



Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism



AFRICA
YOUTH IN TOURISM
INNOVATION SUMMIT & CHALLENGE 2022

In collaboration with



2023

AFRICA YOUTH IN TOURISM Innovation Challenge and Summit



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Namibia Tourism Board



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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Africa Tourism Partners in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism of Namibia hosted the 5th Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit and Challenge (AYTICS) at the MTC Dome in Swakopmund, Namibia from 30th May to 02 June 2023.

Prefaced by a training day on 30 May 2023, the Summit also incorporated a hosted buyer programme to facilitate market access for start-ups and other SMEs participation in the event. Various messages of support were received for the initiative, including a message from Zurab Pololikashvili, Secretary General of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). Opened by the Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism of Namibia, Hon Pohamba Shifeta and supported by the Deputy Minister, Hon Heather Sibungo, the 5th AYTICS received wide support from Continental and other delegates, including those from the host region, the Irongo Region.

Topics covered during the three day conference ranged from Policy discussion on enabling regulatory environments and policies, youth entrepreneurship, practical approaches to investment engagements and capital raising, work focused learning, building innovative and technology driven enterprises, partnerships to support SMEs and start-ups, global best practice on successful youth entrepreneurship programmes as well as youth and women economic inclusivity.

Highlights of the event included the Youth in Tourism Innovation Challenge, whereby various youth enterprises presented projects for review and adjudication by a panel of industry leaders. Once again the YTIC, attracted a wide variety of innovative ideas from youth owned enterprises from across the Continent.

A key theme echoed throughout the conference was the need to ensure youth and women inclusion in the quest for inclusive economic growth. Given that the Continent is comprised largely of youth, the point was made that greater efforts must be made to include youth in decision making, open up opportunities for them to get involved and use technology and digitalisation to become creators of employment, and for governments and private sector to work together in this regard.

Various case studies were shared of initiatives aimed at broadening youth inclusion and participation in the tourism industry. There was general consensus that broadening access should extend to amongst others, creating market access, access to funding and finance, access to opportunities for work place experience or experiential learning, alignment between industry requirement and the curriculum for tourism, as well as a commitment to develop and implement policies that are supportive to entrepreneurship and youth enterprises.



2. INTRODUCTION

The Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit and Challenge is an exclusive platform being provided to innovative African youth looking to present their projects to the global marketplace to find the required support for their projects.

The Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit (AYTIS) serves as a pan-African platform for youth and startups in tourism, travel, hospitality, aviation, academia, and related industries to connect, engage, learn, innovate, and grow. The Youth in Tourism Innovation Challenge on the other hand is a platform to invite innovative projects and solutions that go beyond technology but are related to the travel and tourism industry for review and adjudication by a preeminent panel of industry leaders. Those shortlisted candidates are introduced to industry experts for mentorship and to potential funders for support and/or partnerships.

The 2023 Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit and the Challenge presentations were held in Swakopmund, Namibia from 30 May to 02 June.

3. DELEGATE PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE

The 5th Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit and Challenge was attended by a 697 physical delegates and 980 virtual ones over the three day period. A further breakdown of the attendees is presented in the table below:

DATE	ACTIVITY	ATTENDANCE
30 May 2023	Namibia SME Digital / Social Media and Entrepreneurship Masterclass	Physical: 116 Virtual: 86 Total: 202 Target: 80
31 May - 02 June	Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit	Physical: 697 Target: 350 Virtual: 980 Target: 1000
31 May - 02 June	Exhibition	Target: 60 Actual: 36
01 June 2023	Hosted Buyers B2B session	Total: 20 Target: 15
02 June 2023	Career Guidance and Youth Development Clinic	
02 June 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raina Augustus – Winner - Namibia Top 3 finalists (Africa) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gloria Kisilu – Kenya• Cornelius Ugwunwa – Nigeria• Ntshabo Lehong – South Africa	

DATE	ACTIVITY	ATTENDANCE
30 May - 02 June	Number of countries represented	60
1. Austria	16. Djibouti	31. Lesotho
2. Algeria	17. Egypt	32. Libya
3. Angola	18. Eswatini	33. Madagascar
4. Belgium	19. Ethiopia	34. Malawi
5. Benin	20. France	35. Mali
6. Botswana	21. Gambia	36. Mauritania
7. Burkina Faso	22. Ghana	37. Mauritius
8. Burundi	23. Guinea	38. Morocco
9. Cameroon	24. Guinea-Bissau	39. Mozambique
10. Canada	25. India	40. Namibia
11. Comoros	26. Indonesia	41. Netherlands
12. Congo	27. Italy	42. Nigeria
13. Congo {DemocraticRep}	28. Kenya	43. Niger
14. Cote D'Ivoire	29. Lebanon	44. Russian
15. Dominican Republic	30. Liberia	45. Rwanda
		46. Sao Tome & Principe
		47. Senegal
		48. Sierra Leone
		49. Somalia
		50. South Africa
		51. South Sudan
		52. Spain
		53. Switzerland
		54. Tanzania
		55. Togo
		56. Uganda
		57. United States
		58. United Kingdom
		59. Zambia
		60. Zimbabwe

4. SUMMIT DAY 1 - Thursday, 31 March 2023

Welcome Message

Hon. Neville Andre Itope - Governor of Erongo Region, Namibia

The Governor welcomed delegates to the conference and articulated how the tourism industry was beneficial to the economy of the region; noting that tourism can play a role in improving the economic growth and creating employment. Highlighting that Swakopmund was a business travel destination as well as an adventure capital and tourism city of Namibia. In concluding, the Governor thanked the Ministry for choosing Swakopmund to be the host of the AYTIS 2023 and wished the delegates success in their deliberations over the coming days. The event would help the city to grow stronger as a tourism destination.



Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Challenge and Summit – A strategic youth development initiative for Namibia

Seimy Shidute - Deputy Executive Director, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia

The Deputy Executive Director highlighted that the Ministry's objective was to ensure an inclusive and sustainable economy and the route to this was youth development and innovation.

He articulated the challenges and barriers to access for youth into the industry, which limited youth involvement in the industry. The ministry appreciates the impact of tourism on all sectors of the economy and its importance of youth in economic development and contribution to inclusive tourism.

AYTIS is a developmental initiative to centre stage youth in Africa in championing their futures. Youth were encouraged to start their own businesses and support them with training and funding. Tourism is an industry with low barriers to entry and offers opportunities for obtaining critical skills. The AYTIS presents an opportunity for youth to meet experts and who can help cultivate their careers and access to knowledge.

“Investing in youth development is essential for the future of Namibia. Let us work together to create a brighter and more prosperous future for Namibia's youth. *Seimy Shidute*”



Elcia Grandcourt
Director, Africa Department,
UNWTO, Spain

Message from the UNWTO

Building the future of Africa travel and tourism economy through Innovation and Technology

Elcia Grandcourt thanked the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism of Namibia and AP for the work they were doing ensuring youth involvement in tourism as it supports the UNWTO's effort to ensure youth empowerment and inspire the youth.

Tourism generates one out of ten jobs worldwide and presents opportunities for innovation, development and achievements of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Innovation, Technology and Digitisation are part of the evolution of tourism. The COVID 19 pandemic made us rethink tourism and adapt it to new conditions and developments. It is important to capacitate the youth with digital skills as this is critical for the socio economic development of youth. Africa is a young continent and youth offer an opportunity for the continent's growth. Thus young people must be involved in decision making as they contribute to the future of tourism. Upskilling and training are important for the future of tourism.

The UNWTO's agenda for growth emphasises education, skills and empowerment and the organisation is working with member states to advance this agenda. To develop youth, the UNWTO is committed to driving innovation in tourism. Some of the shared initiatives include, amongst others the following: attraction of FDI and youth development as well as publication of guidelines on Tourism Education, Digital Futures Programme and Doing Business Investment Guidelines.



