

Leaders in the Civic Engagement Movement: Zimbabwe

Co-edited by Lorraine Hoyt and Amy Newcomb Rowe

May signals the eighth edition of the expanded series. This issue includes an introduction to Zimbabwe and the University of Zimbabwe in Harare. Also, we feature interviews with Dr. Charity Manyeruke, Chair and Lecturer at University of Zimbabwe, Donald Bodzo, Executive Director of *paNhari* organization and Irvine Chimedza, a graduate student.

Zimbabwe

By Marla Chaneta, paNhari

The Republic of Zimbabwe is located in southern Africa and is bordered by South Africa to the south, Botswana to the southwest, Zambia to the northwest and Mozambique to the east. It is a nation that consists of up to 13 million people of diverse ethnic groups and up to 16 official languages, Shona, English and Ndebele being the foremost. The country's capital is Harare and stands as the largest city in the nation.

Pre-colonial history shows the "pronto-Shona" speaking societies first emerging in the middle Limpopo valley as far back as the 9th century and later migrating to the highlands which became the center of Shona states. Trade was established with Arab merchants on the Indian Ocean coast as early as the 10th century, the Shona were skilled in agriculture, metalwork and animal husbandry. This led to the rise of the various kingdoms some of which are credited with the dry stone architecture such as Great Zimbabwe.

In the late 19th Century, the British military established the first colony rule and removed Lobengula (the last Ndebele king) from power. Several waves of opposition and resistance dubbed Chimurenga rose in the 1960's and 1970's. British rule finally gave way and The Republic of Zimbabwe achieved de jure sovereignty in April 1980. Robert Gabriel Mugabe was elected the country's first executive head of state.

Zimbabwe

The Republic of Zimbabwe, or Zimbabwe, is located in southern Africa. Landlocked by South Africa, Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique, most of the country is elevated in the central plateau, which stretches from the southwest to the northwest. Bantu-speaking ethnic groups make up 98% of Zimbabweans, who total nearly 13 million. Harare is the largest city, capital of Zimbabwe and the country's seat of government.¹

Zimbabwe is not an electoral democracy. President Robert Mugabe and the ZANU-PF (Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front) have dominated the political

¹ "Zimbabwe" and "Harare," Wikipedia, Accessed 29 April 2014.

landscape since independence in 1980, overseeing 18 amendments to the constitution that have expanded presidential power and decreased executive accountability.² Zimbabwe has had a bicameral legislature since 2005. Human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have accused the current government of Zimbabwe of violating rights to shelter, food, and freedom of assembly; there have also been allegations involving assaults by ZANU-PF on the media, civic society activists and human rights defenders.

Constitutional amendments in 2005 placed all schools under the Ministry of Education of Zimbabwe's control. About one-third of Zimbabwean girls do not attend primary school and two-thirds do not attend secondary school due to poverty and customary laws in rural areas. There are eleven universities in Zimbabwe that are fully internationally accredited. Academic freedom is limited and university students have been arrested or expelled for protesting against government policy.³ Located about six kilometers north of Harare's center, the University of Zimbabwe began a grassroots education movement in 2013 entitled "START Science," affording university students opportunities to teach in teams in the nearby public schools.⁴

University of Zimbabwe

The [University Of Zimbabwe](#) (or UZ) is the largest and most established university in Zimbabwe with a total student population of 11,590 and staff of 2,740. It was founded with the help of the University of London and opened its doors in 1952 in a residential suburb called Mount Pleasant, in the capital city of Harare. The current Vice-Chancellor, Professor Levi M. Nyagura, has served since 2003. The University is accredited through the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education, under the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education. The university has ten faculties offering a variety of science and social degree programs and many specialist research centers and institutes. The university has interdisciplinary research institutes in environmental sciences, mining, development studies and defense studies. There are numerous education institutions with affiliation, including teacher training colleges and the School of Social Work.

