

## Business incubator to boost 200 Zimbabwean entrepreneurs

A business bootcamp for 200 would-be Zimbabwean entrepreneurs, offering business training and support, will be launched by business incubation specialist KBA Africa, with the support of Zimbabwean Youth Minister Patrick Zhuwao and the Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and Cooperative Development.



Agnes Chikukwa-Hove

The business coaching will be delivered under the auspices of KBA Africa, an African SME development organisation specialising in accelerating the growth of start-ups and early stage business. On the back of successful pilot projects, KBA has now opened applications for its largest-ever BootCamp, to be staged in Harare later this month.

The BootCamp will empower 200 entrepreneurs, equipping them with skills and business toolkits, after which 50 participants will be selected for a 12-month business incubation programme.

Agnes Chikukwa-Hove, CEO of KBA Africa, notes that the key to Zimbabwe's socio-economic development lies in empowering small business and supporting the growth of a middle class in the country. "However, while the SME sector is crucial to Africa's growth, currently contributing more than 45% to employment and 33% to GDP, a large proportion of new businesses fail. This is often due to funding challenges, but also – and sometimes more importantly – due to a lack of strategic business skills."

“We often find that small businesses think they need to secure loans in order to grow. What we say to them is sometimes funding is not the biggest challenge; sometimes it’s the ability to reposition your business, address your operations and marketing. In fact, financing comes at a high cost and it can put a stranglehold on the business. In many cases, it may be better to grow organically and look at the tools, technologies and strategies you have around you to support this growth.”

The BootCamp will elaborate on viable business growth strategies, giving participants practical business development tools and access to business partner networks designed to support business success. Chikukwa-Hove says the programme includes a number of innovative approaches, including;

1. A targeted incubation selection algorithm and an advanced Trade Exchange Network (TradeX).
2. Access to (remove sustained) growth phase capital.
3. Access to a Pan-African Crowdfunding platform.
4. A unique SME Bootcamp approach incorporating Scenario Planning and Trend Mapping.
5. The deployment of a bespoke Supervisory Board for SMEs.

“In addition to the securing support of Zimbabwean Government Ministries focused on youth empowerment and business development, we are also working with a global strategists Kjaer Global, specialising in trend mapping around the impact of disruptive technologies on business, as well as crowdfunding platform Thundafund, to ensure that our entrepreneurs benefit from access to world-class and modern approaches to building and running their businesses,” says Chikukwa-Hove.

[Applications](#) to participate in the BootCamp close on 27 July, 2016, with the initial Harare BootCamp set to begin on 29 July, 2016.

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