Kwakye Donkor
CEO, Africa Tourism Partners,
South Africa

Message from Africa Tourism Partners, Event Conveners

Kwakye Donkor welcome all present and highlighted some stories of young people who had come through the AYTIS programme and gone on develop their own businesses.

Youth attending the conference were encouraged to connect, engage and do business. It was noted that there are 38 countries participating at AYTIS 2023. It is important to catalyse intra Africa travel to bring forward Agenda 2063.

The young people at whom the AYTIS is targeted are the one who will reap the fruit of agenda 2063. It was thus important to help the youth realise their dreams and aspirations.

With the support of the Durban University of Technology and the Namibian Ministry of Tourism an Innovation Hub was being established in Namibia and partnerships with Cornell University would enable training courses to be offered to young people at highly discounted prices.

Presentation of Unfolding Opportunities for the Youth in the Travel & Tourism Sector in Namibia



Sebulon C. Chicalu
Director for Tourism
and Gaming, Ministry of
Environment, Forestry and
Tourism, Namibia.

There is great potential in the tourism sector in Namibia due to its abundant natural beauty and diverse landscapes, rich cultural heritage and practices, wildlife and safari experiences, adventure activities, and outdoor pursuits. There is a lot that can still be unpacked cruise tourism, business events, and film and creative tourism.

A survey conducted by MEFT showed the following statistics in connection with tour guides in Namibia, 12% were women, and 536 participants. This survey showed that there is potential for growth among women tour guides.

Vast opportunities lie in the rural tourism sector in Namibia. There is a need to establish more community-based tourism enterprises and create cultural excursions in local communities for authentic heritage experiences

In the digital space as well as in the marketing sphere, utilising social media platforms to promote tourism is essential as well as building a strong online presence for tourism businesses.

The youth have an advantage in excelling in the tourism industry as there are favourable regulations for youth entrepreneurs. There are also incentives for sustainable tourism initiatives. The Namibian government also provides support for small and medium-sized enterprises in the sector.

When it comes to funding and grants, in Namibia there is financial support for youth-led tourism ventures. There are grants and loans for tourism-related projects and collaboration with financial institutions and development agencies have been set up.

Message from the Secretary General of the UNWTO

Secretary General thanked ATP for supporting their work in developing the next generation of tourism professionals, giving them voice and involvement in decision making. This will contribute towards building a highly qualified tourism industry base.

Keynote Address

Minister Shifeta welcomed all those present to the occasion. The purpose of the AYTIS was to ensure amongst others growth and prosperity. AYTIS was established to nurture African youth to pursue opportunities in tourism. The Minister expressed support for the UNWTO efforts to ensure sustainability, inclusive development, noting that this can only happen with the inclusion of women and youth. Citing Namibia's Vision 2030, the Minister further noted that tourism is a pillar of economic growth and elimination of poverty. Some of the benefits from Namibia having hosted the 4th AYTIS included more awareness of tourism



Hon. Pohamba Shifeta, MP
Minister of Environment, Forestry and
Tourism, Namibia

benefits and insights on tourism for high school and university graduates. The Summit also exposes youth to job opportunities, new digital innovations, and ways of doing business. The youth were encouraged to seize the opportunities presented by the event.

Namibia was seized with various initiatives to develop youth and ensure solutions for inclusive recovery in Africa; ensuring SME support, MICE development as well as facilitation of market access. Noting that African Ministers of Tourism had met in Durban on the fringes of Africa's Travel Indaba, and countries were encouraged to support youth in various areas such as Digitalisation and Entrepreneurship.

It is vital for African youth to participate in programmes focused on achievement of Africa's development and were urged to collaborate to place Africa centre stage of discussions.

The minister concluded by thanking the partners for having chosen to host the AYTIS in Namibia and thanked all involved in making the AYTIS a success.

Vote of Thanks

Hon. Heather M. Sibungo - Deputy Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia

Deputy Minister Sibungo conveyed the gratitude of the Ministry and expressed appreciation for the delegates attending the conference. A special word of gratitude was also extended to the Irongo Region for co-hosting the AYTIS 2023 and for demonstrating support for youth development.

The summit would assist youth to get involved to benefit from connections and networks offered by the platform. She hoped that the objectives would be met and new learnings, new innovations and new ways of doing things will be found.

Thanking the organisers, the Deputy Minister urged all delegates to explore Namibia.



***Whenever your
soul desires
some peace
bring it to the
land of the
brave***

Ministerial and Policy-maker's Dialogue

Strengthening Africa tourism innovation ecosystem through progressive policymaking

- Hon. Pohamba Shifeta, MP - Minister of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia
- Gonaya Monei Sethora - Women and Youth in Trade Expert, Directorate of Institutional Matters & Programmes Coordination (DIMPC), AFCFTA, Ghana
- Dr. Urs Aebischer - Founder of DISEO, Digital Innovator, and Entrepreneur, Switzerland
- Hon. Emma Kantema-Gaomas - Deputy Minister of Sport, Youth and National Service, Namibia

Moderator - Nangula Shejvali - Manager: Policy Reform and Business Climate Alka Bhatia - UNDP Country Representative, Namibia



Focusing on policy innovation and areas where it is required, this panel session emphasized that policy innovation is required to improve tourism. Policy development frameworks that are advanced and flexible are the cornerstones of tourism growth and policy-makers should embrace the approach. The economic role of progressive policies was another critical area highlighted, with panellists arguing that policies on youth employment and entrepreneurship could be used as a way

to arrest youth unemployment. It was necessary to consider what kind of policies and how they should be implemented to realise this objective.

Critically, youth must be given the opportunity to participate in policy development to create a competitive tourism sector. Digital media could create space for young people to get involved and we need digital media. Hence, the importance of training was reiterated.

Another point which came through the discussions was the fact that creating inclusive policies could eliminate the matter of leakages through foreign agents' commissions, which eroded margins for local tourism role-players. It was noted that Web 2.0 was controlled by internet companies, which took everything and did not share. Web 3.0 however was predicated on trust, data protection and ownership ecosystems and not giant internet companies. It therefore presents a new way of digital entrepreneurship. Government policy should be supportive of such systems which enabled internationalisation of business and enable youth to use technologies in tourism.

Some of the challenges with respect to youth entrepreneurship which were highlighted in the panel discussion were:

- Access to finance;
- SME financing strategy
- Credit guarantees
- Training an skills
- Access to market

It was noted though that the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offered opportunities for accessing bigger markets. What was required was the confidence and preparedness to assist and support through for example, mentorships, training, grooming and encouraging entrepreneurship, supporting start-ups and innovation. Curricula must also be linked to entrepreneurship and business must be prepared to offer internships. Learning that takes place outside the classroom is important.

Entrepreneurship was lauded as the backbone of the economy. We must create platforms for young people to enter for young people who have the passion to create employment for others in the tourism industry. Local traditional products for example, it was argued, should be considered and recognised as innovations.

Policy makers were encouraged to “stop talking” and focus on implementation.



Ministerial and Policy-maker's Dialogue

Fostering e-commerce and digital transformation culture in Africa's travel, tourism and hospitality marketplace place and experiences

- Keleabetswe Tlouane - DDG, TEDET, Limpopo, South Africa
- Ian Putter - Head Blockchain Centre of Excellence, Regional Director Blockchain Research Institute Africa and Board member of Hedera Hashgraph, South Africa
- Hon. Nqobizitha Mangaliso Ndlovu - Minister of Environment, Climate Change, Tourism & Hospitality Industry, Zimbabwe

Moderator - Elcia Grandcourt - Director, Africa Department, UNWTO, Spain

This panel focused, amongst others, on how public sectors can support the drive to get youth to pursue interest in tourism and why it is critical for ministries to drive digital transformation and advocate for adoption of ecommerce. It was noted that Ministries of Tourism can enable platforms for promotion across countries and adopt digitalisation, while the private sectors can provide the platforms.



