

Casebook of Indigenous Business Practices in Africa

This unique collection of case studies across multiple sectors and regions in Africa presents a compelling resource for the advancement of indigenous knowledge and business practices on the continent. It provides an invaluable Africa context-specific resource to inform knowledge development about African businesses, ensure socio-economic advancement, preserve cultural heritage, achieve sustainability and enhance business decision-making.

Prof Nathaniel Boso, Dean of KNUST School of Business and
O. R. Tambo Africa Research Chair in Entrepreneurship and
Employability

Casebook of Indigenous Business Practices in Africa: Apprenticeship, Craft, and Healthcare – Volume 1

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

To my precious Mum, Mrs Dorothy Okwanuzo Anumnu, aka Kwanis, who embodies the positive spirit of Africa – Vibrant, Vivacious, Valiant and Victorious – I dedicate this book. Thank you, Kwanis, for all you do effortlessly and gracefully – champion dancer, educationist, fashionista, friend and beautiful mother of eight.

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Preface

Africa must unite. We have before us not only an opportunity but a historical duty. It is in our hands to join our strengths, taking sustenance from our diversity, honouring our rich and varied traditions and culture but acting together for the protection and benefit of us all.

Kwame Nkrumah, first Prime Minister of Ghana (1957–1960) and
first President of Ghana (1960–1966)

Africa has historically boasted of indigenous business practices; however, studies are yet to fully explore the dynamics of these practices for the benefit of business actors. The continent's indigenous institutions established in pre-colonial societies provided the foundation for business operations within and across cultures, governance and structure. Entrepreneurship and enterprise development are drivers of economic performance and improved living standards when they fit into the social and economic context. Therefore, it is logical that African nations seeking social and economic development should encourage entrepreneurial practices that suit their cultural, social and institutional realities. Despite studies on the African business culture, several nations across the continent are yet to develop a comprehensive framework for sustainable entrepreneurship based on indigenous practices.

Interestingly, there are homegrown businesses in Africa achieving remarkable success but are not given the recognition they deserve. Simultaneously, the small- and medium-scale enterprises applying Western business practices and management principles find it difficult to survive in the very challenging and dynamic African business environment. Perhaps it is time to consider indigenous strategies and ways to codify success factors premised on the peculiarities of the environment. This book offers cases on indigenous business practices in Africa with the aim of providing business actors with insights into what makes entrepreneurship work on the continent.

Though there are opportunities for business growth in Africa, their concomitant challenges must be addressed. Despite the adoption of western management practices by entrepreneurs and small-scale businesses in Africa, their success rate is of great concern. It is time to consider, integrate or scale up age-old practices indigenous to Africa. For instance, the indigenous business system of the Igbos of South-East Nigeria thrives on a mutual-aid economy in which successful entrepreneurs within clans develop others by providing start-up capital and the required business tutelage. The Igbo business incubation system and other unique models discussed in this book support entrepreneurs through an Africa-centric approach to business that is built on cultural practices, norms and values.

Every fledgling business must align itself with the peculiarities of its environment if it expects to become successful. In Africa, indigenous business enterprises that have applied homegrown strategies to their operations have achieved remarkable success. The aim of this two-volume edited work is to enhance understanding of how indigenous enterprises in Africa's varying countries and regions have built and sustained their business performance, through case study research. Contributors' case studies document the distinct business attributes across the five regions of the continent (North, East, Central, West and Southern Africa). Volume 1 focuses on Apprenticeship, Craft and Healthcare, while Volume 2 offers insights into Trade, Production and Financial Services. Volume 1 covers the following:

- Exploration of Apprenticeship and Business Succession Models in *Nigeria, Ghana and the Benin Republic: A Cross-Case Analysis of Selected Tribes*
- Apprentice training, Mastership and Managerial Development of the Igbo Entrepreneurs in *Nigeria*
- Case Studies on Business Ethics and Values: Insights from the Igbos of *South-eastern Nigeria*
- The Cultural and Creative Industries in *Ethiopia: A Case of Cultural Lifestyle Items Producer*
- Reviving and Sustaining Market Opportunities in an Indigenous Business Practice in *Egypt: A Case of the Kiliim – A Social Enterprise and Lifestyle Brand*
- An Examination of Indigenous Business Incubators with Emphasis on the Kente Weaving Industry in *Ghana*
- Cultural and Socioeconomic Impact of the Indigenous Garment Industry: A Case of Smock Dealership in Tamale, *Ghana*
- Placing Indigenous Knowledge at the Core of Production and Marketing of Medicinal Plant (mpesu) in *Zimbabwe and South Africa*
- African Indigenous Entrepreneurship: A Rereook at Africa's Traditional Healthcare Practice Among Tsonga Speaking People in Limpopo Province, *South Africa*
- Sustaining the Trade Ingenuity of Female Herbal Producers (FHPs) in *Southwest Nigeria: Lessons from the COVID-19 Pandemic*
- The Somali Business Orientation: Key Lessons and Recommendations for Africa from the *Kenyan Somali* practice
- Advancing Indigenous Knowledge and Building Sustainable Business Structures in *Africa*

Despite the increased theoretical discussions on African enterprises, limited empirical research into entrepreneurial practices is available to students, practitioners and business leaders or decision-makers. This book addresses this gap with case studies focused on Africa's culture-based indigenous business practices. Insights from these cases incorporate recommendations for business success in Africa and advance scholarship into indigenous practices. This book will be of benefit to scholars and educators from diverse disciplines, business actors and entrepreneurs interested in developing business frameworks grounded in Africa's unique and varying indigenous practices.

Acknowledgement

The editor acknowledges all the authors who embarked on this journey with her to document the indigenous processes, practices and business heritage across Africa, for posterity and to portray the uniqueness of the continent's indigenous enterprises. Thank you for this critical step towards establishing Africa-centric business models through the identification of traditional prototypes and sustainable practices embedded in culture, norms and values.