

Develop the Community by Empowering the Individual



Tuesday, March 20, 2018

TO WHOMEVER IT MAY CONCERN

Thank you for expressing interest in Micro-MBA. We are the undoubted experts at what does NOT work because we have made so many mistakes as we have tried to help the poor. We would like to help others to avoid the same pitfalls!

The **Micro-MBA Course** is a highly effective modular competency-based course that has been used by more than 230 development organisations throughout Africa. The course was developed specifically in relation to the needs and abilities of people in the micro-business sector of the South African economy, but has been found to be of value in places like Northern Ghana and Cape Verde, as well as many other African countries, as well as in Latin America. About 190 000 emerging entrepreneurs in the micro and small-business sectors have been educated in this way over the past 28 years. About 70% of the learners have been women, in urban, peri-urban and rural areas. In Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe, the Eastern Province of Zambia and in northern Ghana the Micro-MBA has been used to empower many hundreds of women, a good percentage of whom were illiterate at the time. There is no doubt that focusing on individuals is more effective than trying to work with production projects, but the Micro-MBA course has been effective in both paradigms. The programme begins with a 5-day, learner-driven course, based on a series of simple workbooks covering the basics of business management comprising the following modules:

- ☐ Investigating the Market
- ☐ Using a Calculator
- ☐ Buying
- ☐ Costing and Pricing
- ☐ Selling
- ☐ Writing a Business Plan
- ☐ Money Management
- ☐ Stock Control

After the basic classroom experience, each learner is expected to meet with the facilitator at least once a month for three months. At that stage, those who demonstrate

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Micro-MBA meets the requirements of SAQA Unit Standard 14444

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that they are applying what they have learned are awarded a Micro-MBA Diploma. This methodology is not cast in stone – it is simply the most effective and efficient way that we have found to do things at present. The course, which is updated and improved at irregular intervals, is offered in three versions, i.e. Blue books for Traders, Green books for Producers and Red books for Service Providers. The books are available in English, French, Portuguese, Spanish Afrikaans. In practice, we have found that more than 97% of learners choose English as their preferred language for the Micro-MBA course.

A pack of training materials required to enable each learner to write their own business manuals, including a basic business plan, costs \$70. There is also a charge for sending the goods via courier. This varies according to distance from main centres. It makes more sense to enter into a Royalty agreement with us, which involves the licensing of our intellectual property, plus a fee per set of training books printed locally. Please let us know if you are interested in this option. The pack comprises 8 workbooks and bookkeeping materials that should last for 6 months.

Courses for people who wish to become Trainers and Mentors in their community are run regularly in Gordon's Bay, outside Cape Town and in Plumstead. The cost per person for this intensive 4-day course is US\$500 payable “up-front.” Participants are required to complete all the exercises in all 14 workbooks prior to the first day of the course, therefore arrangements must be made two to three weeks prior to the course to allow time for the training materials to be sent via courier. The pack of training materials for Trainer-Mentors comprises 5 generic workbooks plus three each for Traders, Producers and Service-Providers – a total of 14 workbooks. It also includes a copy of the Trident “Bizzy” game, used to enhance calculator skills.

The course typically starts on a Monday morning and finishes on Thursday afternoon. It takes longer when translation is required.

Unfortunately we don't have a programme for Trainer/Mentor courses for the year. These courses are arranged by appointment in Cape Town, or as a quorum emerges in other areas.

We are prepared to run courses for Trainer/Mentors anywhere, provided that the following conditions are met. We need:

1. A pre-paid “quorum” of at least 10 Trainer/Mentors at \$500 per person.
2. A suitable (air-conditioned) venue with facilities for teas must be provided by the hosting organisation. The venue should include either a data-projector or a pc-compatible HD screen, plus a flip-chart and pens.
3. Travel and accommodation costs for the course facilitator from two days prior to the course until one day after the course plus a cash per diem of US\$100 per day to cover dinners and incidentals.
4. Wi-Fi access must be available throughout the course.

On the Trainer/Mentors' course, we deal with the TASK and the PROCESS of empowering people to start or improve their small businesses. The TASK is fairly simple, but very important. It involves learning how to assist emerging entrepreneurs as they work through the 8 workbooks that comprise Micro-MBA.

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The PROCESS is as important as the task and here we deal with the principles that we have found to be important in bringing people from a place of dependence, through independence, to interdependence. Apart from concentrating on skills needed to implement the Micro-MBA course, we also deal with the basics of Competency-based Training; Transactional Analysis; Managing Change; the Trainer as Leader vs the Trainer as Manager and the importance of Effectiveness vs Efficiency. We have come to recognise the enormous power that a prevailing world-view has on the culture within which it reigns. Throughout the course, we attempt to help delegates realise that development does not occur in a vacuum. It is vital to be aware of the belief-systems and paradigms of the communities in which one operates.

Facilitators are the natural mentors of the small businesses and there is a strong emphasis placed on the mentoring function.

It would be a privilege to work with you for the empowering of the emerging entrepreneurs in your area.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours in Development



CEDRIC BUFFLER
Managing Director



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