

**Entrepreneurial Behaviour Series**

# **Entrepreneurship Education in Africa**

**A Contextual Model  
for Competencies  
and Pedagogies in  
Developing Countries**

**Alfred Mbeteh and  
Massimiliano M. Pellegrini**

# **Entrepreneurship Education in Africa**

# ENTREPRENEURIAL BEHAVIOUR

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# Entrepreneurship Education in Africa: A Contextual Model for Competencies and Pedagogies in Developing Countries

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Specifically, I, Alfred, would like to dedicate this achievement:

To my beautiful partner, kids, brother, sisters, and friends, I thank you for both your moral support and understanding throughout this process.

Above all, to God almighty for His divine wisdom and grace over me.

Specifically, I, Massimiliano, would like to dedicate this achievement:

To My beloved partner; in this long period of the pandemic you were always by my side and I never felt alone.

To My family; you were my nurturing environment and you passed me down a strong sense of caring that leads me in every aspect of my personal and professional life.



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# Foreword

Earlier today I was savouring cardamom-flavoured coffee gifted to me by a dear colleague from Sierra Leone, while I was reading Professor Tarek Heggy, the leading liberal political thinker who suggested that tyranny, corruption, and outdated education are the principal causes of the current conditions in the Middle East. Indeed, education is so very important and it affects lives – not only in the Middle East, but everywhere.

I feel honoured to be invited to write the Foreword for this timely book, and I salute both the authors for their contribution. Katz (2003) provided an overview of the chronology and intellectual trajectory of American entrepreneurship education from 1876 to 1999, and other studies focus on entrepreneurship education in Europe (an early example was Dana, 1992), but there is a need to examine education pedagogy in Africa too!

Having long been interested in entrepreneurship education pedagogies in developing countries (Chhabra et al., 2021; Dana, 2001), I appreciate the importance of this book. Furthermore, given my interest in (Dabic et al., 2022; Dana et al., 2022; Ojong et al., 2021) and love for the people of Africa, I am delighted to see this volume dedicated to entrepreneurship education pedagogy in Sierra Leone – a little known nation in Africa.

The authors remind us that 70% of youths in Sierra Leone are either unemployed or underemployed. Indeed, entrepreneurship education can help make a better tomorrow for many.

Alfred Mbete and Massimiliano M. Pellegrini have long been brainstorming about this important topic and the result is this well-planned book. They discuss important implications for policymakers and the education system and they propose ideas for future research. Enjoy their thought-provoking ideas and let's together contribute to a better world.

**Léo-Paul DANA**  
**Visiting Professor, Kingston University, UK**  
Professor, Dalhousie University, Canada  
**Chaire ETI – Sorbonne Business School,**  
**Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, France**

In 2012, I was asked to teach an entrepreneurship class for an MBA program at a Government University in Sierra Leone. As a scholar and practitioner of business and leadership who had spent the majority of his career in North America and Europe, I was excited about the opportunity to give back to my home country

and its citizens. That euphoria turned into angst as I was faced with the sobering reality of the state of entrepreneurship education in Sierra Leone at that time: I asked for a syllabus and there was none; I asked for the prescribed textbooks and was informed that there were none. This was not what I had bargained for! After a few visits to the library and tapping into my PhD research material, I developed a syllabus for the class, and proceeded to deliver it. The syllabus employed a mixture of theory and practical; students were asked to read about entrepreneurship, shadow and interview current entrepreneurs in Sierra Leone, develop business plans for their own business ventures, and present them to a panel of external experts. The experience was transformative for the students ... a decade later, more than a quarter of the students who were employed at the time have gone on to create their own business.

However, this experience cost me a few sleepless nights, as I developed the syllabus from scratch. How I wish I had the luxury of the entrepreneurial framework developed by Mbeteh and Pellegrini. It would have saved me hours of work developing my own and would have increased the efficacy of the syllabus that I developed.

The area of need that this book addresses is acute. There is a huge youth unemployment challenge in Sierra Leone and by extension the continent, exacerbated by an extraordinarily high failure rate of new businesses, influenced by a lack of quality entrepreneurship education, correlating with a dearth of research-based knowledge for entrepreneurship educators to utilise to develop their curricula and syllabus to achieve the learning outcomes that are desperately needed for university graduates who should be and want to create jobs but find themselves ill-equipped for the journey of entrepreneurship.

