

Youth**Action**Net®

CASE STUDY SERIES

**UniTED - Universities Together
Empowering Development:**

*CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGES,
YOUTH-LED PROJECTS, AND
SOCIAL CHANGE*

A partnership between:



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY

School of Foreign Service
Global Human Development Program



Introduction

This is one of a series of case studies produced by students enrolled in the Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University through its partnership with the International Youth Foundation (IYF). Students enrolled in a course exploring the role of social enterprises and social entrepreneurs were paired with young leaders of social ventures identified through the IYF's YouthActionNet® program. The students were given the assignment of analyzing the venture's assets, successful methodologies, and opportunities for investment to increase impact. Through this experiential learning process, the student consultants gained hands-on experience and exposure to the needs of social enterprises. The ventures, too, benefited from student insights into their strengths, areas for growth, and recommendations for enhancing their impact and sustainability. The Georgetown practicum is part of YouthActionNet's larger efforts to partner with institutions of higher learning around the globe to integrate social change into the academic experience and career interests of students.

International Youth Foundation

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) invests in the extraordinary potential of young people. Founded in 1990, IYF builds and maintains a worldwide community of businesses, governments, and civil society organizations committed to empowering youth to be healthy, productive, and engaged citizens. IYF programs are catalysts of change that help young people obtain a quality education, gain employability skills, make healthy choices, and improve their communities.

www.iyfnet.org

YouthActionNet®

Since 2001, YouthActionNet, a program of the International Youth Foundation, has provided founders of social ventures, ages 18 to 29, with the training, networking, coaching, funding, and advocacy opportunities they need to strengthen and scale their impact. These young social entrepreneurs have pioneered innovative solutions to critical local and global challenges, resulting in increased civic engagement, improved health, education reform, economic opportunity, environmental protection, and more inclusive societies. Our work is carried out through a network of 23 national and regional youth leadership institutes that collectively support over 1,350 young social entrepreneurs globally.

www.youthactionnet.org

Global Human Development Program at Georgetown University

The Global Human Development Program of Georgetown University is home to one of the world's premier master's degree programs in international development. An innovative, academically rigorous skills-based graduate program, the Master of Global Human Development degree prepares the next generation of development professionals to work with public sector agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations that advance development. Through coursework, extracurricular activity, and practical fieldwork experiences, our graduates develop the insights, skills, and experiences necessary to become leaders in development and make a difference in our global community.

<https://ghd.georgetown.edu>

INTRODUCTION

Meet Leo Henghes, Co-founder and Executive Director of UniTED

In 2010, Leo Henghes travelled to southwest Uganda as a volunteer in a primary school where he met Eliab, a Ugandan teenager around his age. The two quickly formed a friendship. Leo returned home to join Oxford University in England, and Eliab left for Makerere University in Kampala. They stayed in touch over social media, and when an opportunity arose at Oxford to link with an international student body, Leo immediately suggested Makerere, leading to an international exchange program between students at the two universities. With growing interest from students in both universities, the program soon became an annual fixture, with the partnership evolving to address social issues. Leo saw the impact of the exchange on students on both sides, seeing the potential of a platform to cultivate cross-cultural relationships and harness students' unique abilities to drive positive change. In 2013, after graduating Oxford with a degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics, Leo moved to Kampala to set up UniTED – Universities Together Empowering Development.



UniTED builds positive social impact through cross-cultural student exchanges.



The Problem

Africa's youth population is growing faster than in any other part of the world, making up 40% of the workforce and 60% of the unemployed on the continent.¹ In Uganda, 75% of the population are below the age of 30. Unfortunately, despite an increasingly educated youth population, research shows that unemployment is actually increasing for those aged 18-30, with youth currently make up over 64% of the unemployed.² According to International Labor Organization's (ILO) underemployment indicators, the youth labor potential is heavily underutilized, limiting the growth of both individuals and Uganda's economy as a whole.³ The widespread underemployment is compounded by institutions failing to teach skills to help students meet the demands of the job market. In this context, building capacity of youth to be self-sufficient entrepreneurs is vital.

¹ Agbor, J., Taiwo, O., & Smith, J. (2012). Sub-saharan africa's youth bulge: a demographic dividend or disaster? Brookings Institution - Africa Growth Initiative.

https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2016/06/01_youth_bulge_agbor_taiwo_smith.pdf.