[PaNhari](#), recipient of a Talloires Network's Youth Economic Participation Initiative grant, is housed in the Life Skills Center, which falls under the Students Affairs Department. Student Affairs is a non-academic, administrative department strategically positioned to complement academic departments in the fulfillment of the University of Zimbabwe's mission of developing all human potentials in students. The Division's mandate is to design, implement and review policies, programs and activities oriented towards efficient and effective nurturing of the physical, social, spiritual, emotional, intellectual and psychological dimensions in students. At UZ, PaNhari is one such program that is created to undertake extensive civic engagement activities in the community as part of the department's mandate. The university's civic mission is "to make meaningful

² "Zimbabwe," *Freedom in the World 2013*, Freedom House, Accessed 29 April 2014.

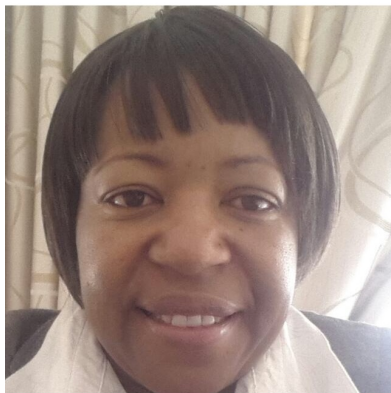
³ "Zimbabwe," *Freedom in the World 2013*, Freedom House, Accessed 29 April 2014.

⁴ "Zimbabwe," Wikipedia, Accessed 29 April 2014.

contributions to sustainable development in Zimbabwe...by maintaining excellence in teaching, learning, research and service to the community.” Despite the political and economic insecurity in the country making it sometimes difficult for young people to participate in civic projects, UZ maintains a strong community focus and commitment to student experiential learning with opportunities in social entrepreneurship and community engagement.

Dr. Charity Manyeruke, Chair and Lecturer in the Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Zimbabwe

By Amy Newcomb Rowe



As a young girl growing up in the small town of Marondera, Dr. Manyeruke’s first encounter with civic engagement was as a tennis student. The volunteer instructors who taught her and the other children were committed to the community through education. Dr. Manyeruke’s passion to work with and inspire university students originated from being a student herself in various stages of a successful academic career in higher education. Now she teaches undergraduates and graduates, and serves as advisor for Enactus, one of UZ’s most promising student-led programs. “Working with Enactus students has been useful to me because I see the transfer of inspiration and the incredibly hard work they put into it,” she explains, “I am proud to be associated with these students, who sacrifice their extra time and go the extra mile.”

Dr. Manyeruke’s greatest civic accomplishments focus on her work as advisor to students beyond the formal teaching structures. One of these projects is the women’s empowerment group that provides a soap-making program for victims of gender-based violence. During the first year, the program struggled to get off the ground, but after a re-evaluation to understand basic business principles and the importance of engaging the right community partners, the program now teaches women entrepreneurship skills as well as providing financial support for their families.

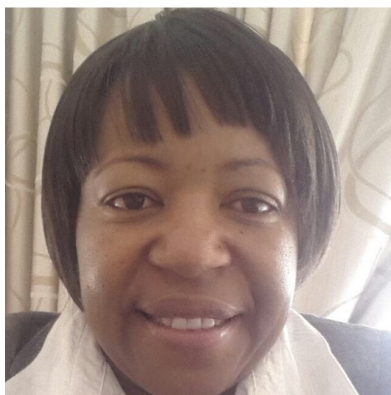
UZ has proven to be a supporter of Dr. Manyeruke’s efforts. The university provides meeting space and logistical provisions for students groups and their advisors. Institutionally, Dr. Manyeruke is able to contribute regularly to senate meetings to

discuss university policy around community engagement activities, and a university-wide bulletin is available for staff to publish research related to sustainable community development. “There are other universities involved in the community and of course with Enactus, but generally speaking, we do not hear a lot about their projects and impact,” she says. Enactus is a unique program in a leading institution, especially in terms of the ‘student-led’ component of the program, according to Dr. Manyeruke. When asked about advice for other universities, particularly those in the Talloires Network membership, Dr. Manyeruke recommends more cross pollination of ideas among universities and better ways of sharing what others are doing. She concludes, “Universities should remain open and aware of what others are doing. They should see value in investing in students and their community work. It helps students change their attitude and prepare for life after formal education.”

