio Innovation, a concrete example of social entrepreneurship in agriculture, is revolutionizing how we think about food production. By embracing soilless agriculture, which replaces traditional soil with substrates like coconut fibers and organic growing media, this initiative is unlocking unprecedented levels of productivity and sustainability. This isn't just about growing food; it's about empowering communities and building a more resilient future.

The beauty of this approach lies in its efficiency. Soilless agriculture can produce twice the yield of traditional methods, liberating farmers from the constraints of land size and seasonal limitations. The process, while technologically advanced, is surprisingly simple: germinating seeds in a growing medium, transferring seedlings to specialized substrates, and nourishing plants with nutrient-enriched water. This method achieves remarkable results: a 50% reduction in water consumption alongside a significant increase in crop yields. Beyond the impressive statistics, Agro Bio Innovation offers a tangible and accessible opportunity for young people seeking to enter the agricultural sector. For a generation often priced out of traditional farming due to land scarcity and high startup costs, soilless agriculture provides a viable and profitable alternative. Imagine the possibilities: with limited space, young entrepreneurs can cultivate healthy, organic vegetables for their families and local markets, contributing to food security and building sustainable livelihoods.

The success of Agro Bio Innovation hinges on providing accessible resources and comprehensive training. Farmers need to understand the nuances of substrate selection, nutrient management, and sustainable production practices. Fortunately, various training programs are emerging to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to thrive in this innovative landscape. Ultimately, Agro Bio Innovation is more than just a farming technique; it's a movement toward a more inclusive, resilient, and future-oriented agricultural system. It sends a powerful message: a lack of land should no longer be a barrier to food production and agricultural entrepreneurship.

By embracing social entrepreneurship and supporting initiatives like Agro Bio Innovation, we can cultivate a new generation of agricultural leaders, strengthen our food systems, and sow the seeds of a more sustainable and equitable future for all. Let's empower our youth, invest in innovation, and transform the landscape of agriculture, one soilless farm at a time.

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LEVERAGING E-COMMERCE FOR SOCIAL IMPACT: THE RISE OF SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN RWANDA

Social entrepreneurship in e-commerce is gaining significant traction in Rwanda, propelled by the nation's dedication to innovation and economic growth. Social entrepreneurs in Rwanda are utilizing e-commerce platforms to tackle social issues while building sustainable businesses. These ventures often address crucial areas such as poverty alleviation, education, healthcare, and environmental sustainability.

An example of this trend is the promotion of locally made products through online marketplaces. By offering a platform for artisans and small businesses to sell their products, social entrepreneurs create jobs, stimulate the local economy, and preserve cultural heritage by promoting traditional crafts.

The Rwandan government has played a pivotal role in supporting social entrepreneurship through various policies and initiatives. For instance, the Entrepreneurship Development Policy aims to create a conducive environment for private sector dynamism, innovation, and risk-taking. Furthermore, partnerships with international organizations, such as the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), help strengthen the e-commerce ecosystem in Rwanda.

By integrating profit-making with a social mission, social entrepreneurship in e-commerce in Rwanda is driving positive social change. These ventures significantly contribute to the country's economic growth and community development, setting a precedent for other nations to follow suit.

This innovative approach represents a powerful synergy between business and social responsibility, ultimately fostering a more inclusive and sustainable global economy.

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HOW SOCIAL ENTERPRISES ARE REDEFINING SUPPLY CHAIN MODELS FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Social enterprises are significantly redefining supply chain models to promote sustainability. A core strategy involves prioritizing ethical sourcing, ensuring raw materials originate from suppliers committed to fair labor practices and environmentally sound methods. This approach not only bolsters local economies but also mitigates the environmental damage frequently associated with conventional supply chains. As Porter and Kramer (2011) argue, creating shared value—integrating social and environmental goals into business operations—can lead to both economic and societal benefits.

Furthermore, transparency is a hallmark of social enterprise supply chains. By openly disclosing product origins and manufacturing processes, these enterprises cultivate consumer trust and encourage responsible consumption. This transparency can stimulate demand for sustainably produced goods, thus driving broader industry-wide shifts in supply chain practices. This aligns with the growing consumer preference for ethically and sustainably sourced products (Lee, 2020).

Many social enterprises also embrace circular economy principles, focusing on waste reduction and promoting material reuse and recycling. They design durable products and facilitate the return of used items for refurbishment or recycling, fostering more sustainable supply chains that lessen resource depletion and environmental harm. This approach echoes the principles of industrial ecology, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of industrial systems and the environment (Graedel & Allenby, 2019).