I have read this book with immense pleasure and look forward to entrepreneurship educators in Sierra Leone and Africa reading this book and applying its insights to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of their entrepreneurship courses. Africa needs its educated youth to become successful entrepreneurs. We cannot wait much longer before the tsunami of unemployed youth becomes a security and social hazard for all residents. I encourage policymakers, administrators, professors, teachers, and practitioners to read this book and apply its principles to enable entrepreneurship education in Sierra Leone in particular to become the transformative tool for private sector growth that it can become.

**Dr Modupe Taylor-Pearce**  
**Founder and CEO of BCA Leadership**  
**[www.breakfastclubafrica.com](http://www.breakfastclubafrica.com)**

In Europe, each EU Member State is responsible for its own education and training system. European intervention in the field of education and training is mainly intended to facilitate cooperation among the Member States in face of common challenges, to create opportunities for mutual learning, to disseminate advancements in knowledge that may inform educational reforms at the national or regional level.

In this context, for more than 15 years, the European Commission has been working on promoting key competencies for lifelong learning, that are

deemed relevant for all citizens to take an active part in today's society, to transition successfully in the labour market and to fulfil their potential. The key competencies identified by the Commission are eight and include among others digital competencies,<sup>1</sup> personal, social, and learning to learn competencies,<sup>2</sup> and entrepreneurship competencies.<sup>3</sup>

As a key competence for lifelong learning, 'entrepreneurship' in the EU is understood as the capacity people have as individuals and collective entities to act upon opportunities and ideas to create value for others, that can be of any type: economic, cultural, social, environmental, emotional... Entrepreneurship as competence, thus, is decoupled from venture creation.

'EntreComp: the entrepreneurship competence framework'<sup>4</sup> is the European reference document that describes in detail what it takes to turn ideas into action. EntreComp is not prescriptive; it is not a destination or a goal to reach. It is a means to orient oneself in the sea of competencies relating to value creation, out of necessity or opportunity. It is more of a lighthouse than a harbour, a tool that acts as a beacon to help anyone who is interested to navigate in the world of entrepreneurial knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

EntreComp was designed to create a common language that could bridge the world of education and the world of work across EU countries and was not conceived as a reference model for developing countries. Yet, soon after its publication, it was deemed relevant and adaptable also beyond the borders of the EU, from European Partner Countries to different contexts in Africa, such as Egypt, Madagascar, and South Africa.<sup>5</sup>

The exercise run by Mbete and Pellegrini in 'Entrepreneurship Education in Africa: a Model for Competencies and Pedagogies in Developing Countries' to mould EntreComp to the specific contingencies of Sierra Leone is a new example of adaptation of the framework to a given context. Sierra Leone is no country for entrepreneurial endeavours, at least on paper – the authors explain. It is one of the poorest countries in the world, it has one of the highest youth unemployment/underutilisation rates in the world, it ranks 132 out of 137 in terms of entrepreneurial activities globally and – on top – becoming an entrepreneur is not an aspiration of Sierra Leoneans. Nonetheless, they argue, such a resource-bounded context should not put off education and training actors from the

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<sup>1</sup><https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/digcomp>

<sup>2</sup><https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/lifecom>

<sup>3</sup><https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/entrecomp>

<sup>4</sup>Bacigalupo, M., Kamyllis, P., Punie, Y. and Van Den Brande, L. 2016. *EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework*. EUR 27939 EN, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC101581>.

<sup>5</sup>Mccallum, E., Weicht, R., McMullan, L. and Price, A. 2018. *EntreComp into Action – Get Inspired, Make it Happen: A User Guide to the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework*. In M. Bacigalupo and W. O'Keeffe Eds, EUR 29105 EN, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union. Available at: <https://publications.jrc.ec.europa.eu/repository/handle/JRC109128>.

intention to promote an entrepreneurial mindset in learners. Rather the opposite. Entrepreneurship education is deemed a promising avenue for Sierra Leone to fight unemployment, and specifically youth unemployment and to increase economic growth for the country.