² Ahaibwe, G., & Mbowa, S. (2016, July 29). Youth Unemployment Challenge in Uganda and the Role of Employment Policies in Jobs Creation. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2014/08/26/youth-unemployment-challenge-in-uganda-and-the-role-of-employment-policies-in-jobs-creation/>

³ International Labor Organization (July 2011). Skilling Uganda: BTNET Strategic Plan 2011-2020. http://www.skillsforemployment.org/KSP/en/Details/?dn=WCMSTEST4_033226

University students in Uganda represent a largely untapped potential in developing solutions to address the country's economic and social challenges of tomorrow.

Figure 1: UniTED's three focus areas



In order to effectively address the global problems of the 21st century, we will need a strong global community that transcends national boundaries. Students have a unique potential to develop into global citizens and drive positive, transformative change both within their countries and across borders. With technological advances, the potential to connect and engage even the most remote communities is continually expanding. At this critical juncture, the potential of students to engage as socially-minded global citizens

remains largely untapped, especially in lower-income countries like Uganda. For students to develop into global citizens and have the skillset to effectively address social issues, they need a platform to foster cross-cultural exchanges and build their capacity in developing viable, relevant solutions that can bring positive impact.

The Solution

UniTED aims to empower students as social entrepreneurs and global citizens, building their skills to effectively drive social change. UniTED's work is focused on three key areas.

Enhancing Capacity for Social Action

UniTED works with Ugandan university students who are running their own social action projects. In order to build capacity and develop financially viable and socially effective projects, UniTED provides 1-on-1 consultation services ('tutorials') to student teams over the course of the academic year. Students run through a curriculum to build a skillset in effectively designing, implementing, and managing projects to maximize impact.

Fostering Global Citizenship

UniTED serves as a network to help build relationships between university students from different countries. Leveraging a global network, UniTED offers students outside Uganda the opportunity to support Ugandan peers with their social ventures. Students can volunteer online and in-person, providing a chance for students on both ends to gain exposure and understanding of diverse backgrounds. These exchanges help foster values of global citizenship such as equality and mutual understanding, and offer diverse insights into the further development of Ugandan student ventures.

Building Ecosystem to Promote Student Action

UniTED runs an annual competition within Uganda to increase interest and participation in the voluntary sector. It also partners with other civil society partners in events to promote social action amongst Ugandan youth.

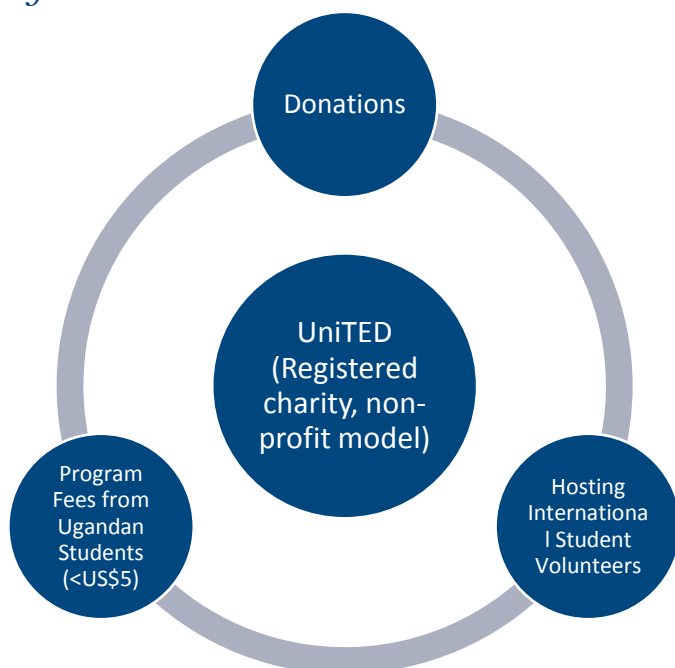
Box 1: Overview of Impact to Date

- As of June 2016, UniTED has provided support to more than 92 student lead projects in Uganda
- A January 2017 survey of students enrolled in UniTED's programs found that:
 - 69% found UniTED's support to be 'transformational' to their initiative
 - 94% found UniTED useful to every key aspect of their operations
 - 100% would recommend UniTED's tutorials
- On average, students valued each tutorial at twice the running costs. The average cost for delivering 1 tutorial session is UGX 110,000 (US\$30). Students pay a nominal US\$5 annual fees to enroll in UniTED's programs.
- 14 universities around Uganda participated in camps with students from Oxford University
 - 97% of participants said it increased their engagement with global issues
- Multiple student exchanges, with 22 Ugandan students travelling to the UK and 21 Oxford students visiting Uganda
- Ugandan students have been selected to participate at the Oxford Forum for International Development on the basis of their social projects

Operational Model

UniTED is a registered charity in the United Kingdom and Uganda with operations based out of Kampala, Uganda. Leo Henghes is based out of Kampala and manages all day-to-day operations of UniTED. Leo is supported by a diverse Board of Trustees from around the world who meet every two months to support strategic developments.