In conclusion, social enterprises are reshaping supply chain models by prioritizing ethical sourcing, enhancing transparency, and adopting circular economy practices, collectively contributing to enhanced sustainability. This multifaceted approach demonstrates the transformative potential of businesses to integrate social and environmental responsibility into their core operations.

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SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN DIGITAL MARKETING: A GAME-CHANGER

Social entrepreneurship, the process of identifying, developing, and implementing innovative solutions to address social, cultural, or environmental issues, has found a powerful ally in the digital age. Social entrepreneurs, driven to create positive change, blend social impact with effective business strategies. The integration of social entrepreneurship with digital marketing has become a game-changer, enabling these ventures to reach a global audience and amplify their impact exponentially.

One of the most significant advantages of this synergy lies in leveraging social media for awareness. Social entrepreneurs can harness the power of platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook to spread the word about their mission. By creating compelling content - whether it's through inspiring stories, behind-the-scenes glimpses, or real-time updates - they can effectively engage users and cultivate a loyal community around their cause. Digital marketing also allows for targeted campaigns that speak directly to individuals who share an interest in supporting social good. This targeted approach leads to higher engagement rates and, crucially, increased donations, empowering social entrepreneurs to achieve their goals more effectively.

Recommendations for Startups Embracing Social Entrepreneurship in the Digital Age

Clearly define a social mission to guide marketing and resonate with the target audience; Embrace digital storytelling by creating compelling narratives with visuals and personal stories to build trust; and Engage strategically on social media by being active on relevant platforms, tailoring content, and fostering a sense of community.

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RWANDA'S QUIET REVOLUTION: SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EDTECH AS ENGINES FOR CHANGE

Rwanda, a nation forging a path of remarkable recovery and development, stands at a crucial juncture in its educational journey. While progress has been made, literacy rates remain a persistent challenge, mirroring a broader trend in low and middle-income countries. However, within this context lies a potent solution: the convergence of social entrepreneurship and educational technology (EdTech).

Social entrepreneurship, the engine of innovative problem-solving, prioritizes impact over profit. It's about individuals and organizations, driven by a desire to address societal challenges, who create sustainable solutions that uplift communities. Unlike traditional businesses, the metrics of success for social enterprises extend beyond financial gains, encompassing the tangible improvements they bring to the lives of others.

Think of Muhammad Yunus, the Grameen Bank founder and Nobel laureate, who revolutionized microfinance, empowering impoverished women in Bangladesh and beyond. This spirit of impactful innovation is precisely what Rwanda needs within its education sector. EdTech, as the article suggests, offers a promising avenue. Recent studies demonstrate the effectiveness of EdTech interventions in improving learning outcomes in similar contexts. Rwanda's openness to embracing these technologies creates a fertile ground for innovation. Combining both sectors could create opportunities for social entrepreneurs to create solutions that work for education in the country.

The challenge, then, is to cultivate an ecosystem that fosters collaboration between social entrepreneurs and the burgeoning EdTech sector in Rwanda. This means providing access to funding, mentorship, and resources that empower these change-makers to develop locally relevant and sustainable solutions. It also requires government policies that incentivize social impact businesses and support the integration of technology into classrooms, particularly in underserved communities.

As Horn (2013) points out, microcredit empowers women, giving them a voice and enabling them to invest in their families' futures, including their children's education. Similarly, EdTech initiatives, driven by social entrepreneurs, can empower individuals to access quality education, equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive.

Rwanda's commitment to progress, coupled with the dynamism of social entrepreneurship and the transformative potential of EdTech, presents a unique opportunity to revolutionize education and build a brighter future for its citizens. By investing in these powerful forces, Rwanda can ensure that education becomes a true catalyst for social and economic development.

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SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND INCLUSION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES, ESPECIALLY THE DEAF

Social entrepreneurship plays a crucial role in promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities, particularly the deaf, by addressing social challenges through innovative business solutions. Traditional job markets often overlook the potential of individuals with disabilities due to communication barriers, misconceptions, and a lack of inclusive policies. Social entrepreneurs can bridge this gap by creating businesses that prioritize accessibility, provide skill development, and advocate for inclusive hiring practices.

For the deaf community, inclusive businesses can implement sign language training, visual communication tools, and assistive technologies to foster effective workplace integration. Entrepreneurship also empowers deaf individuals by encouraging self-employment and enterprise development, reducing dependency on conventional job markets. Additionally, raising awareness through advocacy and partnerships with policymakers can promote long-term systemic change.

By integrating inclusivity into business models, social entrepreneurship not only enhances economic opportunities for people with disabilities but also fosters a more diverse and equitable society. A sustainable approach to inclusion benefits businesses, communities, and economies, proving that disability is not a limitation but an opportunity for innovation and progress.

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