

2016 HiH EA YOUTH LEADERS ENTREPRENEURSHIP CONFERENCE

According to a recent study done jointly by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) and Youth Business International (YBI) 60% of 18 to 34 year olds in Africa are more optimistic about the availability of good business opportunities, and believe they have the skills and knowledge to start a business compared to their peers in any other region. This goes on to show how upbeat youths in Africa are seriously focusing on entrepreneurship. HiH EA through her Peace and Prosperity through Job Creation Project is aiming at equipping youths in Kenya with skills and knowledge to start small innovative businesses.

The project brought together about 110 youths drawn from 14 branches namely; Kitengela, Gatundu, Machakos, Emali, Iloitoktok, Tala, Limuru, Kasarani, Kiambu, Kawangware, Nakuru East, Nakuru West, Nyahururu and Thika. The theme of the Youth Leaders Entrepreneurship Conference was dubbed '*Vijana tujikaze na tujinue na mabizna*' (Youth arise and raise your status through entrepreneurship).



The participants of the youth leaders entrepreneurship conference

Present at the event were guests drawn from organizations with unique programmes geared towards youth empowerment and who HiH EA is currently working with. The guests included; Daniel Juma Omondi and Vincent Rapado from the Global Peace Foundation, Dorah Nesoba from Digital Opportunity Trust-Kenya, Charles Mugendi from Godrej-Darling, Athmani Masood an advisory committee member for the HiH EA HiHYP and Violet Mbiti ,a blogger and a young entrepreneur and a member of the HiHYP Advisory committee.

The event acted as a platform for the youth to network and connect as well as share their challenges in starting and running their businesses. The guests urged the youth to take up entrepreneurship seriously and not only to focus on creating businesses for themselves but also to create businesses that will help alleviate social challenges, from health and housing to nutrition, education, environment, women and youth empowerment.



A youth participant explains the importance of innovativeness in a business

“Each year, thousands of graduates are churned out and there are no enough white collar jobs for everyone. So it’s important that the youth are empowered to change the world, make a profit and inspire other young people to take the future into their own hands.”- Daniel Juma, Global Peace Foundation.



Daniel Juma, Executive Director, Global Peace Foundation

Violet Mbiti, an entrepreneur and Founder of Vijana Network International, who runs a blog 'Youth county projects Kenya' encouraged the youth to be innovative and embrace technology to reach out to wider audiences and hence have great impact. Some of the opportunities in the IT sector includes; cyber café, blogs, online marketing, e-books among others. The blog highlights youth projects and opportunities taking place in the 47 counties in Kenya being implemented by stakeholders working with the youth.

<https://youthcountyprojectskenya.com/>

A representative from Darling Kenya, a company that deals in the production of the highest quality hair extensions in Kenya, explained how the company is investing in the youth by providing training on beauty skills which they can use to start their own beauty enterprises and venture into the multi-billion industry. He gave an approximation of KES 30,000 (\$295) as the minimum conservative estimate for a moderately equipped salon.

Athmani Masood encouraged the youth to avoid engaging in vices and keep out of bad peer groups and forge forward. Zachary Francis, a young entrepreneur and a winner in last years' Hand in Hand youth business competition who travelled to Sweden, explained how the internet had moderately helped boost his egg-selling enterprise. Through the advice and mentorship he got from the Sweden visit, Zachary has been

able to open a goat enterprise and has recruited some youth who help him source and sell his goats.

HiH EA is encouraging innovative IT entries during this year's business competition. Winners will be awarded and will also get a chance to travel to Sweden for networking with other upcoming and successful entrepreneurs.



Some young entrepreneurs from Tala branch who attended the conference

The 3 year project is funded by the Swedish Postcode Lottery and is targeting 7,000 youths.

