

## The Graduate Enterprise Academy's Entrepreneurial Promotion Program

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Unemployment in Africa including in countries such as Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Ghana, and so on has risen to very high levels of great concern to everyone. This situation was depicted by a Kenyan cartoonist in a national newspaper as early as in 2011 in a very graphical way. The cartoonist depicted the unemployment scenario in Kenya with a graduate holding his curriculum vitae by one hand while begging on a street using a bowl next to a beggar who is chasing the begging graduate away warning him loudly saying, "Don't bring competition here". Somewhere at the far end of the street, a little mouse is shouting loudly cautioning that there are no jobs in town "hakuna kazi". This is a desperate situation which is also recorded to have grown to a point in Ghana where the unemployed graduates have formed the association of unemployed graduates of Ghana. Thus, time has come when every institution must rise and contribute towards job creation as well as a mindset change among the graduates to be job creators rather than being job seekers.



A cartoonist's expression of the run-away employment in Kenya that has not spared the graduates (**Source: Daily Nation, Thursday 2- June 2011**).

Given the above realization by the Founder of MKU, Prof. Simon Gicharu, who established the Graduate Enterprise Academy (GEA) in 2013 to instill and nurture the entrepreneurial spirit amongst alumni of Mount Kenya University (MKU). According to Professor Gicharu, his ultimate intention is to hold every GEA beneficiary by his / her had to ensure they do not play a try-and-error game in their businesses. The first admission of MKU alumni who had viable business ideas was done in 2013 and were commissioned in 2014. These were 9 young men and women whose businesses are currently running throughout the country.



***A photo of GEA Commissioning in 2014;***

Each of the 9 GEA 2014 beneficiaries were provided with a total of Ksh 800,000 (USD 8,000) as seed capital by MKU after their training. This was provided in 4 installments of USD 2,000 after every three months depending on individual business performance.

The second admission of GEA trainees took place in April 2016 and the 14 trainees who were also alumni of MKU were commissioned in April 2017. The one year training program involved a well-integrated mix of 3 week-ends boot camps and unlimited digital networking.

*"If I had mentors all steps of the way I would have built MKU much faster and with less pitfalls .....I want GEA to be the bridge to entrepreneurial success for the youth of Africa".* GEA Patron, Prof. Dr. S.



Gicharu

GEA Patron (and sponsor), Prof. Dr. S. Gicharu displaying his Monaco Hall of Fame (France) induction award in 2015 after he was inducted due to his entrepreneurial capacity.



**A photograph showing GEA Cohort 2 Commissioning Ceremony (seated on the front row are members of some MKU top Management while standing at the back are the GEA trainers and GEA Cohort 2 beneficiaries).**

The 24 GEA trainees at MKU (from both Cohort 1 and Cohort 2) are integrated into a sound and robust digital networking and mentoring process which shall go on indefinitely into the future for as long as one wishes to

remain engaged. Their mentoring includes receiving online motivational materials, online guests, online group peering sessions and physical involvement in relevant projects from time to time when situation avails itself. Additionally, the GEA beneficiaries go through a dedicated sessions of monitoring and evaluation at least once every year and the results of the M&E are used as a vital input in advising the GEA advisory team on areas that require improvement.

Here attached are presentations on two cases of successful Cohort One businesses whose details are presented herein. These are, namely, STEJOS Tours and Travels Limited as well as the Kipacha Technologies that offer IT services.



## Kipacha Technologies

Kipacha Technologies is a technology company which has a passion for innovation and is unafraid to invest in web and mobile technology. Our company develops software's, websites, E –learning solutions and offers ICT consultancy to help organizations like learning institutions and Small and Medium sized companies(SME's), connect to the internet to market their products and services online through developing customized affordable websites/mobile sites using the latest technologies.

Kipacha technology has concentrated on developing websites that promotes the institutions and small businesses to have a better publicity and easier marketing. The website are developed and hosted by Kipacha Technologies at affordable prices.

We have developed software's like ERP, MIS, and HRM to enable company's management work in a digital easier environment's.

The company has been in existence since 2012. We bring together a unique, multidisciplinary team of professionals to provide best services for our clients" in the various fields of Information Technology.

The company on 2015 diversified into new business that would see the company generate more income on a daily basis unlike the previous contract based. We agreed and financed a new business venture "The Crux Gaming Lounge and Cyber" which was registered under the company act of Kenya. Currently we have two Branches in Limuru Town and Thika Town.

The Crux Gaming Lounge and Cyber offer the following services:

- i. Printing
- ii. Cyber services: DL renewal, Typesetting, Scanning, Photocopy etc
- iii. WIFI Hotspot for the youth.
- iv. Gaming: Mission games, Sports games, Action Games, Racing using gaming console PS4.

Kipacha Technologies started in 2012 when our Director Godffrey Ngotho finished His Master's Degree at the Catholic University of Milan. It existed as a small startup with no physical address. When MKU in 2013 advertised

for the applications for GEA, he applied and managed a position at the academy. GEA trained nine of the first cohort and in June 2014 he graduated and was granted a startup capital of \$6,000. This enabled Godfrey to expand the company and acquire assets to set up a physical location in Limuru town. The push and the elp from GEA were magnanimous. The company saw growth in the client base and the training was now being actualized in real life.

We established the offices in Limuru town due to its central location and easy access to the clients who then were in Nairobi, Westlands and Naivasha. There was a niche in Limuru since we were to be the first ICT Company and it was a ripe market for our services.

The company has grown its assets and impact to the society since its establishment in 2012. We have developed over thirty major websites; developed software's for International companies and consulted in big very major established forums. The start of The Crux Gaming Lounge and Cyber is an establishment that has brought so many youths and once in a while we offer them free forums, seminars and Webinars that improve their passion for technology.

Some of our clients are:

- Nairobi City Water and Sewerage Company
- African Water Association (AfWA)
- Nairobi City Council
- Karibu Paradise
- ITube Kenya
- Innovation eye Centre
- Kisii Eye Centre
- Mater Hospital

We are forever grateful to GEA and Mount Kenya University for the opportunity. It was them who opened our eyes and sharpened our skills to be where we are today. The training was very vigorous and those trips every Friday to meet a mentor is my greatest gift from GEA. Asante.

We have been facing problems expanding The Crux to other Counties especially the main towns. Devolved governments have given us challenges since each county has different regulations that affect the establishment. We have been working on a formula and once we work it out fully we shall manage to work with the counties. Finances are a challenge too since to setup each Crux we need about \$20,000 which we have to raise slowly through loans and savings. If we had the money power we would set the branches in most counties at once.