Curriculum linkages to industry and alignment to the world of work need to be supported through private sector workplace experience. To this end government needs to work with the private sector to capacitate the youth and ensure independent market-ready students. Industry could use youth as content creators for the promotion of tourism and building of Brand Africa. They could assist in shifting narratives about Africa – youth can help create our own narratives.

Overall the digitalisation of tourism should be supported as it offered many opportunities to get involved and grow the tourism industry, create new enterprises and employment opportunities.



Some of the critical areas that should receive focus were identified as the following:

- Collaboration partnerships with entrepreneurs in the sector;
- Addressing the high failure rates of start-ups;
- African partnerships to fill the gaps;
- Putting in place applied programmes, incubation and applied learning;
- Mentorship and support ; and
- Exchange programmes.

On the subject of encouraging youth to get into the various roles in the industry, it was indicated that the youth should be empowered before they come into the industry. Creating awareness through colleges, outreach programmes and ensuring that the youth are market ready. Market access can be created through provision of virtual tours.

For all this to succeed, governments needed to initiatives to ensure uniformity and harmonisation of polices. Practical mechanisms to collaborate and create bigger impact were required and examples such as the Univisa initiative were cited. Also highlighted was the importance of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) to support access to apprenticeships and on the job training within the private sector. Emphasis was laid on the need to improve vocational training to create employment for the youth.



TED Talk Taking the next step in entrepreneurship journey across African Tourism ecosystem through Creative Arts

Denim Richards - Hollywood Actor/Producer and Founder of Khumo Studios, Gaborone, Botswana

This TED style talk focused on the interconnectedness between tourism and entertainment, and what tourism can do through entertainment. The tourism industry should leverage the entertainment sector to drive tourism growth and revenues.



Africa's tourism is a global destination for investment and entrepreneurship. Tourism is one of the primary drivers of economic growth and job creation in emerging economies throughout the world. Africa's unique history and natural wonders are gaining attention amid the local and global increase in cultural, heritage, and development tourism. Based on analyses of various countries' governance and business environments, it is clear that numerous African countries present tremendous promise to become or remain vibrant hosts for tourists, investors, and entrepreneurs, which can drive employment for low-skilled workers and economic inclusion for women and youth.

A World Bank study classified African countries into four performance categories:

“pre-emergent,” “potential,” “emerging,” and “consolidating” tourism destinations.

The performance of countries was based on indicators such as the ease of doing business; the competitiveness in terms of tourism regulation, infrastructure, and resources; the tourism receipts per long-haul arrivals; the international arrival per head of population; and the forecast of growth in tourism arrivals.

The pre-emerging countries, such as Somalia and Sudan, have faced significant security and governance challenges as well as low government commitments to the tourism sector. The potential countries, such as Madagascar, Ethiopia, and Gabon, have shown relative interest and initiative in the sector, but are still facing governance challenges and market limitations. The emerging countries, such as Rwanda and Seychelles, are prioritizing and scaling up tourism and are relatively competitive. Finally, the consolidating countries, such as Morocco, South Africa, and Mauritius, are among the top performers with a relatively mature tourism sector.

Other key points included how the film industry supports the tourism industry, an example highlighted was Montana:-

- Yellowstone helps Montana generate \$730 million in tourism and 2.1 million visitors.
- 527 permanent jobs in the state, not including the 624 Montana residents who were employed during filming as extras.
- \$25.3 million in annual personal income for Montana households.
- \$85.8 million in additional gross receipts for Montana businesses and non-business organizations.
- Additionally, annual revenues of state government were higher by \$10.6 million

The talk also emphasised the importance of incentives in providing support as well as the opportunities that flow from that support.



Insights into The Future of Youth in Entrepreneurship: Successes, Failures & Recommendations

Successes, Failures and Recommendations

- Ndabenhle Ntshangase - Chief Executive Officer, AirStudent, South Africa
- Cornelius Ugwunwa - CEO, Kardinal Technologies Inc, Nigeria
- Pauline Alfeus - Namibia Winner, Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Challenge 2022
- Aline Murekatete - Founder of Spree, Rwanda

Moderator - Danny Meyer - Founder & Director, SMEs Compete, Namibia



This session focused on entrepreneurs sharing their entrepreneurial journeys, highlighting success, failures and learnings. Key take outs from the session were the following:

- You need the right people to push and show talent;
- You need self-belief and getting things done;
- Break your long term goals into manageable sizes;
- Start early and start smaller;
- You need support to scale the business so you need to establish communities of support;
- Entrepreneurs have to be willing to learn;
- Importance of mentorship;
- Being consistent in life; and
- Anticipating your competitors next move



**“
The bottom line
is most investors
will look at high
returns on their
investment.
”**

MVP – A Practical Approach for Potential Investment Engagements

- **Jabulani Debedu** - Principal Consultant, DBO, South Africa

The presentation centred on fast-tracking ideas to minimum-viable product and growth through venture capital funding. Themes explored included venture capital funding, how it works and its different stages.

The main types of venture capital are pre-seed, seed, early, and late-stage. Investors will want to know the viability of the idea and opportunity. It is vital for one to conduct preliminary market research, and refine the concept, after which to identify key partners. A business plan would be key before implementation.

Important metrics to track when measuring the success of a product or service include; Market demand, that is the market penetration levels. Total revenue generated by the product or service. Another important metric is the margin, is the business’s net income after expenditures.

Criteria to evaluate potential investments include; the team, a great product, the size of the market, and assessments of risks.



Strategies of success when seeking venture capital include a solid business plan, a good grip on your market and industry, understanding the risks and rewards, having a compelling story, making sure the financials are in order, being prepared to be grilled, having the same mindset of an investor and being tenacious.

The Do's and Don'ts of Capital Raising

Mastering what investors and venture capitalist are looking for from start-ups

- Safiyya Akoojee - Director, Fortunatus Advisory, Dubai
- Benedict Libanda - CEO, Environmental Investment Fund, Namibia
- Kaunapaua Ndilula - Managing Director & Trustee, NamPro Fund, Namibia
- Dipopego Julius Tsheko - Project Manager, Global Expo Botswana

Moderator - Dan D'Souza - Senior Manager, Intrapreneurship, L Marks, United Kingdom

Exploring the subject of capital raising, the session presented insights on some of the critical actions involved in successfully raising capital and highlighted the following key points:

- Be prepared and obtain funding advice where necessary;
- The right kind of capital depends on the project type
- Be prepared to share in losses and gains;
- VC ecosystems were still nascent in some countries on the continent and needed to be developed; and
- Ensure you have a solid business plan covering the legal and financial aspects.

Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Challenge Demos & Pitch Battle

Youth Challenge Judges

- Barry Clemens - CEO, Hospitality EQ, Kenya
- Akwasi Obeng-Adjei - Director of Audit: Investment Management and Insurance Absa Bank, South Africa
- Prof. Keo Motaung - Technology Transfer and Innovation Durban University of Technology, South Africa
- Maipato Mmako - Lecturer, Coordinator and Learning Development Facilitator University of Johannesburg, South Africa
- Delia Maasdorp - Project Analyst, Directorate: Research, Innovation & Partnerships Namibia University of Science & Technology
- Caroline Amito - Managing Director, Hotel Pearl Afrique, Uganda Netumbo Nashandi - Tourism Expert & Social Entrepreneur, Namibia
- Jose Ricardo Diaz Ardila - Innovation and Digital Transformation Expert, UNWTO, Spain
- Dipopego Julius Tsheko - Project Manager, Global Expo Botswana, BITC
- Mentors and Shortlisted Nominees
- Moderator - Barry Clemens - CEO, Hospitality EQ, Kenya



Presenters:



5. SUMMIT DAY 2 – Thursday, 01 June 2023

Welcome and Introduction

Sebulon C. Chicalu - Director for Tourism and Gambling, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia



Unpacking the Future of Work- Focused Learning

Equipping the youth with quality education, training, and skills that meet the market's needs

Panel

- Devota Mdachi - Lecturer, National College of Tourism, Tanzania
- Mamello Mofokeng - Co-founder & CEO, Saturated, South Africa
- Maipato Mmako - Lecturer, Coordinator, and Learning Development Facilitator University of Johannesburg, South Africa

Moderator - Sonto Mbonambi - Chief Executive Officer, Small Tourism Enterprise Association, South Africa

This panel discussions explored the issue of equipping the youth with quality education, training, and skills that meet the market's needs. The following key points and observations were surfaced by the panellists:

Skills shortages or deficits are still a challenge in the tourism industry. This is partly due to the fact that public training institutions, either cannot keep pace with the sector growth or that governments prioritise infrastructure rather than the supply of skills. The training curriculum is outdated and often focuses on theoretical skills rather than practical ones. Positions available in the industry are not attractive enough, in terms of wages, career progression, and benefits. There is therefore a need to build a capacity for tourism leaders, managers, and entrepreneurs.

