
Educator Toolkit: Doing Business in Africa

Date : March 22, 2019

Why This Matters Now

Nurturing global perspectives and creating leaders who grow economies, organizations and opportunities that transcend borders – this is a key mission these days of higher education institutions like Wharton and the University of Pennsylvania. The future of today’s students is inexorably linked to the complex challenges of the global community.

It’s critical to recognize and embrace the next generations’ role as global citizens, introducing high school students to different cultures and norms and helping them understand the nuances and strategies of businesses and economies other than their own.

Africa is an important part of that conversation, especially as a developing region. The United Nations predicts Africa’s economic growth will reach 3.7% in 2019, which is an increase from previous years. This is largely due to recoveries in Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt, three of Africa’s largest economies. Still, the continent has 54 different countries, all very diverse and rich in natural resources.

Many African nations face grave challenges, including widespread poverty and unemployment. And the continent is also home to some of the fastest-growing economies in the world and entrepreneurs who are spurring Africa’s growth in unique and dynamic ways. During this month’s Demo Day for Y Combinator, a high-profile accelerator program in Silicon Valley, California, that provides seed funding for startups, [seven African-focused companies](#) presented as part of the group’s winter 2019 class. This represents, as TechCrunch pointed out, “the growing significance of African ventures in YC’s universe.”

Tomorrow’s leaders should have their fingers on the pulse of economic and entrepreneurial energy in Africa – and begin to understand its unique business landscape. The articles and lessons below help them to explore key economic and business concepts through the African lens.

Resources

Article

[Youth in Uganda Work Toward Lives As Job Creators, Not Seekers](#)

As one of the poorest nations in the world, Uganda struggles with the serious problem of youth unemployment. With labor statistics that suggest that three quarters of the Ugandan population are below the age of 30, unemployment is hitting this country particularly hard. According to the organization Enterprise Uganda, 400,000 young people enter the job market annually for a mere 9,000 new jobs each year. Many young people in Uganda face the challenge of finding work and earning wages to support themselves and their families. Entrepreneurship has become one option, with an increasing number of Ugandans starting small businesses to generate income. This article explores the Ugandan entrepreneurial spirit through the experiences of one African teen, Ssebuggwawo Jovan, as well as introducing this global issue of youth unemployment, which is considered one of the greatest economic challenges of our time. Use the conversation starters and related links accompanying the article to deepen students’ exploration of the topic.

Lesson Plan

[A Chocolate Entrepreneur in Ghana](#)

From East Africa to West Africa. In this lesson, students will read “Dark Milk Chocolate Bars Help To Unlock Wealth In West Africa” and learn about one entrepreneur’s venture in Ghana, which will highlight unique challenges and

opportunities in setting up a business in Africa. Then, they will debate the pros and cons of changing the traditional value chain of an economy. The students should conclude the lesson with a basic understanding of competitive advantage and wholesome leadership qualities.

Hands-on Learning

South Africa is one of the most vital economies of Africa. Send your students on an online scavenger hunt to help them discover different aspects of South Africa's economy and culture. The words below all appear on the Knowledge@Wharton High School site, either in lesson plans or articles, and they are connected in some way to South Africa. Divide your class into teams and ask them to locate each word (the [site](#) search engine accessed through the magnifying glass at the top of the page will be a big help), and write a short description for each word. If the word is linked, then they should click on the link to find out more info. The first team to identify all the words and the names of the KWHS resources in which they found them and write accurate descriptions of a few sentences each (when necessary, describing the context in which they're used), wins! Remember, they have to provide the KWHS context; they can't just search them up on Google! This will expand their learning about how the terms relate to business and finance.

- Stokvel
- Sawubona
- Tshivenda
- Apartheid
- Bloemfontein
- Brittany Bull
- Pilchard
- Muki
- Mpumalanga
- XinaBox
- Chappie
- African Sports Academy
- Cami

Video Glossary

Provide an extra layer of learning for your students with our video glossary. Here, Wharton professors define terms: Developing Country, Exporting, Globalization, Importing and Unemployment

KWHS Quote of the Month

"I used to hate lions, but now because my invention is saving my father's cows and lambs, I don't think I hate lions anymore. We can live with them without any conflict." – *Richard Turere, teen inventor and [featured TED talk speaker](#), Brookside International School, Nairobi*