Dr. Charity Manyeruke is the Acting Chair of the Department of Political and Administrative Studies and a Senior Lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe. She is a Research Board member and teaches International Economic Relations, International Conflict Management, and Contemporary Strategic Studies. She is also the senior coordinator of a female students' project, which participated in a Southern African Regional Universities Association program. She was recently appointed as the Faculty Advisor of Enactus. She has a PhD in International Relations. Her recent publication is “Global Trade and Economic Development: World Trade Organization and Developing Countries.”

Dra. Charity Manyeruke, Presidente y profesora en el Departamento de Estudios de Política y Administrativas de la Universidad de Zimbabwe

Por Amy Newcomb Rowe



Como niña creciendo en la pequeña ciudad de Marondera, el primer encuentro de la Dra. Manyeruke con la idea de compromiso cívico fue como estudiante de tenis. Los instructores voluntarios que ella y los otros niños tenían estaban comprometidos con la comunidad a través de la educación. La pasión de la Dra. Manyeruke de trabajar e inspirar a los estudiantes universitarios se originó de ser una estudiante en diversas

etapas de una carrera académica exitosa en la educación superior. Ahora da clases de pregrado y posgrado, y sirve como asesora para Enactus, uno de los programas dirigidos por los estudiantes más prometedores de UZ. "Trabajar con los estudiantes de Enactus ha sido útil para mí porque veo la inspiración y el increíblemente difícil trabajo y esfuerzo que ponen en él, me siento orgullosa estar asociada con estos estudiantes, que sacrifican su tiempo extra y van más allá de lo que es pedido de ellos".

Los mayores logros cívicos de la Dra. Manyeruke se centran en su trabajo como asesora de los estudiantes que va más allá de la enseñanza formal. Uno de estos proyectos es el grupo de empoderamiento de las mujeres que ofrece un programa para la fabricación de jabón para víctimas de la violencia de género. Durante el primer año, el programa luchó por ponerse en marcha, pero después de una re-evaluación para comprender técnicas básicas de negocios y la importancia de involucrar a los socios comunitarios, el programa ahora le enseña a las mujeres habilidades emprendedoras, así como proporcionar apoyo financiero para su familias.

UZ ha demostrado ser partidario de los esfuerzos de la Dra. Manyeruke. La universidad ofrece un espacio para reuniones y disposiciones logísticas para grupos de estudiantes y sus asesores. La Dra. Manyeruke también puede atender y contribuir ideas regularmente a las reuniones del Senado para discutir la política universitaria en torno a actividades de participación comunitaria, y un boletín universitario también está disponible para el personal donde pueden publicar investigaciones relacionadas con el desarrollo sostenible de la comunidad. "Hay otras universidades que están involucrados en la comunidad y por supuesto con Enactus, pero en general, no escuchamos mucho acerca de sus proyectos y su impacto." Enactus es un programa único en una institución líder, especialmente los programas 'dirigidos por los estudiantes' según la Dra. Manyeruke.

Cuando se le preguntó que recomendaciones le daría a otras universidades, en particular los a los miembros de la Red Talloires, Dra. Manyeruke recomienda la polinización de ideas entre las universidades y mejores formas de compartir lo que otros están haciendo. Y concluye, "Universidades deben permanecer abiertas y conscientes de lo que hacen los demás, deben ver el valor de invertir en los estudiantes y en su trabajo comunitario. Eso ayuda a los estudiantes a que cambien su actitud y prepararse para la vida después de la educación formal."

Dra. Charity Manyeruke es la Presidente interina del Departamento de Estudios Políticos y Administrativos y profesora en la Universidad de Zimbabwe. Ella es miembro del Consejo de Investigación y enseña Relaciones Económicas Internacionales, Gestión de Conflictos Internacionales y Estudios Estratégicos Contemporáneos. Ella es también la Coordinadora de un proyecto de una alumna cual participo en un programa para la Asociación Regional de Universidades del África del Sur. Recientemente fue nombrada como profesora consejera de Enactus. Tiene un doctorado en Relaciones Internacionales. Su reciente publicación es "Comercio Global y Desarrollo Económico: Organización Mundial del Comercio y Países en Desarrollo.