The lessons we learnt from the pandemic include; being adaptable, being open to growing, upskilling oneself, and exposing one's self to opportunities like the AYTIS and keeping track of what skills are in demand, investing in mentorship, challenging oneself, and not being afraid of trying new things.

***“Not all institutions are going to give you the skills needed, it is up to each individual to upskill themselves”. The jobs are not going to look like what they did yesterday, one needs to be ready for what tomorrow brings.*”**

Mistakes made in the past contribute to building a better Africa. Mentorship and apprenticeship are important and government needs to engage more when it comes to these two elements. Succession planning is critical and companies and government institutions should set in place succession plans.

***“Engaging the youth today is of great importance, it means we are building the Africa of tomorrow.*”**

Following trends is something we can do, and one trend that is being picked up in tourism is that sustainable tourism is growing and Africa is rich in natural resources and cultural heritage. “There is a need for conscious travelers, people are not traveling just for the sake of leisure, they want to be involved in cultural immersion, and they want to be involved in community development. When we look at future work, we also need to look at technological advancements, digital marketing, and social media marketing needs to be added in the tourism sector.”

Tourists are looking for authentic cultural experiences and there are opportunities for the youth and they can get help from the government to get the skills needed; “being an interpreter, for instance, being a local tour guide. We look at the future through the eyes of technological advancement and cultural immersion, this opens up doors for future work for young people within Africa.

There is a need for tourism education to be redesigned, by changing the nature of what is taught, and how it is taught, to build the capacity for the youth and to lead the industry into a sustainable future, the educational institutions need to be capacitated, to invest in education and training that will meet the conditions and requirements of future work.

While theory is important what is key are the practical skills practical element is more so and that these skills could be obtained through volunteer work or having a mentor.

***“You have to learn by doing. Or see somebody doing it, duplicate it, and master that skill. Institutions can get you what you need, however, it is up to you to get that practical training*”**

The curriculum needs to be reviewed so that it incorporates the latest developments in tourism and what the industry wants, to meet the market's demand. Some of the skills entrepreneurship, leadership as well as financial management.

“ We teach them things that can build them, things that they were not taught at school. By doing so they will be able to excel. What we need to do now is to uphold the education system so that it can reflect what the industry needs. Devota Mdachi ”

Other key points emanating from the discussions included:

- Importance of practical or experiential learning in redesigning the curricula that will make them market ready
- There is a need to design the curriculum in a way that the student will learn the skills in the institution so by the time they get into the market, they are ready, not doing it the other way round, where they get to the market and then only do they learn the skills needed.
- The importance of transferable core skills, time management, as well as project management.
- Partnership and increased collaboration were also highlighted as important to ensure that the educational institutions are aligned with the industry. Partnerships between higher education, institutions, and private sectors allow for increased mutual benefits, in the form of exchanged knowledge and innovation. These partnerships not only offer job opportunities for students but also make them flourish in the long run.
- ICTs were highlighted as critical elements in any curriculum as the digital gap needed to be bridged. There should be an aspect of technological advancement in the curriculum.

Starting From Scratch

Understanding journey and critical building blocks for innovative and technology-driven tourism enterprise



Speaker: Mikul Shah

Co-founder and CEO, Purple Elephant Ventures, Kenya

In his talk the speaker shared his journey as an entrepreneur which started in 2005 on the small island of Lamu, in Kenya.

Lamu serves as an important trading centre along the east African coast connecting various cultures and civilisations, over the centuries Lamu developed into a prosperous trading hub, attracting merchants from Africa Arabia, India, and Persia; all of those helped shape its rich Swahili culture. Today Lamu is known as the land of festivals, the famous one being the Lamu Yoga Festival, which attracts hundreds of participants from all around the world looking to experience Lamu's pristine beaches, tranquil ambiance, and rich cultural heritage. The people, the culture, the good Swahili food, the beaches, the stunning villas, we stopped and wondered to ourselves, why did we wait for so many years to make our first visit.

The amazing thing about Lamu is that there are no cars on the island, the usual mode of transport is by boat, or a trusty donkey. And this trip made a lasting impression on our lives. Ten years later, I have now relocated from London, and now live in Nairobi, my family has grown, and we made it our family mission to discover all of Kenya's hidden gems, which made us default travel guides to our friends.

After a lot of encouragement from friends, I launched a magazine called Nomad, which was Kenya's first freely distributed travel magazine, and we managed to secure a distribution partnership with some of the top cafes and restaurants in Nairobi, we focused on high-quality content and beautiful design and a strong social media strategy. We had identified a niche, and Nomad grew to become one of the most loved media brands in the country. Within a couple of years, we were now providing content marketing services to airlines, hotels, lodges, all over East Africa. It was around this time that I was introduced to my future partners, Ben and Yan. Ben was a former Venture Capitalist, and Yan a banker and we realised that there is a huge opportunity in the travel industry in Africa. It is a multi-billion dollar industry, and it accounts for nearly 7% of our continent's GDP, yet only a small number of companies were leveraging cutting-edge technology to streamline their operations and lock in their true potential. We then launched Africa's first venture studio with the aim of building and scaling several start-ups every year looking at tourism, technology, and climate change. We started to gain popularity globally, so we used this time to kick off PEV. However Covid hit, causing lots of challenges, the tourism sector lost over four trillion in GDP contributions, with a staggering 62 million job losses, and here we were trying to raise funds for Africa's first Venture Studio. We were optimistic, and in the end, we were able to raise 1 million dollars, and we were able to launch Purple Elephant Ventures."

In defining a venture studio Mr. Shah said it is a special type of company that helps create and launch new businesses. Instead of just providing money like traditional investors, venture studios are much more involved. The core of the studio is an experienced team, what is unique about venture studios is that we are hands-on with the start-up journey, to make it successful. The venture studio model offers a collaborative and resource-rich environment for founders, enabling them to leverage shared resources, expertise, and support to build and scale technology-driven start-ups more efficiently. Mr Shah likened it to having a team of four people as co-founders, but they belong to our core venture studio team, yet they assist you to make your start-up dreams come true.

In discussing his business and where they are now he said, "We currently have three start-ups in our pipeline, the three are Nomad, and Nomad Travel Club, which are last-minute deals and member-only promotions for domestic travel. We have a business called Kijani Supplies which is a one-stop shop for supplies and logistics, for lodges in the Masai Mara, we opened our very first warehouse in the Masai Mara and we supply everything from toilet paper to high-end Gin, to all the lodges, as well as solving their logistics challenges, and finally a pure tech play in elephant bookings, which is an all in one easy to use digital platform, which combined digital booking tools, CRM systems, PMS systems, and digital marketing services, like a shopify for the hospitality industry."

In answering the question of how to build, grow and fund new businesses, especially for the youth in the rapidly growing industry. Mr. Shah said it is essential to follow a strategic approach to achieve success. By embracing technology and innovation, one can tap into new opportunities and meet the changing demands of travelers.

