



Enhancing the student enterprise training (SES) at Gulu University

Summary

Paradigm shifts in higher education have necessitated embracing and mainstreaming entrepreneurship education in training curricula. This is because entrepreneurial capacity building amongst the youth is considered the best approach for addressing unemployment, rural poverty and creation of responsible citizens. Entrepreneurship education training has been reported to increase the chances for youth to start-up new business enterprises, gain confidence and as such enhance their employability. However, one of the predominant criticisms of the nature of entrepreneurship education in African universities is due to the fact that it has been largely theoretical, hardly providing the much needed hands-on practice and experience to the learners. Consequently, there have been calls for entrepreneurship training models that inculcate practical orientations. In light of this concern, the Faculty of Agriculture and Environment (FAE), Gulu University developed the Student Enterprise Scheme (SES) as an innovative approach to training future agricultural professionals. This is an innovative, practical approach to agri-entrepreneurship training in which students develops, analyse, justify, and implement innovative agribusiness ideas. Experience gained from this process is then shared with fellow students and the wider community.

The agribusiness incubation hub (AIH) at Gulu University is intended to provide hands-on practice agri-entrepreneurship training to graduate and undergraduate students. Through the AIH, up to 50 students, in groups of five will be mentored to develop and implement viable agribusiness enterprises. Students will be required to develop business plans which will be evaluated, and approved based on their innovativeness and feasibility. Approved business plans will be financed on a revolving fund basis, where students are required to repay the money advanced to them at the closure of their business implementation. Approved business plans will be implemented by the respective teams for a period of up-to one year. At the end of the implementation period, successful cases will business cases will be shared with the community, the private sector and the university students' community. The intention is, through students training develop business models, which in the long-run can be rolled out to the community.

The overall objective of this agribusiness incubation hub is to promote student enterprise initiative and entrepreneurial mind-set through the creation and management of practical agribusinesses.

Specifically, the project aims to:

1. Inculcate an entrepreneurial mentality (social, environmental, ethical) amongst students;
2. Develop business management knowledge, abilities and skills amongst graduate students
3. Enhance creativity, innovation and strengthen leadership skills amongst students

Target groups

The AIH activities will run for a period of two years, in which two cycles of students will be trained. Specifically, the AIH aims to achieve the following outputs:

- Inculcate a sense of entrepreneurial mentality (social, environmental, ethical) amongst students;
- Develop business management knowledge, abilities and skills amongst graduate students
- Enhance creativity, innovation and strengthen leadership skills amongst students

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Project Coordinator
Gulu University

Project ID: RU/2018/RECAP/04

Partners

- International institute for rural reconstruction
- Techno serve Uganda

Project Duration: 24 months

Total budget: US\$ 50,000





General Activities

The key activities will include business plan development, financing and implementation and dissemination of results. These activities will be preceded by business skills training and value chain mapping activities by the students. The major output from this AIH will be development of student enterprise initiative and entrepreneurial mind-set through the creation and management of practical agribusinesses.

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