Mr. Donald Bodzo, Executive Director of paNhari

By Ahsen Utku



Civic engagement projects at the University of Zimbabwe are in the hands of young social entrepreneurs, such as Donald Bodzo, who are pioneering innovative solutions to daunting global challenges. Donald is a 28-year-old activist and Executive Director of [paNhari](#) – a program that empowers students in Zimbabwe by providing economic and learning opportunities. Despite his young age, he is one of the most successful university civic engagement leaders in Zimbabwe. In 2007, he was one of the first pan-African students to receive the U.S. President's Student Services Award due to his consistent commitment to community development in Zimbabwe. In 2009, Donald was also selected among thousands of young people around the world as one of the twenty [YouthActionNet® Global Laureate Fellows](#). Launched by the International Youth Foundation (IYF) and Nokia, this unique leadership program supports a new generation of socially conscious, global citizens who create positive change in their communities, their countries, and our world.

When Donald graduated from the University of Zimbabwe in 2008, it was challenging for him to find a job. “Unemployment rates in Zimbabwe were unprecedented,” says Donald. “Using the skills I had garnered from being a community catalyst and social entrepreneur at the university, I decided to create my own job by starting a social enterprise,” explains Donald. He developed a low-cost approach to boosting agricultural productivity in poor, rural communities by training farmers how to produce, apply, and sell low-cost, enriched cattle manure. There are a lot of challenges to university civic engagement in developing countries. Donald explains, “There are decade-long political and economic crises in Zimbabwe, which pose several problems.” He continues, “The first is youth unemployment. The second is poverty eradication. With the record rate of youth of unemployment in Zimbabwe, there is poverty and prostitution, increased crime, a lot of political violence exacerbated by unemployed youth. Also you see increased HIV diseases. It’s a vicious circle.”

Donald has been involved in many projects in a relatively short period and there are certain ones that he takes pride in. One of the most intriguing projects was an initiative he developed as a student a few years ago. “We worked with some young girls in a semi-rural area. Their families could not afford to send them to school, so they dropped out. Some of them were single mothers, and some of them had HIV. We trained them on basic entrepreneurship and helped them start small businesses as individuals and

also as a cooperative. Some of them already had businesses, but they were always in trouble with the authorities because they were operating illegally. Also, they did not know how to utilize their small profits – they lacked basic financial literacy skills. We assisted them in all these aspects. One particular girl stood out. She managed to grow her business and opened a bigger shop that sells clothes and shoes. She had dropped out of high school a few years ago but eventually managed to pay for her school fees and tuition all the way up to University level. She's such a hallmark of success. To me, that was a life changing project," he says.

On the other hand, Donald's perspective on "success" reaches beyond typical definitions. He sees it as the ability to "...make a change in someone's life," which is evident, in effect, "when they come back to you and thank you." For Donald, the real achievement is not only "giving someone a fish," but also "teaching someone how to fish." According to Donald, civic learning has been achieved "when a person becomes conscious and aware of his or her responsibility, and participate in bringing change in society issues, with the aim of improving the overall condition."

Meanwhile, one of the short-term results of Donald and his team's work is the increasing employability of their students. He notes, "Most students start their own enterprises and they don't need to hunt for jobs like the students who do not go through our program." Of course, there are challenges including the need for additional resources. "One of the challenges that we face is the financial resources for the program itself," indicates Donald. "Last year there has been a lot of demand among the universities in Zimbabwe to introduce the paNhari program on their campuses, but we don't have enough resources to expand the program."

Donald explains that they try to avoid any training that may be seen as confronting "political issues." Such activities, he shares, "would be considered as a political rallying," which could have serious consequences. Donald and his team have learned and changed their approach to university civic engagement over time. For instance, "gender issues were never a key issue in our organization's mission. While recruiting students we never considered that we should have a balance between men and women," notes Donald, adding, "But we have increased our priority in promoting gender equality in our program."

On the other hand, there is a lot of work to be done, both on the local and regional level. "A lot of universities need to be more involved in civic engagement and begin collaborating within Zimbabwe, Southern Africa, and throughout Africa," says Donald. "Unfortunately, collaborative efforts among institutions in Zimbabwe on civic engagement does not seem to exist. That's why we need the Talloires Network. I don't think these universities are working collectively. They are competing. We need to sit down and see how we can work together," he concludes.