He also shared a slide on critical steps in ensuring one has a thriving business. Identifying a unique value proposition so as to stand out from the rest, is the first point he mentioned. "It is crucial to have your own VP determine how your solution addresses specific needs or gaps in the market, by offering something different, and compelling, you can capture the attention of both travelers and other industry stakeholders. Ask yourself, what is the problem? Who is your audience and how big is the opportunity?"

Mr. Shah then shared the following points that would assist the audience to success:-

- **Research** - “Take time to understand your target audience, take time to understand industry trends, and do a comprehensive competitor analysis, by gaining insights into customer preferences, behaviours’, and market dynamics, one can then make informed decisions that guide the business strategy and ensure relevance in a rapidly evolving market.”
- **Write a comprehensive business plan.** Outline your goals, your strategies, your revenue models, and your marketing approaches, and you have to prove that they demonstrate the viability of your venture to potential investors. Also, do not forget to stay up to date with your data and your business plans. (pitch deck)
- **Build a team** - “This is where a lot of people get this wrong. Take for instance that you are in the tech industry. Your partners cannot be your tech colleagues. You need a diverse skill set. Assemble a motivated team to have success in a dynamic market. And foster a collaborative work culture in your team.
- **Leveraging technology** - “This is vital for enhancing customer experiences, streamlining operations, and improving efficiency. One must identify relevant solutions, mentioned before artificial intelligence, online booking platforms, communication tools, and data analytics, and embrace innovation to deliver seamless, convenient, and personalized experiences, for your customers. By harnessing the power of technology, you can gain a competitive edge in the tourism industry. Virtual reality and augmented reality are going to play a role in the future of travel.

Mr. Shah candidly shared that getting a start-up off the ground is extremely hard, especially when the money is tight. He emphasised the need to collaborate, saying that it is key. “Work with industry stakeholders, technology providers, and several organisations to leverage their expertise, networks, and resources. What I would like to see at this summit next year, is that we invite Airbnb, Facebook, and Instagram, so they come and explain what they are doing for the tourism sector in Africa.”

He added that through strategic alliances, they have accessed new markets, gained valuable insights, and struck a competitive position in the industry.

“Now comes building and testing a minimal viable product, and this is one of the most essential parts of the validation process. You would create a version of your product or service to be able to gather feedback and validate market demand. We must continuously iterate and improve our products based on the insight that we gained. By incorporating user input and market dynamics we can enhance the value and relevance of our offerings.”

Next Mr Shah talked about getting one’s product to market. He mentioned that ICT is no longer a luxury. When getting one’s product to market, effective marketing and distribution strategies are crucial for reaching one’s target audience. He emphasised the importance of utilizing digital channels, social media platforms, and content marketing to promote one’s brand. “You have to craft compelling messaging that will resonate with your target audience, and highlight the unique benefits of your solution. Implement distribution strategies that ensure wide accessibility, and ensure convenience for your users.”

When talking about funding, Mr Shah shared that it is a tricky topic because securing adequate funding is essential for the viability and sustainability of any business. Without the necessary capital, it can be challenging to bring your innovative ideas to life and to run your business effectively. He then went on to list several ways to go about funding;

1. **Bootstrapping** - Using your savings or revenue generated from your initial sales, and at the same time keeping the costs low, for your start-up. It requires careful financial management, the growth may be small, and bootstrapping grants you full control of your business. It allows you to prove its viability before going out to seek external funding.

- 2. Loans and Grants** - these often need a well-developed business plan, financial projections, and a solid track record to demonstrate your venture's potential. Government grants and Economic development programs can also be a valuable source of funding particularly for start-ups with a focus on local economic growth. So you won't be diluting any equity in your business.
- 3. Crowdfunding** - in recent years has emerged as an alternative way of raising capital for your business. An example, there is a lady who runs a magazine called Nyayo which was highlighting the plight of the rangers in East Africa and she crowd-funded the entire operation. So crowding platforms allow entrepreneurs to showcase their ideas to a broad audience, and gather other small contributions, from individual crowd funders, who resonate with their vision. This method not only generates funds but also validates your concept and builds a community of early adopters.
- 4. Angel Investors** - Individuals who are experienced in the space, or high net-worth individuals, who invest their funds into early-stage companies. And beyond financial support, Angel Investors have invaluable industry knowledge, mentorship, and networks, to help your venture to thrive. Building relationships with angel investor networks, and attending pitch events to showcase your solutions can increase your chances of securing an angel investment.
- 5. Start-Up Accelerators** - Organisations or programs that provide mentorship, resources, and funding to early-stage companies, in exchange for equity. These programs, however, typically run for a fixed duration in which entrepreneurs receive intensive guidance to refine their business models, validate their ideas, to prepare for future investors. In addition to financial support, Start-Up Accelerators offer access to industry networks, mentorship from seasoned entrepreneurs, and exposure to potential investors. Participating in an accelerator can significantly enhance your chances of securing follow-up funding and provide the necessary guidance to navigate the challenges of building a start-up. "I was part of the Atler network, and I have played a role either as a mentor or investor or as a participant, in some of these programs."
- 6.** Particularly for start-ups with high growth potential, venture capital firms are another avenue for funding. These would invest a substantial amount of money in exchange for an equity stake in your company, you need to present a compelling business plan, you need to show market traction, and demonstrate your scalable business model. These are the key steps in attracting venture capital.

Start-ups require careful planning, expertise, and access to capital. By following a critical path, identifying a unique value proposition, conducting market research, and developing a solid business plan, entrepreneurs can lay a good foundation for success. The entrepreneurship journey is full of ups and downs, with passion, perseverance, and a commitment to continuous learning, you can overcome these obstacles and make a significant impact. The following were highlighted as 'keys to success' :

- Ensure your team is a passionate team with a diverse skill set.
- Focus, we all have a limited number of time and resources.
- Customer input, analyse how your business is meeting the customer's needs.
- Execution, our ideas are not necessarily unique, it is about the execution of your idea.
- Fixating over funding, a lot of youth who venture into start-ups believe that funding equates to success. Remember investors are not running a charity, they need something in return. If your business is already making money, then you are better off not thinking of investors and fundraising in doing so you retain control and ownership of your business.
- And if your business is not making money then perhaps before speaking to investors, there are some bigger issues that you might have to tackle. The only thing that matters is building a growing viable, and profitable business.
- Don't worry about failing. There is no substitute for hard work. Work hard, play hard and the rewards will come. Remember there is nothing wrong with failing. However, if you are going to fail, make sure it happens quickly and cheaply.

Partnerships For Innovation

Partnering to support entrepreneurs and start-ups to thrive and scale up through digital and technological innovations

Panel

- Francis Doku - Digital & Communications Consultant, TV3 & 3FM, Ghana
- Charl Albertyn - China Market Specialist & Research, Create Consulting, China
- Dr. Isobel Green Head of Department: Hospitality & Tourism Namibia University of Science & Technology
- Nawa Likando - Head of Digital Transformation & Transformation, MTC

Moderator - Prof. Michael Twum-Darko - Acting Head: Graduate Centre for Management Head: Centre for Business Innovation & Incubation Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa



Focusing on partnerships to support entrepreneurs and start-ups to thrive and scale up through digital and technological innovations, this panel discussion explored various partnership approaches, the benefits, value addition in partnerships, the critical requirements such as trust, sustainability and innovation in making for successful partnerships. Key take aways from the session's deliberations were:

Compatibility - young entrepreneurs should take compatibility when thinking of partnering with any business. How the partnership will benefit both parties is also something to look into. Businesses will ask, what's in it for them. Big businesses are not Father Christmas. They look at what you're bringing to the table. What value are you adding to their business?"

Proximity - Proximity is key. There is a need for closeness, whether, in terms of culture, language, or location, i.e. being in the same location as your target audience. "We need to include the triple helix of innovation; the state, private sector, and the government." It is important to pull as many stakeholders as possible to engage. The three stakeholders; the private sector, the government, and the state need to actively assist individuals and that it cannot be all on the individual. "Taking a systemic point of view is key."