Figure 2: UniTED revenue streams



UniTED has a non-profit business model, generating revenues from three streams – donations, hosting international student volunteers in Uganda, and program fee for enrolled Ugandan students. UniTED's primary revenue-generating stream is from international supporters in the UK and other countries. In addition to donations, UniTED receives some revenues from the service provision. Ugandan students are charged a minimum annual fee to enroll in tutorials (UGX 20,000/US\$5). This minimal fee is primarily to ensure attendance and does not support operational costs. UniTED also raises funds through hosting international student volunteers. Going forward, UniTED aims to expand this stream to be a

primary source of revenue generation and increase the enterprise's financial sustainability.

Since 2015, UniTED has adapted its models to the needs of students and the larger Ugandan context. While still a nascent social enterprise itself, UniTED's model presents great potential in supporting Ugandan youth and amplifying their impact as both entrepreneurs and social-change agents.

The first programmatic component of UniTED is a volunteer exchange, based on the model of UniTED's founding partnership between Oxford and Makerere Universities. Students outside of Uganda can volunteer remotely over the internet, or in person by being hosted by UniTED in Uganda. Students being hosted in Uganda generally stay for three weeks and pay a fee to cover their costs. They attend a one-day training in social entrepreneurship and global citizenship before starting work with Ugandan peers, which UniTED oversees. Currently, these connections are established through campus partnerships. The rationale for partnering two institutions is that it encourages greater engagement from students who are working with peers at the same university. In the future, UniTED aims to expand this network to students around the world. This will mean students can apply to volunteer through the website and then be connected to projects in Uganda, either remotely or in person through an exchange trip to Uganda, in turn supporting revenue generation to continue UniTED's activities in-country.

In November 2015, UniTED launched a pilot consultancy tutorial program to encourage social entrepreneurship in Uganda. Each project signs an agreement with UniTED and can expect six sessions, totaling over twenty hours of contact time, over the course of the year. These projects must be established for charitable purposes that add value to the whole community or a significant section of the community. A normal session lasts for about three hours and helps to guide students through a framework UniTED has designed called the 'Project Narrative.' UniTED developed this framework based on similar global programs, tailoring it for the context of Ugandan students, and building on the 'tutorial' traditions of Oxford University.

In total, the Project Narrative consists of sixty steps within six stages (figure 3). Each step is linked to a corresponding toolkit to help the students complete the task. From these sessions, UniTED can help student initiatives to find suitable mentors and partners within wider civil society and the international community. As part of building students' capacity and supporting ventures, students are often paired with international peers who provide additional consulting and guidance on enterprise development.

Figure 3: Consultancy Steps



KEY ASSETS AND SUCCESSFUL METHODOLOGIES

Building Ugandan Youth as Social Entrepreneurs

While there are several organizations working to promote international student exchanges, UniTED is unique in emphasizing support in developing students as social entrepreneurs. After seeing the immense potential of Ugandan students to drive social change within their own communities, support was shifted from promoting international exchanges to addressing how to build the capacity of students to become social entrepreneurs. This unique program is structured to provide tailored support to students in effectively designing and managing a social enterprise. These sessions develop the capacity of university students to build viable social projects, while also imparting a critical entrepreneurial skillset that students can leverage after graduation. For Ugandan students, UniTED presents an opportunity to gain transferrable entrepreneurial skills while focusing on a social issue of importance to the local community. For students in developed countries looking to volunteer, it offers a chance to form a 1-on-1 relationship with a peer and offer meaningful consultancy in supporting a social venture, differing from many other ‘voluntourism’ offerings.

Box 2: Spotlight on MUCCA

Makerere University Climate Change Association (MUCCA) was an early participant in UniTED’s program in 2013. It was created by students as a way of engaging their peers with climate change adaptation and mitigation.

UniTED provided tailored support in diversifying MUCCA’s business model, establishing partnerships, and conducting outreach. UniTED connected them to volunteers from the University of Oxford, who helped them to research similar associations around the world and create a strategic plan to expand their outreach. With UniTED’s guidance, MUCCA has run 2 climate change bootcamps with over 120 participants, receiving funding and support from USAID, FHI360, and REDD+.

MUCCA has now developed a tailored curriculum on climate change that is being adapted into the official national curriculum to deliver to tens of thousands of Ugandan students.