Donald Bodzo graduated from the University of Zimbabwe with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Applied Environmental Sciences in Agriculture and began working for Anchor Holdings in Zimbabwe. He then served as an Atlas Corps Fellow in Washington D.C – working at the Grameen Foundation and Service For Peace. He has also worked for

other non-profits in the United States including the Global Peace Foundation and Global Peace Connect. He holds a Masters Degree in International Development from the School of International Training at World Learning in Washington, D.C.

Sr. Donald Bodzo, Director Ejecutivo de paNhari

Por Ahsen Utku



Proyectos de participación cívica en la Universidad de Zimbabwe están en manos de emprendedores sociales, como Donald Bodzo, que son pioneros en soluciones innovadoras para los problemas globales de enormes proporciones. Donald es un activista de 28 años de edad, y el Director Ejecutivo de paNhari - un programa que capacita a los estudiantes en Zimbabwe, proporcionando oportunidades económicas y de aprendizaje. A pesar de su corta edad, es uno de los más exitosos líderes universitarios en Zimbabwe. En 2007, fue uno de los primeros estudiantes panafricanos de recibir el premio de Servicios Estudiantiles de EE.UU., debido a su compromiso constante con el desarrollo comunitario en Zimbabwe. En 2009, Donald también fue seleccionado entre miles de jóvenes de todo el mundo como uno de veinte Global Fellows Laureate YouthActionNet®. Lanzado por International Youth Foundation (IYF) y Nokia, este programa único de liderazgo apoya nuevas generaciones de ciudadanos socialmente conscientes, a nivel mundial quienes crean cambios positivos en sus comunidades, sus países y nuestro mundo.

Cuando Donald se graduó de la Universidad de Zimbabwe en 2008, fue un reto para él encontrar un trabajo. "Los índices de desempleo en Zimbabwe no tenían precedentes", dice Donald. "Usando las habilidades que adquirí trabajando en la comunidad y como un empresario social en la universidad, decidí crear mi propia fuente de empleo al iniciar una empresa social," explica Donald. Desarrolló un método de bajo costo para impulsar la productividad agrícola en las comunidades rurales y pobres capacitando agricultores en cómo producir, aplicar, y vender estiércol a bajo costo. Hay una gran cantidad de retos enfrentando la participación cívica universitaria en los países en desarrollo. Donald explica: "Hay crisis políticas y económicas que tienen una década de duración en Zimbabwe, que plantean varios problemas" Y continúa: "El primero es el desempleo juvenil. La segunda es la erradicación de la pobreza. Con el veloz aumento de desempleo juvenil en Zimbabwe, hay pobreza y prostitución, aumento de delincuencias y una gran cantidad de violencia política exacerbada por los jóvenes

desempleados. También se ve el aumento de enfermedades de VIH. Es un círculo vicioso."

Donald ha participado en muchos proyectos durante un corto período, y hay algunos que lo enorgullece. Uno de los proyectos más interesantes fue una iniciativa que el desarrolló como estudiante hace unos años. "Trabajamos con algunas jóvenes en una zona semi-rural. Las familias de ellas no podían darse el lujo de mandarlas a la escuela. Algunas de ellas eran madres solteras, y algunas de ellas tenían VIH. Les enseñamos conceptos básicos de tener un negocio y les ayudamos a crear pequeñas empresas, individualmente y también como una cooperativa. Algunas de ellas ya tenían pequeñas empresas, pero siempre tenían problemas con las autoridades porque estaban operando ilegalmente. Además, ellas no sabían cómo utilizar lo poco que ganaban - les faltaba las habilidades básicas de alfabetización financiera. Les asistimos en todos estos aspectos. Una chica en particular se destacó. Ella logró crecer su negocio y abrió una tienda donde vende ropa y zapatos. Ella había abandonado la secundaria hace unos años, pero finalmente logró pagar sus gastos escolares y la colegiatura hasta el nivel universitario. Ella es un sello de éxito. Para mí, ese es un proyecto que cambia vidas"