Trust - Trust and shared purpose are important elements that big business look for when thinking about partnering with a start-up or entrepreneur. They need to be able to trust the individuals, as well as the product or services they are providing. Although there is the financial aspect, they also would like to see if the product or services that they will be investing in aligns with their objective. “Mutual benefits are also something to take into consideration, and the results should be measurable, whether the results are instant or be seen in the long run, there still needs to be some sort of measurable aspect. Flexibility is key, in a partnership that big business would like to see if the start-up would be flexible enough to mirror some of its objectives so it is a win-win at the end of the day.”

Sustainability - Proof of sustainability is something that big businesses would look for in start-ups. “Innovators often would like big corporations to sponsor in the form of CSR. Organisations often have objectives, and they have a strategy in place, so whomever they partner with would want that shared value, they would like to know how the startup would assist the organisation in meeting those objectives.” “There needs to be value creation. We need to move away from the mentality of CSR and start thinking of fostering synergies, in terms of resources that you can leverage from these big organisations, and what are the technical capabilities that you can bring to the table as well in terms of partnering with these large organisations.”

Sustainability around environmental practices, recycling and reusing is also important. Examples were cited of an agribusiness project that focuses on using all the waste that is produced in the hospitality industry into a sustainable product; turning waste into gas, which in turn is used in the kitchen to cook. Wastewater is then recycled and used to water plants. Indigenous fruits are being planted together with vegetables and these are in turn used within the hotel operations on a day to day basis.

Social innovation - plays a part in digital transformation of product services and practices within the tourism environment and it is necessary for society. When it comes to innovation, you need to know what you are innovating for, and what social issues are you trying to resolve. The most important thing in terms of partnership you would also need to be close to the communities that require this innovation. Innovation is not about the most fancy ideas. It is about whether the community members going to benefit at the end of the day? In the tourism space, there are various beautiful spaces. When innovators come up with ideas they should think of the impact that innovation will have on the grass root level. Start thinking beyond technology and start thinking of a multitude of stakeholders that are involved and the potential partnerships that can be built.

Culture - In Ghana, there are different communities that have different cultural festivals; young people could look at modernising these old festivals and creating value for them as to how it will impact the community in which the festival will take place. The gap in these festivals is that you have the same people celebrating each year, we need to look at bringing in new people to these festivals. One may think of doing virtual tours, however, there is a danger in that virtual tours do not necessarily benefit the communities, the tourists need to visit those communities.”

A list of new areas of focus that the youth could look into was shared:-

- Event tourism, Ghana is leading Africa in this area
- Digital Nomadism; the perceived threat of covid still lingers in people’s minds, especially in big countries like China. Young ones can lean into digital nomadism adjacent to businesses and companies.
- Creative sector; all you need is your natural inherent skills to be able to create something and teach tourists how to recreate
- Tech and Innovators; creating digital experiences - artificial intelligence, cyber security, data analytics.

Work tourism - the new travellers that travel was highlighted for the young people to explore. Remote work was growing due to the pandemic, which altered the mindset of companies about remote work.

It was noted that Namibia launched the digital nomad visa in October 2022 and that since the launch the traveller numbers have increased. There are twenty one (21) countries of nomads, and their visa lasts for 6 months. It's a good boost for the tourism sector in the country. And there is no threat of them taking the jobs of the local people, they are doing their work remotely, but they are spending their money in Namibia, and they wish to extend their stays and travel more within the country.

Inspiring Youth Entrepreneurship Practice

Bridging the gap between Fintech and Travel Tech

Panel

- Musthafa Tijjani - Founder & CEO, Aeropaye Smart Flight, Nigeria
- Dan D'souza - Senior Manager, Intrapreneurship, L Marks, United Kingdom

Moderator - Jabulani Debedu - Principal Consultant, BDO, South Africa



This session explored Fintech and Travel Tech as technologies that are used to modify, enhance, and make financial transactions as well as travel and accommodation reservations respectively to enhance the visitor travel experience. Some of the salient points which emerged from the discussions include the following:

These technologies are used on a day to day basis. As entrepreneurs and start-ups, there are still some blind spots. You need to find something very unique. In the travel space, you need to find the gap. Aeropaye for example found a gap and capitalised on it. Customers are able to process their refund claims on the Aeropaye refund engine. This helps airlines to maintain great customer support and integrity because of the speedy recovery systems in place.

Working with banks, and travel companies, there is a common theme, it all comes back to customer experiences. That is where Fintech comes in, making things more seamless. You are providing more usability and volume by improving tech. We are going into the mobile phone world. We need to start looking into technology that creates less fees for customers. Safari Wallet and Buy Now Pay Later were examples that were highlighted. If there is less friction during the transaction, you basically give customers an experience that will cause them to want to come to you at all times.

How can Fintech and Travel be used to facilitate engagements or transactions from business to customer?

- The key trend is that people now use their phones, and you don't need to go to the actual building to make transactions. These are things that are already in place, one does not have to build them from scratch.
- There are things now like QR codes where you can pay for things using your phone.
- Payment portals now have offline capabilities, this helps when you are on a safari or on an excursion that is off the grid.

At Aeropaye they have a relationship with the airlines where it is either a customer pays for their ticket through them, or if the customer prefers to pay directly to the airline, then the airline links them with their API so they can capture that traveller

Companies can lose a large amount of revenue through basket drop, in the travel industry it could be an activity, an airline payment, or a hotel booking. It was pointed out that this way of doing things can be time-consuming because of the passcodes and the like and so the customer may choose to go somewhere else. But with Fintech it is making things easier, it is just two clicks or so and you are done.

We do not want travelers to lose the excitement of travel because of long processes when making a booking. There is room here for something innovative to come to the fore that would make a traveller's experience frictionless using Fintech.

Blockchain was mentioned as a security tool between Aeropaye and airlines. In defining Blockchain technology the panellists mentioned that it is a ledger that is used to record transactions across many devices. So if one makes a payment, the other will see the same payment, so it provides transparency as well, thus fostering trust.

It was pointed out that Blockchain can also be used when making international transactions, to cut back on fees due to different currencies. So one can use blockchain technology to send money to another party, across borders and you retain the transaction fee, which might have been consumed by the bank. So one needs to identify which technology is the best for your company and modify it to suit your business.

The panellists also touched on how mobile companies are also making use of Fintech, they gave an example of Mpesa, using a USSD to transact. Mpesa has been able to tap into a larger market of people that do not have bank accounts, so they give the unbanked access to funds and financial tools. Mpesa has opened the market for tour operators as well to tap into the unbanked, which is a huge market, as hundreds of millions of people don't have bank accounts. Mpesa thus opens up new customers. One of the impacts of Covid on the travel industry is that domestic travel has been a main focus for travel agencies, so tools such as Mpesa can add value to travel agencies, as they tap into their local market.

Another issue that was touched on was payment across African countries which is very difficult. Institutions like Western Union and banks have exuberant fees that cut back on a person's finances. The youth could look into creating systems and platforms to assist to make payments across the continent easier and more affordable.

Security of payment as well as data protection was also a topic that was discussed. Touching on regulations, that they differ from country to country. A point was made that it would be good to have unilateral regulations when it comes to transferring money across borders.

The panellists also cautioned the youth in the audience about obtaining licenses. Talking about how high the fees are the panellists advised the youth to look into partnering with someone that already has a license. They gave an example of becoming a service provider, or a PSP, and pointed out that the license fees are very high. Micro policies affect microservices, so as a start-up, it may be a challenge to overcome if one is looking into going into that space.

Mastering the Art of Capital Raising

What investors and venture capitalists are looking for - from pre-seed to growth-stage funding

Panel

- Robert Eiman - The DBN Head: SME Finance, Namibia Development Bank

Moderator - York Zucchi - Chairman, Start-up Tribe, Switzerland



Doing things differently, Robert Eiman and York Zucchi did a Q and A session with the audience, using an online platform, slido.com for the audience to type in their questions, and then being projected on the screen for the gentlemen to see and address.

