Transforming secondary education in Uganda

Globally, 311 million young people are unemployed, largely due to the mismatch between what is taught in school and what skills are demanded by the labour market. Perhaps no country faces this challenge more acutely than Uganda, which has the world’s youngest population coupled with a youth unemployment rate as high as 62%. In response to this reality, since 2009 Educate! has been working to transform secondary education in Uganda by scaling a practical, experience-based learning model that teaches students business and leadership skills needed to start their own businesses. We work with Educate! to roll out its curriculum to 50 extremely low-resources schools of eastern Uganda every year over three years, reaching directly 6,000 students and indirectly more than 50,000.

**DURATION:** 2016-2018

**CHALLENGE:** Access to Basic Services

**COUNTRY:** Uganda

**PARTNER:** Educate!

**CONTEXT**

Uganda has the world’s youngest population (over 80% of the country’s 33 million population is aged 12-30), the highest youth poverty rate (94%) and a youth unemployment rate of 62%. Yet too often schooling does not lead to a better life. With the majority of youth lacking the requisite skills, the informal sector has become the major alternative source of employment and opportunity for job creation. Moreover, the current youth surge in the country means that the need for jobs will continue to become more pressing with every passing year.
ACTION
Educate! has developed a leadership, entrepreneurship and work-readiness training program that targets core skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, confidence and resource mobilization and encourages secondary school students to take leadership roles, create small businesses, and ultimately improve their livelihoods. Educate!’s programme intends to:

- Roll out its leadership and entrepreneurship training course in 50 extremely low-resource secondary schools of eastern Uganda every year. During the course, 6000 scholars receive intensive mentorship and gain experience working in team settings to lead “Student Business Clubs”, where they are joined by other students that are not directly enrolled in the training. Through these platforms students acquire critical skills, understand market assessment and opportunity identification and practice building and operating profitable businesses.
- Provide a 5-week intensive training for youth mentors (who are often recruited among the top Educate! graduates) where they learn how to teach effectively, using student-centred teaching methods and focusing on creative learning. Mentors also participate in the business accelerator training called “Youth Business Experience” that teach them advanced business concepts to more effectively manage finances, use technology, and oversee personnel and growth.
- Provide practical in-service training for teachers and school administrators of the schools where the leadership and entrepreneurship training is deployed.

EXPECTED RESULTS
Over three years:

- 50 partner schools a year in Kamuli, Bugiri and Soroti districts have completed Educate! leadership and entrepreneurship training.
- Over 6,000 students have gained key hard and soft skills like problem solving, creativity, social responsibility, savings, resource mobilisation, researching and product making.
- Over 50,000 students had been indirectly impacted through the Student Business Clubs and around 3,000 businesses have been concretely created (corresponding to around 4,950 jobs created)
- Youth mentors have been trained to coach students and support their own businesses and projects and around 300 teachers and 150 administrators have learned how to use interactive teaching methods and how to guide students through starting an enterprise and build support structures in their school.

All the programme components - mentorship, experience starting a business, and leadership and entrepreneurship training - are monitored for impact. Mid-line results from a randomized control trial find that Educate! students overall earn double the income of their peers, and are 64% more likely to own their own businesses.

LONG-TERM STRATEGY
Educate! operates across 15 districts of Uganda, reaching almost 120,000 students per year through its direct interventions in 350 secondary schools across the country. In Uganda, Educate! has successfully worked with the International Labour Organization and the Ugandan
National Curriculum Development Center to integrate pieces of Educate!’s leadership and entrepreneurial curriculum into the national upper secondary school curriculum. In 2015 Educate! was also a technical advisor to Rwanda’s national curriculum reform and starting in 2016 is also working in 100 schools in Rwanda. Educate!’s model is cost-effective and is being studied for adaptation and replication in other countries across Africa. Educate!’s vision for 2024 is to work with one million youth annually across ten countries in sub-Saharan Africa.