

Delivering Entrepreneurship Education in Africa

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Delivering Entrepreneurship Education in Africa: New Perspectives

EDITED BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Foreword

The normative commitment to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education can be found in almost any education and training document in South Africa. It sounds deceptively easy to do and nice to have. There are fewer and fewer jobs in the formal economy, the argument goes; so young people need to learn to create their own work opportunities and earn their own income. I like the idea, of course, especially because South Africa is not a high innovation country and our education system prizes conformity over dissent and group think over individual ingenuity.

It is for these reasons and more that I treasure the idea of entrepreneurship for and among youth. Having lived a sizeable chunk of my academic life in the Silicon Valley I was always amazed at how common it was to meet young people trying out a new idea. It carries risk, of course. You will fail often before you get something right. No doubt you will lose money along the way. But that is exactly the point – to experiment, to think outside of the box and to work towards a breakthrough that could improve lives and yes, make yourself tons of money in the process.

But how do you do that in an anti-innovation culture where risk is punished and the established algorithm followed dutifully. Ask a child in a South African school who tried to solve a quadratic equation in three steps rather than the five laid out by the teacher; punishment is swift.

That is what the editors help us bridge in this remarkable book, the ideals of entrepreneurship policy, on the one hand, and the hard social and educational reality of people's lives, on the other hand. This book is situated within the variable contexts of individual student lives and this immediately gives it a conceptual sophistication often absent in the more preachy forms of entrepreneurship texts. For example, concept mapping, a powerful tool in education that gives you insight into the minds of learners that has, by the way, shown to have enormous value in one of my fields of interests, science learning.

I would highly recommend this book to university teachers, policymakers, planners, curriculum designers and the up-and-coming entrepreneur who is tired of hearing what should be and eager to know how we can build a durable and science-informed entrepreneurship among all our students.

Jonathan D Jansen
Distinguished Professor of Education
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16 May 2023

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