Q. There seems to be a mismatch between your passion, your desire, and the need to have an investor, who is not as passionate as you are. You look at your idea as an opportunity, whereas I as an investor look at your idea as a risk factor. How do we bridge this gap between the entrepreneurial passion and the compliance and mandate of the organisation?

A. As a bank, they will look at the risk. Risk is a bank's business. But there are ways and means for you to improve your chances of getting funds. One obstacle that people may attest to is a lack of collateral. From a development bank's perspective, there are products and services that we have to try and make it easier for people. But there are certain products that young people can tap into without the stringent condition of collateral. Skill-Based Financing, where we target entrepreneurs below the age of 35.

Q. Does DBN limit its funding to certain businesses or sectors?

A. Yes, certain businesses are less desirable. Keep in mind that DBN gets its funding from external financiers, and sometimes that funding comes with conditions, you cannot invest in this, or this, or this. An example would be a business in gambling, ammunition, and things that are not typically in the social norms. It is mostly frowned upon. But when it comes to most industries, DBN can provide funding. There is an exception list on our website that will help guide you.

Q. At DBN, what have you done in assisting specifically start-ups? This could be an individual that has an idea but does not have a track record, collateral, and all of that.

A. One thing is for SMEs to be able to sell an idea. When you are not fully prepared or knowledgeable about the business you are putting forward, the bank will find out. The bank will challenge you. It is important for you as an entrepreneur to do thorough research on the industry you would like to venture into. Having in-depth knowledge of what you would like to venture into is important, it will assist you in getting funding, and when eventually you do end up employing people you will not be taken for a ride because you know the ins and outs of your business.

York gave a practical tip, he asked the audience to do the shopping list approach, your needs against your wants. He mentioned that his company did this exercise with about 1.6 million entrepreneurs, across the cities where they operate, the exercise dropped the funding requirement by almost 80% what this means is that we often think that we need money, whereas there are a lot of free resources out there that are available at very little or no cost. "For instance, your wanting an office is a want, it is not a need. A warehouse, do you really need a warehouse for yourself, or the gentleman here has a bit of spare capacity in his warehouse, who could support you, and collaborate with you? Collaboration is such a big way that you can get your foot in the door."

Q. What are the criteria that investors want when funding private companies?

A. Is it an idea? Or is it an already existing business? Because there are varying risks attached to both. If it is an existing company in Namibia; it is easier to get funding for an existing company because of its track record. But I am answering from the perspective of a bank. There are other equity providers, and they might have different approaches.

Financial statements are something that a bank will look at. We would look at what it is that you really need. What would be the impact of that kind of loan? Interest is a reality. So I look at your ability to be able to pay. We look at the 5 C's; character, collateral, cash flow, etc. But the main C is the character. First thing, when someone asks me for a loan, I look at their Facebook profile. If I see, every weekend, you are at the most lavish entertainment venue, then that is a red flag.

In continuing with his answer Mr. Eiman said, “We should remember that a bank is still a human business, we tend to think of money as this cold rational thing. But the people that have the responsibility to manage money have to make it personal. As a suggestion, if you do not have money to your name and you’re really struggling but you would like your idea to grow traction, find an organisation to partner with. Visit a tour operator, a travel agency, or someone with a track record, who can help you start a new route, or add a service, or have clients that can support you. Don’t be afraid that someone might steal your idea.”

Q. Tourism businesses do not typically start off with assets. As a start-up, where would one start?

A. Tourism is a tricky one. One thing is that you would not always think big. Try starting small. There are opportunities in township tourism. When you are starting, bootstrapping is normally the best way, you normally get the funding from friends, family, and fools. This is where synergies and partnerships come into play. Always remember though that the service you provide would need to comply with the big company you are partnering with. In tourism, big lodges will not compromise on quality. If your services are not up to par, you may lose out on partnership opportunities. Ask yourself, what value are you going to add to their business without destroying their value?

York interjected, stating that he started 9 businesses, and 7 failed spectacularly. Robert then added, “Your track record is better than mine. I started 5 and I failed in 5. So I have learned how not to do things, so the next venture will be successful.

Q. What is the difference between a start-up and an SMME in the Namibian market?

A. Many of the start-ups in Namibia are SMMEs. Start-ups more often than not fail, so the advice I would give is that be well prepared as a start-up so you can tap into funding, thus giving you a better chance of succeeding. The reality though in most cases when it comes to banks is collateral. However what the government of Namibia is trying to do is two-fold, one is the National Credit Guarantee Scheme, what this scheme does is that, if you have a brilliant idea, you have research you know the business in and out you have partnerships, you have memorandums of agreement from both parties and letters of intent from strong players, you could potentially tap into funding without the need of your own collateral, or a much less requirement in terms of collateral. So then the bank will look at your bankability, but they would still ask for collateral, so the scheme will give you 60% of the requirement from the bank. Several banks in Namibia are in partnership with the government in terms of this scheme.

Crowdfunding was also something that was discussed by the panellists. A means of raising capital for one’s start-up. Other Financial tools need to be available to African countries. One lady in the audience mentioned that tools such as PayPal are not accessible to people in Africa.

Robert Eiman cautioned his audience from copying and pasting. Finding an angle that sets you apart from your competitors will help when you are looking to get funding from the banks.

TED Talk: Pushing The Boundaries Beyond Possibilities

Pursuing social innovation entrepreneurship through climate change, biodiversity, and Conservation technologies

Speaker - Toni Amutenya -

In starting her presentation Miss Amutenya defined Climate Change, as a long shift in temperature and weather in the atmosphere over a long period, impacting our health, our water, our coasting areas, our species, and the natural areas.

Looking at the impact of climate change when it comes to water resources, Ms. Amutenya pointed out how climate change affects water supply, water quality, and increase or competition of water, especially in dry countries like Namibia. As well as coastal areas where there are a lot of tourism businesses. Climate change affects the coastline as it corrodes the beaches, as the coastal land gets flooded. The species are also affected due to the shift in ecological zones. Forests are also affected as they become encroached bushes, there is a shift in the geographical range of forests. These impacts also affect the tourism industry. Although climate change is around us and it is impacting us, there are challenges and opportunities. Africa's ecosystem and biodiversity are projected to suffer severely and be a major victim of global climate change

There are however opportunities we can harness, these are efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. There is then a paradigm shift in mindsets, that then brings innovation to the fore. There are opportunities for new solutions, and innovations, like smart agricultural practices, for instance. There is also an adoption of low-carbon emission energy sources, and the development of new value chains; finding markets within our societies, harnessing new products, and limiting consumption.

Climate change and tourism. Tourism is dependent on the wellbeing of an environment, it is vulnerable when it comes to climate change. These changes can affect the frequency of visitations in an area, thus losing out of revenue. In as much as this sector is the most vulnerable, it is measured to be one of the sectors that have high activities that result in an increase of greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere. So though it is vulnerable, it contributes to the impacts of climate change.

Solutions - Social innovation and entrepreneurship could look at solutions around green jobs, technologies, and industries. When looking at social innovation, it is important to make sure that the solution is implementable and that it addresses issues that we are facing now. Examples of mitigation solutions, solar car parks, with solar-powered cars, water harvesting (greywater and rainwater harvesting), recycling (making compost, or using bottles as decoration, art, or jewellery) building with materials that can withstand climate change. Hydroponics, aquaponic farming, controlled backyard gardening. Tree planting, agroforestry. Promoting plant-based diets.



