



BABSON ENTREPRENEURIAL LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

GOALS

The goal of the Babson Entrepreneurial Leadership Academy (BELA) is to provide youth in targeted regions with the skills and confidence to identify and create opportunities. Building on more than twelve years of work with youth in Africa, the Academy uses Babson's unique approach to entrepreneurship education to create a new generation of entrepreneurial leaders--students dedicated to putting their ideas into action. The Academy embodies the same ideals that have helped to make Babson the world's leading academic institution for entrepreneurship: the belief in the power of entrepreneurship to transform lives, communities and even entire nations.



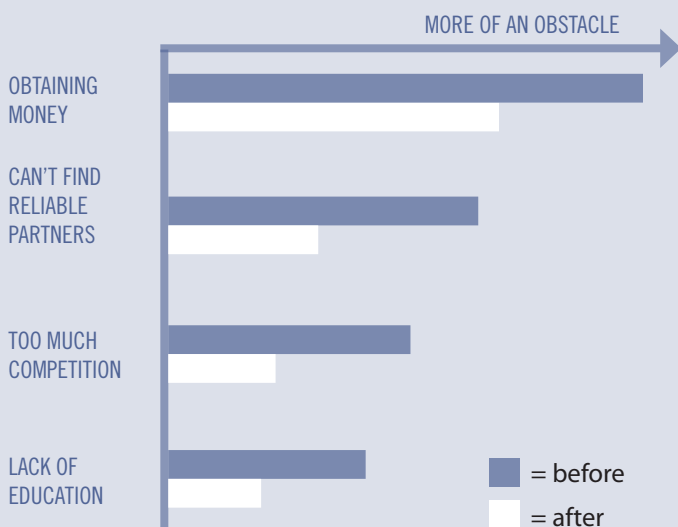
HISTORY

In 2007, Babson College began offering an annual Business Plan Competition for high schools in the Western Region of Ghana each January, led by Dennis Hanno, vice provost and graduate school dean, based on his previous years of experience teaching entrepreneurship in the region. In realizing the success of a consistent program in Ghana, Babson was approached to begin programming with a similar mission in Kigali, Rwanda. In 2010, Babson established the Babson-Rwanda Entrepreneurship Center, designed to assist in the development of entrepreneurs throughout the country through programs and nationwide collaboration with organizations that provide support to entrepreneurs. The combined enthusiasm from the Rwandan and Ghanaian communities for entrepreneurship programs, led to the development of the Babson Entrepreneurial Leadership Academy in 2011 – an opportunity for students to gain a more in depth experience during a one week session in which they explore their potential to be successful social and economic change makers in their community. Now offered in three countries, with Ganako, Tanzania and Kampala, Uganda added most recently, the Babson Entrepreneurial Leadership Academy has proven itself adaptable to the varying climates of entrepreneurship that exist in different countries.

STRUCTURE

BELA joins students with Babson in a dynamic community that focuses on providing the tools and experiences needed to create entrepreneurial leaders. Using a very interactive learning format, students gain the confidence and skills needed to improve their lives, their communities and, ultimately, the world. Students spend long days throughout BELA working with the Babson team and their peers exploring the entrepreneurial process - identifying opportunities, developing feasible solutions and designing ways to implement and act on these solutions. Guided by a workbook developed specifically for youths in developing economies, titled *From Ideas to Action: A Guide for Young Entrepreneurs*, the students spend an entire week engaged in small group discussions where they are both challenged and supported as they identify actions that they can take now. The Academy culminates with a competition that requires every student to share their idea and implementation plan with all of the other students and the Babson team. Every student who completes the Academy is encouraged to continue working on their entrepreneurial plan, and seed funding is made available through local contacts. The *From Ideas to Action* workbook can be viewed at www.fromideastoaction.org.

OUTCOMES



Students who participate in BELA gain knowledge, entrepreneurial skills and the confidence to take action. They also gain the benefits of joining a network of young entrepreneurial leaders from around their country, linked with and through Babson College. Student survey data, collected from all participants both before and after the Academy, clearly shows how the experience impacts those who participate. Not surprisingly, obtaining resources is consistently identified as the major obstacle to becoming an entrepreneur. However, after the Academy this challenge, and almost every other perceived challenge, is perceived as much less daunting than what was initially believed. The graph to the left shows the powerful influence that BELA has on the beliefs of those who participate. The measured results have been the same at each Academy, no matter the country, gender or background of the participants. In addition, with hundreds of participants in multiple counties, BELA has stimulated the creation of hundreds of new and unique ideas for entrepreneurial ventures. The primary focus of these venture ideas has been to create something that will have an immediate impact on the local communities of the participants. Both the quantitative and qualitative feedback confirms that participants leave the Academy having the skills, knowledge and confidence to be entrepreneurial leaders in their communities.

"At first, I thought entrepreneurship was all about starting a business because of famous entrepreneurs like Mark Zuckerberg, Bill Gates, and others. After attending this BELA, my understanding of entrepreneurship changed. It was useful to learn basic topics and knowledge on developing ideas and identifying the needs of our communities and link it to our passions to develop change. I was so inspired by the techniques the teachers used to help us understand. And I have learned that I have all the resources to bring a change in my community now."

BAHIZI Joseph
19 years old | Rwanda



CONTACT US

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