By adapting the EntreComp and paring it with experiential learning pedagogies that can work in Sierra Leone tertiary education programmes, Mbeteh and Pellegrini attempt to ignite the fire of entrepreneurial learning in Sierra Leone. The ultimate goals of promoting entrepreneurial learning are to help youth come out of poverty through decent jobs and to set the human capital foundation for an economy that not only exploits the value of the natural resources of the country, but is actually capable of creating new value.

I have no doubt that you will find this book greatly helpful in your own search to equip learners with the competencies they need to build their future while contributing to fair and sustainable futures for all, no matter the context in which they operate.

Margherita Bacigalupo  
Research Officer  
European Commission Joint Research Centre

# Preface

This book was born out of one of my main PhD thesis contributions to knowledge in which I adapted the European Union Competence framework (EntreComp) within a developing country context to ameliorate the rise in youth unemployment problems. The thesis was supervised by Professor Massimiliano M. Pellegrini, Dr Jannie Roed, and Dr Tony Olden. Professor Pellegrini and I particularly had a burning desire to generally address the youth unemployment problems in developing countries and since then, we have jointly published several articles with a primary focus on this particular issue and this book is no exception.

The book was written before the global pandemic related to the Covid-19 outbreak. Thus, no direct mention of this unexpected situation is made in the rest of this text. However, at least in this preface, we would like to stress that these current events and the related global economic crisis, confer even more contemporaneity to this book and its contents. Emerging and developing countries will experience an exacerbation of an already precarious situation in the work market, where workforce unemployment rates were already quite high.

Youth unemployment is one of the key challenges facing many countries around the globe today. The International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2019) report states that 59 million youths between the ages of 15 and 24 years are currently unemployed globally. The situation is severe for youths in most of the developing countries, in Africa particularly. Africa has about 1.3 billion of the total world population and of these, '764 million people (or 59 percent) are aged 15 years or older (i.e., the working-age population)' (ILO, 2019, p. 28). North Africa has the highest number of youth unemployment with an estimated 30% of youths expected to remain unemployable in 2020 (ILO, 2019). Also, although sub-Saharan Africa has a relatively low rate of youth unemployment compared to other regions, the majority of youths who are actively seeking jobs in those markets cannot afford one (ILO, 2019). Worse still, out of the 38.1% of the total number of the poor working population, 23.5% are young people (ILO, 2020).

In Sierra Leone, the UNDP (2015) report shows that 70% of youths in Sierra Leone are either unemployed or under-employed. Similarly, the ILO (2017) report estimated that 59.9% of young men and 72.8% of young people are unemployed. The report also shows that one of the hardest hits in this group are the young graduates. While there is no recent information on the actual number of unemployed graduates in Sierra Leone, it is estimated that out of the 5,000 young people who graduate each year, only a minute number get employed (Bedson and Fofannah, 2 October 2013). Another research study carried out by the *Career*

and *Advisory Placement Services (CAPS)* between 2010 and 2012 pointed out that 55% of graduates in Sierra Leone were still searching for jobs (World Bank, 2013a). Accordingly, this will have a negative impact on the country's economic growth (Agbor and Smith 2012; ILO, 2015). The varied forecasts about how the aftermath of the-Covid-19-outbreak will ultimately affect these results are still blurry at present, but it is certain that the pandemic is most likely to worsen any pre-existing situations, which for Sierra Leone is already quite dire. As a result, different stakeholders in developing countries, including scholars, governments, and non-governmental agencies, have all recognised entrepreneurship as a strategy to fight youth unemployment.

One of these strategies is the stimulation of entrepreneurship and self-employment intentions (Volkman et al., 2009; Gerba, 2012). This particular strategy is actionable through participation in entrepreneurship education programmes that contribute to the development of appropriate competencies and mindsets for chasing opportunities – something that will lead to the reduction in the number of unemployed in a country (World Bank, 2008; ILO, 2015). Globally, the concept of entrepreneurship has been recognised as a major tool in ameliorating the high rate of youth unemployment. This notion has led to the rise in Entrepreneurship Education Programmes (in the book referred to as EE programmes) across the world especially in Africa where there has been a perceptible rise in the level of graduate youth unemployment. Nabi and Liñán (2011) averred that graduate entrepreneurship specifically looks at the extent to which graduates effectively engage in entrepreneurial activities. Nevertheless, such a theoretical sound affirmation about effectiveness is not always confirmed in practice. For instance, the 2018 Global Entrepreneurship Index report ranked Sierra Leone 132 out of 137 countries in terms of the level of entrepreneurial activities relating to the attitudes, abilities, and aspirations of the citizens in the country (GEDI, 2018).

