



## *Zimbabwe Team Excels in JA Africa Finals*

JA Zimbabwe team “Apex Limited” of Saint Faith’s High School from Rusape did well in the JA Africa Company of the Year Competitions. As a rural school, and coming from a country with an acute electricity shortages, the team produced Apex Beta Fuel. Apex Limited won the third place after producing affordable, locally manufactured and environmental friendly fuel which is a substitute for paraffin. The first place was won by Kenya and the second by Mauritius. The product addresses energy needs of the community and is also used in reading lamps at the school. St Faith’s High School is in a rural area with intermittent power supply and they sought to solve this community problem with their business and innovation.

The competition is Junior Achievement’s celebration of the accomplishments of JA Company Program® students, ages 14-20, in the Africa Region. The finalists showcased their enterprise and business acumen before a panel of independent judges who evaluated each company’s performance against the competition criteria, which includes an annual report, a four-minute business presentation before an audience, a trade booth display, and a final interview with the judging panel. One of the competition’s goals is to measure each team’s business achievements with members’

individual personal development and knowledge.

The team conducted market research to determine the needs of the community in view of their economic status. The company noted that most of the households do not have electricity as it is a rural community hence they used firewood as paraffin is expensive. The use of firewood had its own challenges in relation to deforestation hence the community was always at war with the Environment Management Agency which is a regulatory body of the environment. After noting the need the product was produced at almost zero cost of production using simple distillation through recycled materials that include broom bristles, plastics, paint cans, copper wires and cooking oil bottles that are dumped at the school and in the community.

The team noted that they have learnt critical life skills like leadership, team work, decision making, confidence, communication, budgeting, planning and problem solving. Apex limited has further been gratified by the ability to practice good citizenship through donations to the less privileged and conducting clean up campaigns at the school and in the community.

The team is planning to supply the product at national level after school hence creating employment for themselves and other unemployed young people. This is critical towards reducing unemployment rates and addressing electricity needs in Zimbabwe.

**The picture below from left shows, JA Zimbabwe Board chairman, Mr Birch, JA Zimbabwe executive director, Mr Mlambo, in black suits are Apex Ltd company members and 7th is JA Africa President, Dr Chinwe Effiong at the Awards Ceremony in Swaziland.**



## *A Year of Progress in Youth Employment*

In 2013 JA Zimbabwe focused on scaling the delivery of its programs for out of school young people. This resulted in the developing of the employability program to target out of school graduates who are finding it difficult to enter the job market. JA Zimbabwe supports the program through partnerships with the private sector, small to medium enterprises and civic society organisations who host the interns. This is due to the need to cushion young people from the effects of high unemployment and to address the mismatch between the education curriculum and the demands of the job market.

Zimbabwe's education system promotes academic achievement which restricts work readiness. This is worsened by the socio-economic challenges the country is facing and unresponsive government policies. The program has contributed immensely in providing work readiness and the necessary life skills for young people to be relevant in the world of work. For instance, out of the 57 interns being 37 males and 20 females, 31 were employed being 18 males and 13 females, 19 being 12 males and 7 females are volunteering at the host organisations after the expiry of their internship contracts, 3 being 2 males and 1 female are furthering education, 4 being 1 male and

3 females are looking for jobs after completing the internship.

The success of the internship program is based on the support offered by JAZ that include training in life skills, mentorship, conducting of monitoring visits to strengthen the employability of young people, coaching before interviews during and after the internship period, circulating of vacancies for employment opportunities and using JA Zimbabwe internet facilities for background check of potential employers.

Brighton Mashopeka from Bulawayo who was an intern at Elroi Designs and got employed at Telecel in November noted that, "Had it not been for JAZ I would not have skills like worth ethics, communication, teamwork, confidence and creating networks for employment." Roseline Magaya who was placed in Harare at Magical Zimbabwe noted that, the internship exposure was a catalyst for her successful employment at KLM Accountants. Roseline further noted that despite being the youngest with little experience when the interviews were conducted at KLM Accountants she was not intimidated due to the exposure provided by JAZ.

Discussions with host organisations on the relevance and impact of the program brought positive feedback on its strengths and uniqueness. Scripture Union Director, Dr. Katiro noted that JAZ interns are unique from the interns who do not go under its program due to life skills like communication, work ethics, teamwork, confidence and time management. Norman Kativhu, Kaite Programs Coordinator noted that he renewed and further referred 2 JAZ interns to Technoserve which is another organisation after the expiry of their contracts due to demonstration of maturity and critical skills like communication, confidence, resiliency and work ethics. Technoserve Research Coordinator, Rhiannon further noted that the experience with 2 JAZ interns that were referred by Kaite resulted in the targeting of trained JAZ interns in Harare and Bulawayo who were not attached after completing internship.



**JAZ Executive Director, Mr Mlambo (on the left) mentoring some of the interns**

## *Junior Achievement Zimbabwe Successful Alumni*

### *Takudzwa Musonza*

I was a participant in the Junior Achievement Program in 2006-2007 when I was completing my A-levels at St Ignatius College. I joined the JA Company Program with my colleagues and we set up a company at the school and traded in the simulated company program. Our company won the Best Company of the year in the Barclays funded program. The directors of our simulated company won the Best directors of the year. I won the Best Achiever of the year as the appointed C.E.O of the company. We also used to liquidate and audit our company and little did I know that this was the brink of an era as I am now a Senior Audit Consultant at Deloitte and Touche.

I am also running a small farm and planning to open a vegetable mart in 2015 which will be a market for my products. My decision to venture into farming and the selling of agricultural products is because I believe that agriculture, amongst other economic activities in Zimbabwe, is where the country's greatest potential lies. All this appetite to acquire such knowledge came from the knowledge and eye-opening experience gained from Junior Achievement Zimbabwe.

I would like to thank Junior Achievement for giving me this platform to learn and shape my career. I am volunteering with JAZ on my free time to ensure that more young people benefit.



### *Takunda Chingonzo*

In my high school days at Marist Brothers Nyanga High in 2010 I had the opportunity to participate in the JA Company Program as the Chief Executive Officer. The program was an opportunity of a life time as it instilled innovativeness in our minds. The exposure became the basis of all other entrepreneurial endeavours later in life.

I got to understand what was wrong about corporate structures in Zimbabwe, especially for start-ups, that it's not about simply picking up the next management text book and adopting a structure. I understood the employee/employer relationship, how to motivate a team without dangling the proverbial "carrot" in front of them. I remember building and operating our first mobile billboard, where other associations and clubs would then advertise, at a time when the mobile billboard concept was new to the country. It was indeed an eye opener, and I dare say, that the company program helped me realise the potential within.

Fast-forward three years later; I am the co-CEO and founder of Neolab Technology, a multi-award winning start-up that is revolutionising the technology space in Zimbabwe. It's from the humble beginnings and experimental nature of the Junior Achievement program that I owe most of what I have achieved today, and what we as Neolab are going to achieve in the dawning future. In honour of the lessons I learnt through this program, Neolab has launched BOOT Africa, a program to assist High school leavers and University students to start and run their own businesses and successfully establish self-sufficiency. We strive for our success to be the source of their inspiration.



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