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## Short assignments developing business skills in Africa

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### Problem one

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.

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### Problem two

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.

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### The three way benefits

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#### 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.

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#### 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.



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### 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.

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Small businesses in Kenya are able to access blue-chip mentoring support, focused on their own particular issues, at minimal cost.

Mentoring can take place either in Nairobi or Naivasha, depending on client needs and logistical requirements.

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### 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.

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## Skills Venture for Kenyan partner organisations

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### What we offer

Do you work with small businesses to provide business financing or technical support, either on a commercial or a not-for-profit basis?

Skills Venture enables you to offer high quality, tailored one-to-one consultancy support to your SME clients for a minimal cost of KSh 500 per day (including lunch), plus travel.

We organise short mentoring assignments in Kenya for global business experts from the UK, USA and elsewhere.

Each mentor works with between two and eight small businesses, seeing each SME client for a full day on a regular basis to provide business advice and boost their own capacity in areas that are of particular relevance to the individual company.

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### How it works

Mentors provide support and advice in areas that are of particular concern or relevance to each SME, such as marketing, financial planning, or product development, among others.

Our mentors have at least five years' experience and are carefully selected to ensure that they bring not only excellent professional skills and expertise to bear, but also have superior interpersonal 'soft' skills. They are fully inducted and enjoy the support of a team of trained Kenyan facilitators employed by Skills Venture.

The costs of the scheme are met largely from overseas.

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### What makes us different

We provide SMEs with mentoring advice that is tailored to their own individual circumstances, rather than generic classroom training.

Mentors and clients are matched on the basis of a clearly identified need, and clear success criteria are set to ensure that there is a shared understanding of the goal and a relentless focus on it.

Our team of Kenyan facilitators are on hand at all times to support mentors and clients. Mentoring days include at least three hours of one-to-one discussions, further training if required on a business issue that interests them, and a chance to network with international and Kenyan colleagues - an opportunity to share ideas and make useful contacts.

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### A case study

**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.

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

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

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

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 approaches!