Por otra parte, la perspectiva de Donald sobre el "éxito" va más allá de las definiciones típicas. Lo ve como la capacidad de "... hacer un cambio en la vida de alguien", lo cual es evidente, "cuando regresan y te dan las gracias." Para Donald, el verdadero logro no sólo es "darle a alguien un pescado , "pero también" enseñarle a alguien cómo pescar." De acuerdo con Donald, el aprendizaje cívico se ha logrado, "cuando una persona se vuelve consciente y consciente de su responsabilidad, y participa en llevar a cabo cambios en la sociedad, con el objetivo de mejorar el estado general."

Mientras tanto, uno de los resultados de corto plazo de Donald y el de su equipo es el aumento de la empleabilidad de sus alumnos. Él señala, "La mayoría de los estudiantes lanzan sus propias empresas y no necesitan buscar trabajos, como esos estudiantes que no participan en nuestro programa." Por supuesto, existen retos que incluyen la necesidad de recursos adicionales. "Uno de los retos a los que nos enfrentamos son los recursos financieros para el programa", indica Donald. "El año pasado ha habido una gran cantidad de demanda entre la universidades de Zimbabwe queriendo introducir el programa paNhari en sus campus, pero no tenemos los recursos suficientes para ampliar el programa."

Donald explica que tratan de evitar cualquier tipo formación que pueda ser considerada como tratando de afrontar "problemas políticos". Estas actividades, el comparte, "serían consideradas como un rally político", lo que podría tener graves consecuencias. Donald y su equipo han aprendido y cambiado su enfoque del compromiso cívico universitario con el tiempo. Por ejemplo, "las cuestiones de género nunca fueron un tema de enfoque en la misión de nuestra organización. Durante el reclutamiento de estudiantes nunca consideramos tener un balance entre hombres y mujeres ", señala Donald, y

agregó "Pero hemos aumentado nuestra prioridad en la promoción de la igualdad de género en nuestro programa."

Por otro lado, hay mucho trabajo por hacer, tanto al nivel local y regional. "Muchas universidades tienen que estar más involucradas en el compromiso cívico y empezar a colaborar dentro de Zimbabwe, África del Sur, y en toda África", dice Donald.

"Desafortunadamente, los esfuerzos de colaboración entre instituciones de Zimbabwe sobre el compromiso cívico parece no existir. Es por eso que necesitamos la Red Talloires. No creo que estas universidades estén trabajando juntas. Ellas están compitiendo, tenemos que sentarnos y ver cómo podemos trabajar juntos ", concluye.

Donald Bodzo se graduó de la Universidad de Zimbabwe, un título en Ciencias Ambientales en Agricultura y comenzó trabajando para Anchor Holdings en Zimbabwe. Luego se desempeñó como miembro de Atlas Corps en Washington DC - trabajando en la Fundación Grameen y Servicio Para la Paz. También ha trabajado para otras organizaciones sin fines de lucro en los Estados Unidos como la Fundación para la Paz Global y la Paz Global Connect. Tiene una Maestría en Desarrollo Internacional de la Escuela de Capacitación Internacional en Aprendizaje Mundial en Washington, DC

Mr. Irvine Chimedza, University of Zimbabwe Student and former Enactus Student President



"Leadership is not about one person, it is about the results of a team effort. Leading is about listening and coordinating with others, and I always give credit to the team."

UZ graduate student Irvine Chimedza was not a natural born leader, but his position in the forefront of a promising young group of Zimbabwean leaders says otherwise. To date, Irvine has served as Secretary General, Team President and now in his final year as Advisor to the UZ's Enactus team. Born and raised in Zvishavane, Irvine began his community engagement in high school participating in fundraising for school clubs and variety shows. He is proud to have learned the importance of developing life skills and

becoming a peer-educator as early as high school. When he arrived at university, he found Enactus and was eager to join.

