

JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT ZIMBABWE NEWSLETTER

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Changing the Lives of Disadvantaged Young People through Work Readiness, Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurship

Since its inception in 1998, Junior Achievement Zimbabwe (JAZ) has made significant strides in changing the lives of the less privileged in the community. This is through its programs that are serving as a catalyst in inspiring young people to contribute towards the global economy. The focus on financial literacy, work readiness and entrepreneurship to in and out of school young people has contributed immensely in empowering young people economically, life skills development and making them employable in the formal and informal sector.

Employment creation in the informal sector is fulfilling the needs of young people in the marginalised communities who are disadvantaged by lack of access to adequate education. In cases where the education is accessible, it is not relevant in addressing the employability needs of young people in both the formal and informal sectors. A case of Priscilla Rongoti in Epworth bears testimony to the challenges of employability in Zimbabwe. Priscilla completed her O'Levels but she could not find employment. The young lady received training under the Junior Achievement Success Skills and Entrepreneurship program. The training focused on personal and interpersonal skills such as ethics, team work, influencing others, communication and self awareness; building rapport, business planning and entrepreneurship. The training was an eye opener in changing her future.

Priscilla Rongoti is offering decoration services for weddings and parties. For weddings she charges between USD 350 and USD 700, and USD 150 for birthdays and graduations. She started the services after generating funds from being a master of ceremony at events. The young lady is now employing a person to assist her with running the business especially during festive seasons where there is a high demand for her services, hence, creating employment for other people in the community whilst creating income for the family. The income is contributing towards family sustenance by buying food, paying her school fees as she is studying towards a Certificate in Community Development and paying fees for her two children and the general upkeep of the family.

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Priscilla Rongoti on the right demonstrating her decorating services

Priscilla Rongoti is also demystifying the perception that young people are not employable. She mentored an orphan and vulnerable child, Kudakwashe Mukunguma, who had lost hope in life due to socio-economic challenges. Through being shadowed by Priscilla, Kudakwashe Mukunguma gained skills in offering decorating services and this gave hope that she can be able to start her own enterprise to improve her livelihood. Priscilla feels indebted to JAZ for the life changing experience and self employment.

Empowering Young People through Business Entrepreneurship, Financial Literacy and Work Readiness.

JAZ has successfully developed programs that build entrepreneurial skills of young people in and out of school through real world business experiences. One of its successful programs has been the JA Company Program (JACO). The purpose of the program is to enable young people to experience practical business concepts and skills by organizing and operating a small enterprise to address a need in the community. The goal is to improve young people's financial literacy, work readiness and entrepreneurial skills. Young people are also enabled to contribute towards the betterment of the community by using company profits to support social responsibility initiatives.

Domboramwari Secondary School is one of the success stories under the JACO program. This is due to the ability to use the program to address the need of the community. Rock of Gold JA Company members sold shares at the school with a value of USD 5 which generated capital for the dish washing liquid and peanut butter business. The production of dish washing liquid proved to be the most viable business due to the high demand in the community, despite the fact that it is expensive in the supermarkets. Supermarkets sell the product at USD2.30 for a 750 ml bottle whilst Rock of Gold was selling at USD 2.30 and USD 3 for 2 litres. This made the product affordable to the community hence the demand by the community.

The profits of the business were shared amongst the company members and the share holders. The money was used to purchase exercise books for use at school which contributed towards access to education. It is important to note that one of the company members started a dish washing liquid business at home. Nyaradzo Kwekwani, who is also a prefect, noted that the business is viable and it is enabling her to contribute towards paying school fees, family income and school stationery. The young lady has also identified a good market in Gweru. The product is delivered by her relatives travelling to Gweru and this is resulting in the growth of her business. She has the ambition to fully concentrate on the business after school and to employ other people.

The innovativeness of the Rock of Gold Company resulted in winning the Best Plan International sponsored JA Company in Harare. Despite winning prizes, company members showed their leadership prowess by becoming prefects. For instance Donald Raisi who was the Managing Director is a head boy, Thomas Tembo the Human Resources Manager is a senior prefect, Letty Nyakudya the Sales and Marketing Manager is a Senior of Arts and Culture, Kelly Makeyi the Production Manager is a prefect and Moreblessing Dhiriza the Finance Manager is a prefect. Apart from the Company leadership, four company shareholders are prefects.



Rock of Gold Company members showing their trophy and their product

Inspiring Young People through Economic Empowerment

Heritage School is another success story under the JA Company Program. The company name is Limitless JA Enterprises (Pvt) Ltd with 17 members. The company invested in buying and selling of pin-pops and doughnuts at the school from June to November 2012. The innovativeness of the company resulted in considerable support from the school and their parents.

Limitless Enterprises started with a capital of USD 170 after selling 17 shares at USD 10 each. The pin-pops and doughnuts were bought at USD 0.50 cents and sold at USD 0.70. There was a high demand for the products as the school was not selling them. The need to sell the products was derived from the market research that was conducted by the company hence embracing what they learnt during the training by JAZ.

After sales, the company made a gross profit of USD 901. A net profit of USD 531 was reached after deducting start up capital of USD 170 and corporate social investment of USD 221. Dividends were shared at USD 30 per shareholder, a clear sign of good corporate performance. The success of the company is linked to good corporate governance, team work, negotiation, problem solving, marketing and maintaining customer loyalty.

The support that was received from the school and parents was instrumental in making the young people successful. The schools authority provided an enabling environment for the company to market its products during break time and sports days and the use of notice boards. The JA matron was also dedicated towards ensuring that the company is guided towards achieving its goal. The parents of the company members realised the need to support the young people and contributed the start up capital to their children.

Limitless Enterprises donated groceries worth USD 221 as social responsibility to the less privileged. The groceries included sugar, cooking oil and rice to Chiedza Child Care Centre (CCCC) in Waterfalls, Harare. CCCC is a home for orphans and vulnerable children. The donation was important towards cushioning the children from challenges of food and basic needs. Mrs Ndlovu, the Director of the home expressed her gratitude for the gesture showed by the JA company which she noted as a noble cause for uplifting the less privileged. The company also dedicated its time to play with the children at the home which demonstrates how the company program is nurturing responsible young people.