
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.

Skills Venture for individuals

The need in Kenya

Many Kenya small businesses struggle to get off the ground because they lack the basic business skills to develop their product or service, to survive in a competitive global market, and to manage their own organisation and people.

The knock-on effects are obvious. Few businesses succeed. As a result, few jobs are created. Unemployment is high. Many more people live in poverty than is necessary.

Forget what you've heard about 'adult gap years' where you spend time in Africa painting a school. You leave knowing that the job could have been done better by a local who needed the money. Unlike a school-leaver on a traditional gap year, you have a set of skills that can make a real difference – so use them!

A case study

James is a thirty-year-old chartered accountant with seven years' experience since qualifying with a major London financial services firm.

Elijah is a thirty-five year old entrepreneur who has been educated up to secondary level and runs a mobile phone shop in Nairobi, Kenya.

The opportunity to help

You don't need to be a doctor or a teacher to be able to make a genuinely useful and rewarding contribution overseas. If you have at least five years of experience in business, we will organise an assignment that makes the most of what you can offer.

In return for your skills, enthusiasm and commitment, we will offer you the most challenging and rewarding experience of your life, working with up to eight businesses.

We will carefully match you with companies whose mentoring needs mirror what you have to offer.

You will see contrasts in every sphere, from attitudes to work and play to regulation, HR, logistics, suppliers, competitors and technology.

James attends our induction course and assesses that the main skills he can offer are cash flow planning, book-keeping and managing staff.

Elijah discusses his needs with one of our facilitators and decides that he requires inputs on managing his finances and employees effectively.

What we can offer you

You will undergo a comprehensive orientation and induction programme, both before departure and in Kenya, to prepare you fully for your new environment.

You will also be supported by a team of resident Kenyan 'facilitators', whose job it will be to bridge the divide between your own experience and your role in supporting small Kenyan companies.

We won't expect you to live in a tower block in some ugly, anonymous city. You will have a choice of accommodation options, and will have plenty of opportunities for recreation and tourism at the end of the day and at weekends, whether it be in the bar or on safari!

For details and case studies visit www.skillsventure.com.

James visits Elijah in his shop to see how his business operates and then spends a day with him every two weeks at our campus for three months.

Elijah discusses his ideas for finances and staff with James, sets up new systems, learns skills and inspires James to rethink his own approach.