Enactus is wholly student-led and student-powered, and much different than the volunteer work Irvine did as a high school student. In his third year as president, the team won the [National Competitions](#) and were semi-finalist at the Enactus World Cup in Mexico with a recycling project called *Environment Rebirth*, which supports a new business model for plastic collectors in Mbare, and helps carpenters in Karoi secure materials and training from local sources. The Karoi project also focused on youth training on entrepreneurship and skills development in carpentry and welding. Remarkably, all aspects of the Enactus projects come from the students in collaboration with community.

It is evident that the University of Zimbabwe is home to many talented, young leaders. This might have something to do with soft skill development as a priority for Irvine and his colleagues. They rely on progressive initiatives for community planning, such as place-based development and local economic development, and the participation of local community members in shaping the outcomes of their communities. Irvine engages in candid dialogue and leads discussions with community leaders, which is not always easy considering the number of languages, tribes and traditions requiring thoughtful negotiation.

“Our goal is to maximize the positive things the community is already doing, and try to utilize the resources and ideas they have, both young and old,” he explains. Some student projects do not have sustainable efforts because people do not always have access to the latest resources, which is why involving people from rural and indigenous groups is important for sustainable solutions to poverty and isolation.

“We ask and care about their problems,” Irvine says, “Since their resources and access to education are limited, we must gain a good understanding of what they want, not necessarily what we think they need. For example, we may think they need training for motor mechanics, when they actually want training for carpentry or welding. How would we know if we don’t ask?”

Consulting people in the community is also important for building trust and finding sponsors. The students identify collective problems by asking the community members; they identify key partners by finding organizations with similar goals; and they secure supporters through a proven success record. This doesn’t happen overnight. Since winning the Enactus World Championships in 2005, the young leaders have established a robust alumni group as well as close working relationships with key organizations such as [BOOST](#) and the International Labor Organization and now the Talloires Network through the [YEPI](#) program.

Moreover, Irvine’s professors at the university provide a helping hand whenever possible. Whether lending a car, helping with personal expenses, and offering moral support, Irvine feels fortunate to work with the network of professors and staff. As a young student once quite shy, he now feels more confident with their counsel. Engaging the tough questions through the Business Advisory Board, a group of professors and

local business people, Irvine has become a confident public speaker ready to face their challenges. He respects that UZ is concentrating on corporate social responsibility and knows the valuable impact on his academics.

Thankful for a good team of classmates, advisors and mentors, Irvine is setting his sights on starting sustainable businesses in mining and greenhouses for food production. Irvine says the heart of civic engagement is having a heart for people and treating people fairly. As an aspiring businessman, he knows a successful business depends on its human resources and the community in which it exists.

“My parting advice to others? For students, always have a lot of fun! Always pursue your interests and passions, and the brilliant ideas will follow. Dismiss your fears, enjoy and have fun in your studies and work,” he says with a smile, “and my advice for university leadership is to support students more often and don’t be afraid of student failures. Supporting student efforts is more important than failing or winning.”

Sr. Irvine Chimedza, Estudiante en la Universidad de Zimbabwe y ex Presidente de Enactus

Por Amy Newcomb Rowe



"El liderazgo no se trata de una persona, se trata de los resultados del esfuerzo de equipo. Liderar se trata de escuchar y coordinar con los demás, y yo siempre le doy crédito al equipo."

Irvine Chimedza estudiante de posgrado en UZ no era un líder nato, pero su posición en el grupo prometedor de jóvenes líderes de Zimbabwe dice lo contrario. Hasta la fecha, Irvine se ha desempeñado como Secretario General, presidente del grupo y ahora en su último año como Asesor de Enactus. Nacido y criado en Harare, Irvine comenzó su compromiso con la comunidad en la secundaria recaudando fondos para los clubs de la escuela y shows. Él está orgulloso de haber aprendido la importancia de poder desarrollar habilidades para toda la vida, convirtiéndose en un peer-educador en la secundaria. Cuando llegó a la universidad, encontró Enactus y estaba ansioso por unirse al grupo.

