

Enterprise Uganda

promoting an enterprising mindset

Daily Monitor
www.monitor.co.ug

10 years of enhancing job creation

Way forward. Enterprise Uganda was established in 2001 jointly by the government and UNDP, initially as a project with a mission of creating dynamic Ugandan Small and Medium Enterprises that compete domestically and globally.

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After 10 years, Enterprise Uganda has become a brand name, respected, and honoured across religious lines, political divide, ethnic limitations, wealth differences and even across borders.

Mr Charles Ocici, the Executive Director of Enterprise Uganda explains that with brand recognition, the next 10 years should see the Institution build product clusters to attend to various segments of society.

He identifies the segments as; Enterprise start-up solutions to address youth unemployment numbering 400,000 to 480,000 per annum; solutions for households that continue to receive economic interventions from the government and development partners to enhance income levels and solutions to deepen access to microcredit by the masses but assist them graduate to sources of finance within our banking system.

Mr Ocici says Enterprise Uganda will seek to address the limitations to export market and low joint venture partnerships between Ugandans and foreign investors to improve competitiveness and products for top local enterprises to enable them create businesses that outlive their owners and generate brands that have foot prints across the globe.

Enterprise Uganda is a foundation by legal status established in 2001 jointly by the government and UNDP initially as a project with a mission of creating dynamic Ugandan MSMES that compete domestically and globally.

The formation of Enterprise Uganda was premised on internationally proven model for enterprise creation called Empretec. This is operating in 32 developing countries in Africa, Latin America, Middle East and South East Asia. The franchise is held by UNCTAD a UN agency in Geneva.

Mr Ocici explains that Enterprise Uganda fits in well with government lib-

eralisation programme that was implemented in the 1990s. It was envisaged that with privatisation, the private sector would fill the vacuum of running private enterprises.

"Whereas it is true that many enterprises that were privatised especially those bought by non-indigenous Ugandans validated the argument for government getting out of business, the high failure rate or under performance of those bought by Ugandans brought out the fact that running a private enterprise is not just about owning the asset but requires implementing established principles for satisfying a customer," he says, adding that there was need to help Ugandans already interested in the private enterprise hence Enterprise Uganda coming in handy to fill the undisputed service.

During the project phase of 2001-2005, Enterprise Uganda demonstrated the relevancy of its services by producing MSMES that were able to earn accolades, domestically, continentally and globally.

Challenges amid success

"It was therefore deemed necessary to transition at the end of the project phase to a not-for-profit foundation. Since then Enterprise Uganda now has extended into partnerships with development partners, banks, large manufacturing corporates and continues to have partnerships with government in addressing attitudes and mind sets of youths, households and MSMES.

In 2010 the Enterprise Uganda candidate was a gold winner the Women in Business award organised under the auspices of the UNCTAD and in 2009 the Enterprise Uganda candidate was a silver award winner in the same competition. For 2012, a shortlist of the top 10 women has been released and again the Enterprise Uganda has got a candidate. The final results of the top three will announced in May 2012. Under the micro enterprise bracket, Enterprise Uganda



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PHOTO BY EPHRAIM KASOZI

KEY ISSUE

Under the micro enterprise bracket, Enterprise Uganda has been running for the last four years a pioneering product called 'Business and Enterprise Startup Tool (BEST).

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This is meant to address excuses and limitations cited for failure by youth and other Ugandans to go into private enterprise. Under "BEST", our participants register between 60-75 percent enterprise creation rates. Out of over 18000 beneficiaries of BEST since 2007, youth and household have been able to generate jobs in excess of over 20,000," says Mr Ocici.

He says the participants relied largely on household resources, individual efforts and grants from well-wishers to get started in business.

However, Mr Ocici notes that despite achievements, the challenges faced by the institution range from mindsets about enterprise creation by the population to demand driven.

"The traditional script has always been that to succeed in business, you must get a lot of capital and it has to come from outside. All the greatest business

stories have always started with what one had and are characterised by humble beginnings of a chicken, a garage as a factory or a road kiosk as a shop location," he explains.

Enterprise Uganda is set to host the Global Enterprise Week (GEW 2011), an annual global event started in the United States meant to cause prominence and visibility of entrepreneurship as a vehicle in addressing today's challenges of unemployment, poverty, environmental degradation, and sustainable development.

Mr Ocici says Enterprise Uganda has invited various partners to national GEW 2011 celebrations running November 15-17 at Hotel Africana in Kampala.

Notable speakers from the private sector as well as testimonies and videos of Enterprise Uganda clients will be featured while the Finance Minister will be the chief guest. The European Union chief will also grace the occasion being one of the key partners and lead sponsors of the GEW 2011 in Uganda.



With regular training, Enterprise Uganda has helped many Ugandans achieve their dreams. ILLUSTRATIONS BY STANCO