Redefining “Voluntourism”

In recent years, there has been a burgeoning trend of ‘voluntourism,’ or short-term, one off volunteering opportunities for tourists from developed countries aiming to volunteer in less developed areas. While some of these opportunities can be helpful for communities and fulfilling for tourists, this type of volunteering usually don’t present the opportunity to foster relationships and build understanding on both sides. UniTED aims to offer an alternative to these approaches by providing a way for youth in developed countries to leverage their skills in partnership with a peer in a developing country. Students outside Uganda can leverage their skillsets to support a locally designed project while Ugandan students can benefit from additional mentorship and guidance in building their enterprise. This gives mutual understanding and exposure to both students on each other’s cultures and expands their ability to address social problems with a more global mindset.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTMENT

UniTED is at an exciting period of growth and there remain several opportunities for future investment and new partnerships.

Expansion of Revenue-Generating Activities

The expansion of revenue generating activities must be at the core of UniTED's business model. A key aspect of this will be expanding the existing international exchange program, hosting international students in Uganda, and partnering them with UniTED supported student projects. Students pay a fee to participate in the exchange program, which not only covers their costs, but generates some revenue for UniTED. There is a large potential to expand the exchange program both within Oxford University and other interested international universities. This presents an opportunity for UniTED to reduce dependence on donations as the primary source of revenue. In increasing financial sustainability, UniTED can also ensure that costs remain low for Ugandan students to enroll in the program.

Partnerships with Universities and the Private Sector

UniTED has expanded outside of Makerere University and there are many more opportunities to expand in East Africa and establish partnerships with more international universities. This can help UniTED increase programmatic impact and revenue. International universities could partner with UniTED in subsidizing costs for students to participate and travel to Uganda, and offer opportunities for more Ugandan students to participate in international exchanges as well. There may also be potential to leverage the successful tutorial model and franchise this to other universities in Uganda and the region at large. If other universities, or even private sector actors, are interested in leveraging the entrepreneurship training model, this could be franchised and scaled.

Diversified Funding Sources

While UniTED's primary goal remains to become more self-sufficient in revenue generating activities, the organization also aims to diversify funding sources and reduce dependencies on individual donations. UniTED has begun exploring opportunities for traditional grants and alternative funding models such as results-based financing and private sector partnerships.

Operational Support

A large constraint in scaling UniTED's work is the operational support available by Leo, who currently serves as the only employee. Increased, sustainable funding would increase operational support, thereby also increasing scaling impact. In the meantime, there are various other partnerships that could

support operations and expansions. For example, if the number of international students participating in exchanges expands, they could offer tutorial support, providing Leo more time to focus on other aspects of UniTED's operations. In addition, other interested partners such as private sector companies could offer pro-bono consultant services to support business model development, help with further strategy development, and even fundraising and operational support.

UniTED has given [us] so much hope! What we did [with UniTED] in a month could have taken a year.

Sadam, UniTED tutorial participant

UniTED SWOT Analysis

INTERNAL		Strengths	Weaknesses
INTERNAL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High potential to engage Ugandan youth in socially-focused activities • Builds transferrable entrepreneurial skillset in Ugandan youth • Developed unique curriculum to build capacity as a student social entrepreneur • Offers unique opportunities for international exchange, to promote global citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources to expand services • Financial model limited and not generating sufficient revenues • Operations depend on Executive Director, services require additional staff but limited resources to sustainably expand team size
		Opportunities	Threats
EXTERNAL		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased revenue generation activities to become more financially sustainable • Private sector funding, international funding • Large expansion potential with universities outside Uganda, and to engage additional students within Uganda in programs • Increased impact evaluation • Developing cohesive operational strategy to target funders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to compete for funding • Prioritizing program activities with limited resources • Measuring program impact areas

CONCLUSION

UniTED has developed a unique model to promote social entrepreneurship and engage youth. UniTED can have significant impact on both students in developed countries and Ugandan youth if it receives adequate support to further develop the operational model and expand programming. As described in the SWOT model, engagement in a variety of activities can be both a threat or an opportunity for targeted growth depending on effective use of available resources. UniTED's tutorial program for youth-led social enterprises is unique in the region and the partnership model with international students offers a viable engagement method and revenue generation strategy. If UniTED is able to develop sustainable revenue streams to support the core activities of building Ugandan youth-led social enterprises, this presents a significant area for growth and impact. As the enterprise continues to grow, it will be important to have a more concrete impact measurement strategy and pursue more targeted funding models.

FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT UNITED

- [UniTED Website](#)
- Opportunity Desk: [Article on Leo Henghes](#)
- Facebook: [@unitedpartnerships](#)
- Twitter: [@United_prtns](#)

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This case study series was made possible thanks to support from:



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