Enactus es totalmente dirigido por los estudiantes, y es muy diferente al trabajo voluntario Irvine hizo como estudiante en la secundaria. En su tercer año como presidente, el equipo ganó competencias nacionales y fueron semi finalistas en la Copa Mundial de Enactus en México con un proyecto de reciclaje llamado Renacimiento del Medio Ambiente, que apoya un nuevo modelo de negocio para los colectores de plástico y ayuda a los carpinteros en Karoi recibir materiales y formación de fuentes locales. El proyecto Karoi también se centró en la formación juvenil como el desarrollo del espíritu emprendedor y el desarrollo de habilidades en carpintería y soldadura. Cabe destacar que todos los aspectos de los proyectos de Enactus provienen de los estudiantes trabajando en colaboración con la comunidad.

Es evidente que la Universidad de Zimbabwe alberga muchos líderes jóvenes y talentosos. Esto podría tener algo que ver con el enfoque al desarrollo de habilidades. Se basan en iniciativas progresistas para la planificación de la comunidad, tales como el desarrollo basado en el lugar, el desarrollo económico local, y la participación de los miembros de la comunidad en dar forma a los resultados de sus comunidades. Irvine mantiene un diálogo sincero y dirige las discusiones con líderes de la comunidad, que no siempre son fácil debido al número de diferentes lenguas, tribus y tradiciones que requieren negociación consciente.

"Nuestro objetivo es aprovechar a lo máximo las cosas positivas que la comunidad ya está haciendo, y tratar de utilizar los recursos y las ideas que tienen, tanto jóvenes como los adultos", explica. Algunos proyectos de los estudiantes no tienen esfuerzos sostenibles, porque la gente no siempre tiene acceso a los últimos recursos, razón porque la participación de personas pertenecientes a grupos indígenas y rurales es importante para las soluciones sostenibles a la pobreza y el aislamiento.

"Les preguntamos y nos preocupamos por sus problemas", dice Irvine, "Porque sus recursos y su acceso a la educación son limitados, debemos tener una buena comprensión de lo que quieren, no necesariamente lo que pensamos que necesitan. Por ejemplo, podemos pensar que necesitan formación en mecánica de motor, cuando en realidad quieren formación para carpintería o soldadura. ¿Cómo sabremos si no nos preguntamos?"

Consultando personas de la comunidad también es importante para establecer confianza y encontrar patrocinadores. Los estudiantes identifican los problemas preguntándoles a los miembros de la comunidad; identifican socios claves encontrando organizaciones con objetivos similares; y aseguran partidarios a través de un historial de éxito. Esto no sucede de noche a mañana. Desde ganar el Campeonato del Mundo Enactus en 2005, los jóvenes líderes han establecido un grupo de ex alumnos sólido, así como contacto con organizaciones claves como BOOST y la Organización Internacional de Labor y ahora la Red Talloires a través del programa YEPI.

Por otra parte, los profesores de Irvine en la Universidad ofrecen ayuda siempre que sea posible. Ya sea prestando un coche, ayudando con los gastos personales, y ofreciendo apoyo moral, Irvine se siente afortunado de trabajar con la red de profesores y personal. Cuando era un estudiante mas joven, era bastante tímido, y ahora se siente más seguro dar consejos. Atacando preguntas difíciles a través de la Junta de

Asesoramiento Corporativo, un grupo de profesores y empresarios locales, Irvine se ha convertido en un orador público, listo para enfrentar sus desafíos. Respeta que UZ se concentra en la responsabilidad social corporativa y reconoce el impacto valioso que tiene en sus estudios.

Agradecido por un buen equipo de compañeros de clase, asesores y mentores, Irvine ha fijado su objetivo en crear empresas sostenibles en minería e invernaderos para la producción de alimentos. Irvine dice que el corazón de la participación cívica es tener un corazón para la gente y tratar a las personas de manera justa. Como un empresario aspirante, él sabe que un negocio exitoso depende de sus recursos humanos y de la comunidad en la que existe.

"¿Mis consejos finales para los demás? Para estudiantes, diviértanse! Siempre persigan sus intereses y pasiones, y las brillantes ideas vendrán. Descarten sus miedos, disfruten y diviértanse en sus estudios y trabajo," dice con una sonrisa, "y mi consejo para la dirección de la universidad es apoyen a los estudiantes con más frecuencia y no tengan miedo de los fallos de los estudiantes. Apoyar los esfuerzos de los estudiantes es más importante que fallar o ganar."

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