Agripreneurship Alliance

Impact Story

Introduction
The Agripreneurship Alliance entered into partnership with the IGAD Sheikh Technical Veterinary Training School (ISTVS), Somaliland, in 2018 to support their students through the provision of the ‘Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness’ course. Since 2018 20 young African agri-food entrepreneurs have participated in the course at ISTVS and 4 high-quality business plans have been completed and submitted to the Agripreneurship Alliance for review.

Somaliland is an independent self-governing country which does not have international recognition, most governments regard it as a region of Somalia. ISTVS is a small school based in the town of Sheikh and lies in a mountainous area away from the coast that mainly focuses on the raising of livestock, in this case goats and camels. The school awards its degrees through Makerere and Nairobi Universities and as significant amounts of food, especially fruit and vegetables, are imported there are opportunities for entrepreneurs in the agri-food sector, but only if you can demonstrate the skills to manage a business in such a dry and sometimes inhospitable climate.

This is the story of one of those entrepreneurs.

Nasra Ibrahim

DURDUR ONION PRODUCTION FARM
IGAD Sheikh Technical Veterinary School (ISTVS) alongside other institutions in Kenya and Uganda are currently in a partnership program with the Agripreneurship Alliance through the SIANI Expert Group programme. In an effort to build capacity among the university students on agripreneurial skills. To this end, students at IGAD Sheikh Technical and Veterinary School (ISTVS) continue to benefit from a two months training course tailored to equip them with the knowledge and techniques required in drafting a competitive business plan. This offers the students an opportunity to develop skills on how to identify agribusiness niches, plan and execute the idea. The institution has successfully graduated two cohorts since the inception of the course.
Nasra Ibrahim, a final year student at IGAD Sheikh Technical and Veterinary School and one of the beneficiaries of the first cohort continues to inspire her colleagues through her effort to venture into agribusiness while still studying. Although her group did not emerge as the winners of the USD 1000 grant startup capital by the Agripreneurship Alliance, her desire and passion for agribusiness did not end there. Using the same business plan, Nasra and the team applied for The Tony Elumelu Foundation grant but were still unsuccessful. She never gave up but instead continued to attend training of the second cohort and a times volunteered to co-teach. It is this positive drive that eventually unlocked her potential, nurtured her critical thinking and writing skills in business plan. Concerned over the increasing number of unemployed youths graduating from local universities in Somaliland, Nasra decided to venture into onion farming as a way to cushion herself from unemployment immediately after she graduates.
The need to venture into the onion farming was realized by the gap occasioned by the perennial shortages in onion supply to retailers in Burao Market, Somaliland. Nasra noted that the current suppliers did not meet the market demand and that retailers opted to import the produce from the neighboring Ethiopia to cover for the deficit. She further revealed that customers had numerous complaints related to poor quality and low shelf-life of the imported onions. To finance the business, Nasra responded to a call for grant by Hurbhab, a Somalia Non-governmental organization. The organization offers financial support to young innovators and entrepreneurs to create, build, scale and sustain social ventures that tackle the community’s most pressing issues such as unemployment. Fortunately, the application was successful and received a grant of USD 5000 startup capital. This led to the realization of Durdur onion production farm in Burao where Nasra doubles up as the manager and co-founder. The farm which currently has employed five youths who handle production and marketing has the potential yield of up to eight tonnes of onion per year. Availability of irrigation water has made it possible to produce the onions all year round with up to three production cycles in a year. Nasra find every aspect of the training offered by the Agripreneurship Alliance incredibly useful and would wish to thank the Alliance for their continued support in strengthening skills and building capacity among the university students.

Kenneth Tembe, ISTVS 2020
Note
The Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness course was developed in partnership with the African Management Institute (AMI) and supported by the Swedish International Agriculture Network Initiative (SIANI) through the Expert Group programme. Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness is a part-time course that, over the period of 12-weeks, enables the participant to develop a high-quality business plan that identifies their Unique Value Proposition, Market Sector, Finances and Operational Plans. The course is offered through a ‘blended’ approach through partner universities and institutions in East Africa, wherein locally trained facilitators guide the participants through the course using the online materials and in-person experiential learning approaches to place the curriculum into the local context. More recently the ‘Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness’ course has been offered as an enhanced online course that engaged with over 300 African agri-food entrepreneurs. The Agripreneurship Alliance and its partners are growing a new generation of African Entrepreneurs within the agri-food sector, who are creating businesses that produce nutritious and accessible foods while having positive social impact and positioning their businesses for a sustainable future.

For more details visit www.theagripreneur.org or contact steven@theagripreneur.org.