Planting the Seed

Insights into tourism value chain - A Catalyst for innovative entrepreneurship and human capital development

Panel

- Neville Andre Itope - Governor Erongo Region
- Sophie Zirebwa - Executive Director, Domestic Tourism and Strategic Research Zimbabwe Tourism Authority, Zimbabwe
- Henry Yeledour - Regional Director, Ghana Tourism Authority, Ghana
- Lihle Dlamini - Chief Marketing Officer, Eastern Cape Parks and Tourism Agency South Africa
- Hannelie Du Toit - Chief Operations Officer, Southern Africa Tourism Services Association, South Africa

Moderator - Sebulon Chicalu - Director for Tourism and Gaming, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism, Namibia



This panel sought to dissect the tourism value chain to gain insights into leveraging it as a catalyst for innovative entrepreneurship and human capital development. Discussions also centred on policies, plans, and agendas that have been put in place for the youth and entrepreneurs to assist the growth and success of start-ups and SMMEs.

Starting the conversation, Governor Neville Andre Itope shared that the government of Namibia has a political wheel in terms of addressing and ensuring the growth and enhancement of the tourism sector in the country. In mentioning the Harambee Prosperity Plan II the governor highlighted two pillars, Economical Advancement, and International Relations.

It was noted that youth are our future and that governments have made efforts to create enabling environments that can bring the youth board. Tourism is a catalyst to a number of sectors and it has a multiplier effect and gives opportunities for job creation. Tourism is a sector that one can easily enter, as one for not need much technical skill. So the industry provides an opportunity for one to start small and then build.

The other panellists also touched on the following points:-

- Decentralising the way things are done.
- The need for the youth need to be engaged in the conversations so that they can share their thoughts feelings and aspirations.

- Enabling the youth to unleash their potential by being aided by the government and the private sector, hence the need for partnerships.
- Seeing tourism as an experience, and harnessing the opportunities to enhance those experiences.
- Cultural exchange, homestays
- Experiential traveling
- Food and beverages being incorporated in travel packages.
- Creating festivals as a way of attracting tourists into a destination
- Tourism partnering with the creative arts industry; bags, beads, arts and crafts
- New market segments and niches such as workcation and bleisure.
- Adventure tourism as an opportunity area for youth to get involved.
- Potential opportunities for youth to harness technology to become part of the tourism value chain
- The importance of research
- Virtual tours
- Co-opetition

In closing the the panel discussion the Governor noted that, “We need to diversify. In Namibia for instance we cater to the European market during a particular season but after the season. We need to look at diversifying our market and start deliberately targeting our African continent. Our marketing efforts should be focused on the African market.”

“YOU are unique, you were not mass-produced. YOU as an individual are responsible for your success.”

Spotlight on What “Angel Investors” Need

What angel investors and venture capitalists are looking for in starts ups and pitch competitions

- Ibukunoluwa Salau - Founder and CEO, Direx, Nigeria
- Ntshabo Lehong - Managing Director, Makeeda HTW, South Africa
- Gloria Kisilu - CEO, The Shaba, Kenya
- Raina Augustus - Founder, Kalinasho Trading cc, Namibia
- Mikul Shah - Co-Founder & CEO, Purple Elephant Ventures, Kenya

Moderator - Dipopego Julius Tsheko - Project Manager, Global Expo Botswana, BITC



The panel discussion focused on what angel investors and venture capitalists are looking for in startups and pitch competitions. It was noted that some of the key characteristics investors consider in making their investment decisions include:

- A capable team
- Timing and Traction
- The market, vibes as well as an exit strategy

Other key learnings from the discussion included knowing the difference between an Angel investor and a Venture Capitalist.

“ So when looking at Angel investors for me vibes, the team... is most important, if I’m putting my own money into this because I am willing to risk and lose my money. - Shah ”

Innovation and product differentiation is something that keeps evolving. Young entrepreneurs need to move away from the copy-and-paste method. Solutions that are working in first-world countries will not necessarily work for us in Africa, factoring into play the economic conditions in one’s country is of importance.

More learnings were highlighted which included:-

- As a startup and entrepreneur, there will be a lot of trials and errors.
- Never take your local market for granted
- Branding products
- Good customer service
- Good packaging
- Accepting customer feedback and making improvements
- Accountability in one’s business
- Reinvesting in one’s business and fostering growth in that business
- Financial management and having self-discipline

Closing Remarks

Kwakye Donkor - CEO, Africa Tourism Partners, South Africa

In wrapping up the day Mr Donkor encouraged those present to engage, have conversations, and make business connections. He stated that one key thing is that the work of the future is not going to be the same work of today. So the lesson that Mr Donkor highlighted was that whatever we are currently doing in our business, as entrepreneurs, start-ups, and youth, we should look beyond tomorrow and think beyond tomorrow in making sure that what we do will be relevant for tomorrow. He added that change is something that is constant. Mr. Donkor spotlighted Mamello’s company, Saturated, pointing out that the company stated that there are lessons to learn from what the company has achieved over the past year. Key performance indicators are something Mr. Donkor highlighted in the synthesis of the day. Mr Donkor continued the summary of the sessions highlighting the importance of partnerships, he also spoke of Fintech, that in the world we are in now, money is chasing after technology.

He carried on by quoting a saying, “A wise man is the one who plants a tree not for himself, but thinking of the people in the future to come and sit under that tree and discuss what will happen in the village where he comes from. So the tree we are planting is not for ourselves but for the youth.”

He went on to encourage the youth in the room to be resilient in the industry and to not allow the challenges in the tourism value chain to stifle their growth.

“ Invest your time; buy the ticket; start and make sure you run, if you can’t run, you walk, if you can’t walk, you crawl if you can crawl, you drag yourself and if you cannot drag yourself shout for someone to help you to the next level. - Kwakye Donkor ”

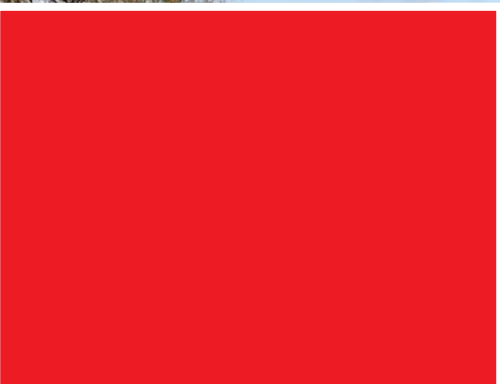
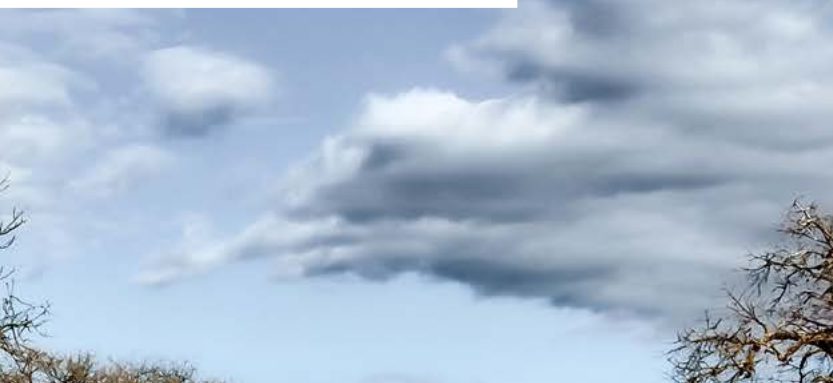
6. CONCLUSION

5th Africa Youth in Tourism Innovation Summit and Challenge 2023 proved to be another success platform for surfacing and addressing youth involvement and contribution to tourism on the Continent. While hosting it in Swakopmund presented some challenge in terms of access and connectivity for some of the delegates, resulting in lower attendance figures, the bold initiative to move the event to the Irongo region had more advantages than disadvantages. Firstly, the event helped to spread the benefits of business tourism around the country. Secondly, it demonstrated the ability of the region to host business events successfully.

The content was well received by the delegates and the quality of speakers continued to be of a very high standard, thus ensuring the meeting of the objective to share insights and exchange ideas to catalyse technology acceleration and innovation in the tourism industry. In addition, the quality of the presentations submitted by the youth for the Africa Youth in Tourism Challenge continues to be of a good standard and demonstrates the passion and commitment that the youth bring to the tourism industry.









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