
Short assignments developing business skills in Africa

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Problem one

Increasing numbers of people want to take time out to see the world and give something back. Many want to use the commercial skills that they have built up over several years to make a genuine impact. However, few overseas volunteering schemes allow people to use their own skills in this way, and therefore to return motivated and re-engaged.

Problem two

One in five people worldwide live in absolute poverty, on less than a dollar a day. Economic growth is the best solution. The best prospect for boosting economic growth in Africa is to help small businesses to grow, and so to create jobs and wealth. But in order to achieve growth, small businesses need support and advice, and most importantly an injection of commercial skills.

The three way benefits

Employers

Inspiring and motivational trips for retention and productivity.

An effective way to develop current and future leaders.

An innovative CSR programme that has real impact in a key emerging market.

Individuals

A real opportunity to contribute to economic growth in Kenya.

An energising environment in Kenya's spectacular Rift Valley.

Improved skills and new experiences.

Kenyan entrepreneurs

Access to high quality one-to-one business mentoring.

Tailored support with a focus on specific business issues.

Opportunities to network with Kenyan and international counterparts, to share best practice and to connect with suppliers and clients.



The Skills Venture solution

Skills Venture allows business people from the UK, USA and elsewhere to provide affordable, one-to-one mentoring support to Kenyan entrepreneurs. This focuses on specific practical issues and transferring key business skills. Assignments last for between five days and six months.

We specialise in enabling people to make a real contribution, even in a short timeframe. We match each person with several entrepreneurs, induct them thoroughly, provide 24/7 support, and arrange dates, accommodation, food and local transport.

Benefits of Skills Venture

Employers

Motivation and inspiration.

Working with dynamic young entrepreneurs in Africa and helping them to build their businesses from scratch is inspirational, and rewards and motivates in equal measure.

Talent development.

Facing completely new challenges in a very different business environment helps to build confidence, communication and leadership skills, diversity awareness and team-working abilities, and provides exposure to developing world entrepreneurs and consumers.

CSR and innovation.

Our programme can form a key part of corporate social responsibility activities and is an innovative way of engaging staff in this area and of delivering real impacts.

Individuals

A real opportunity to contribute to economic growth in Kenya. Skills Venture allows individuals to use core commercial skills in a productive and satisfying way by acting as mentors to small businesses in Kenya.

Improved skills and new experiences. Each person works with up to eight entrepreneurs, giving several case studies in a very different commercial environment. Exposure to real business issues in a new context provides significant learning benefits.

An energising environment centred around a beautiful area of Kenya. Skills Venture operates in an area that enjoys an ideal climate all year round, coupled with excellent opportunities to explore Kenya's world-famous national parks at weekends and to go on safari.

Kenyan entrepreneurs

Access to high quality one-to-one business mentoring for a nominal fee. Our rates are far below those charged by large business consultants. And by working through problems together, entrepreneurs will build up their own skills base.

Tailed support with a focus on specific business issues. We provide practical advice, not generic classroom-based training. This is more tangible and useful for the client businesses, and allows our mentors to make a real impact in a short timeframe, without teaching experience.

Opportunities to network with global counterparts. Entrepreneurs will share best practice and also make connections with suppliers and clients. A day spent at our Kenyan offices will inspire as well as inform. Fees include all mentoring support and lunch.

How does it work?

Mentors are matched with entrepreneurs whose needs correspond to their own professional background. For example, an accountant will work with businesses in need of support on financial planning or book-keeping. There is a focus on reviewing the barriers and opportunities for each specific business.

All mentors attend a pre-departure orientation session and a short induction course in Kenya. These cover logistics, cultural issues, effective mentoring techniques, and a briefing on all aspects of Kenyan life and work. A team of Kenyan facilitators are on hand to support them at all times, whatever the need.

After induction, the first meeting with each entrepreneur takes place at their own premises, to allow the mentor to gain an understanding of their environment. Subsequent meetings take place at our campus. There is time for travel at weekends and before or after the assignment.