Probably, this is also due to the fact that it is easy to talk about entrepreneurship programmes but there is less agreement about what these programmes should teach and on the specific entrepreneurial competencies to be transferred. Although the literature comprises numerous studies on the key competencies needed to be taught in an EE programme (Man et al., 2002; Man and Lau, 2005; Katz and Green, 2007; Morris et al., 2013), most of those studies were conducted in developed countries using Western-minded participants (Imas et al., 2012). Thus, research in this educational area is of course affected by contextual factors such as the economic infrastructure and ecosystem and the culture towards entrepreneurship (Mehtap et al., 2017).

On the other hand, a very limited amount of research on the subject has been conducted in developing countries (Naude and Havenga, 2005; Imas et al., 2012). Consequently, in order to fully grasp the real essence of entrepreneurship, any further studies will ideally need to be conducted taking context into consideration (Anderson and Ronteau 2017; Champenois et al., 2020; Jones, 2010).

Baumol (1990, p. 898) specifically stated that the outcome of entrepreneurial studies 'do change dramatically from one time and place to another'. Indeed, developing, and emerging countries experience completely different

contingencies, and this may render less effective a direct application of theoretical models developed in different settings (Imas et al., 2012). In this need for contextualisation, this book has its main *raison d'être*. The aim of this book is to explore and promote a focus on resource-bounded contexts, such as the African region, to develop a unique framework of entrepreneurship competencies and pedagogies for EE Programmes. In order to achieve this aim, focus groups and interviews were conducted with students, lecturers, and practitioners to understand what key entrepreneurial competencies are needed within the context of developing countries using Sierra Leone as a primary case-study example.

This framework was developed starting with the European Commission Entrepreneurship Competencies Framework (EntreComp). The results show that the EntreComp can be adapted to the African context through 11 core competencies that are extremely necessary. According to these findings, the framework is further enriched by the relevant pedagogical approaches that can be useful to promote them, always considering the specific context of utilisation. And in doing so, this book proposes to offer several contributions.

Firstly, to contribute to the body of knowledge on EE and youth entrepreneurship within the context of African countries particularly in Sierra Leone, where the study of entrepreneurship is under-researched. The contextualisation of entrepreneurship studies (Welter, 2011), should be an omnibus – one that should include considerations of various political, cultural, and socioeconomic differences that exist from one country to the other. While more has been done in terms of entrepreneurship studies, entrepreneurship education as a potential antecedent of entrepreneurial spirit is still too tied to Western theories and mind-sets and, in any case, most of the available research is too heavily based on developed countries' factors (Anderson and Ronteau, 2017). This requires a revision of models in terms of practice and further requires effort be made to re-adapt and re-conceptualize for different contexts.

Secondly, this book will specifically assess the validity of the EntreComp framework in a developing country. The elaborate framework that will hopefully evolve as a result of this book will be aimed at helping to structure EE programmes more suited to the resource-bounded contexts, and specifically Sierra Leone, that have been used as a case study.

Thirdly, this book will aim to offer recommendations and suggestions to key stakeholders and policymakers about the appropriateness of EE initiatives.

Lastly, this book has the daring hope of ultimately representing a reference for future researchers who will further engage with EE within the context of developing countries.

We hope to have contributed to the debate about entrepreneurship competencies and pedagogies concretely, so this book can be used to ameliorate not always easy situations experienced by developing countries' institutions and learners.

*Alfred Mbeteh*  
*Massimiliano M. Pellegrini*



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The participants in the study who gave up their time to present their insights on what competencies and pedagogies they feel relevant within the context of a developing nation, we cannot thank you enough.

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We also thank Dr Margherita Bacigalupo, Dr Modupe Taylor-Pearce, and Prof. Léo-Paul Dana for taking their time to read our manuscript and for consenting to write a foreword to our book from both practical and academic perspectives.

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