

Crafting Success: Prossy and Ivan Build Skills for Community Impact



Empowering youth in Africa with skills for dignified livelihoods and employment doesn't just support them to improve their personal prospects – it can also trigger positive ripple effects throughout their communities. Prossy and Ivan from Uganda are among the many young people translating practical skills learned through Educate!'s livelihood bootcamp into impact.

Educate!'s livelihood bootcamp aims to prepare young people in Africa, particularly rural women who are unable to complete their education to learn, earn, and thrive in today's economy. It combines hard and transferable skills training, hands-on experience in starting a business, and mentorship from a youth mentor.

Our curriculum design emphasizes opportunity identification through community mapping. Youth are encouraged to establish enterprises that align with their passion and address local challenges, developing viable, customer-centered solutions to the problems they identify.

“We want youth to see opportunities that others might not recognize,” says Francis Kusiimwa, Educate!’s Instructional Designer for Out-of-School Youth. He adds, “By understanding the communities they live in and how to apply their own unique interests and abilities, young entrepreneurs can think innovatively about business creation.”



The bootcamp curriculum emphasizes opportunity identification, encouraging youth to develop businesses that address community challenges and align with their passions

Once youth decide on their ideas, they’re supported to prepare business plans and marketing strategies. By the end of the bootcamp, graduates can not only launch and manage businesses but also solve community challenges. For example, Prossy is reinvesting profits from her notebook-making business to develop affordable feminine hygiene products, while Ivan’s agribusinesses - including a tree-planting business - are providing jobs and contributing to sustainable development.

Their stories of resilience and innovation serve as examples of positive impact and the rise of a young generation of socially conscious and entrepreneurial leaders in Africa.

PROSSY

“My dream is to own a tailoring business where I can employ and train other people. I also want to make reusable sanitary pads because I want to help fellow women in my community.”

- Prossy (20), Educate! Livelihood Bootcamp Graduate



At the age of 18, Prossy reached a life-altering crossroads that catapulted her from adolescence to adulthood. She was going to become a mother. Though motherhood brought great joy, the added responsibilities forced her to stop studying and take up agricultural work to provide for her baby.

Prossy’s hard-earned wages weren’t sufficient and unscrupulous employers didn’t always pay her the full amount she was owed. This left her unable to attend to basic needs, such as healthcare or female hygiene products. Determined to give her child a stable future, Prossy sought opportunities to secure a sustainable livelihood.

A turning point came when she attended Educate!’s livelihood bootcamp.



With the skills and business knowledge she gained, Prossy began making and selling notebooks, initially working more hours as a laborer to buy the required supplies. By reinvesting her profits, she was gradually able to grow the business.



After landing contracts with local stationery shops and a school, her business is taking off and she makes enough money to support her daughter and retired parents who she lives with.

While Prossy is thrilled with her business's success, she considers it a stepping stone towards her true aspirations. Driven by a passion for fashion, she dreams of saving to launch a tailoring venture. This will also enable her to create reusable sanitary pads for girls and women in her community, who face challenges accessing affordable sanitary care.

Prossy has already made handmade prototypes for the sanitary towels, and looks forward to acquiring a sewing machine to enhance efficiency.

IVAN



“Before joining Educate!, people in the community viewed me as a failure, but now, people call me Mzee (boss) because they know I can give them work.”

- Ivan (25), Educate!
Livelihood Bootcamp
Graduate

In 2020, Ivan's education was disrupted by COVID. When schools finally reopened after nearly two years of closures, Ivan had married and was expecting a child. Balancing family responsibilities and facing financial constraints, he was unable to continue his studies and took up sugarcane farming.

Ivan yearned for a brighter future so he joined Educate!'s livelihood bootcamp, where he learned about launching a business with minimal capital.

Ivan applied these insights to start a brick-making business. The young Ugandan excavated soil from nearby anthills and mixed it with water to produce bricks. Eventually, his brick-making business took off and Ivan employed other youth to support.

Using his brick profits, Ivan ventured into agribusinesses, focusing on maize cultivation and tree planting.



After Ivan's father passed away in 2016, his mother (right) who is a farmer allocated about 2 acres of land to him.



Ivan devoted one acre of his land to planting trees and another to the crops such as maize, plantain bananas and sugarcane. So far, he has planted over 150 trees. His forward-thinking approach anticipates a future where a single tree will yield a full lorry of timber, generating around 400,000 UGX (USD \$107).

Ivan is excited to contribute to environmental conservation while actively combating CO2 emissions. His tree plantation is a long-term, sustainable legacy he can pass down to his children. Following his father's passing, Ivan has also become responsible

for his younger siblings and is supporting their school fees through his multiple agribusinesses.



Further demonstrating his growth and recognition of entrepreneurial opportunities, Ivan reinvested the profits from the bricks and maize to buy a second-hand popcorn machine so that he could use the kernels from his maize to make popcorn. In the mornings, he sells popcorn to local children so they have a nutritious snack on the way to school.



Ivan's returns from the popcorn and bricks ventures enabled him to purchase five piglets.

After nurturing the piglets to maturity, he sold two pigs and combined this income with money from the popcorn sales to start a retail shop.

Educate!'s [gender equity sessions](#) resonated strongly with Ivan. He regards his wife as a partner in all their ventures, leveraging her talents and ideas to grow their business. During our visit to Ivan, we didn't find his wife at their home as she was managing their retail shop. She's initiated a mobile money business which provides convenient access to financial services for community members.

Within the next two years, Ivan and his wife envision transforming their retail shop into a thriving wholesale hub offering a variety of products like sugar, maize flour and rice. Through this venture, they will extend more services and employment opportunities to local youth.