UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSITY

Maastricht University

UNU-MERIT

APPLICATION TO NBER – ENTREPRENEURSHIP SMALL GRANT PROPOSALS

Principal Investigator: Mariajose Silva Vargas
Project Title: Aspirations and Personal Initiative for Business Growth. Evidence from Low-Cost Behavioural Interventions in Uganda
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1. INTRODUCTION

In 2015 several African countries ranked among the top ten of the most entrepreneurial countries *ApprovedIndex - GEM* list, with one of them – Uganda – ranking first.[ii] This came as a flattering news, though not a surprising one; in fact, the majority of African youth engage in some sort of business activity or in establishing micro-enterprises.[xvi] Nevertheless, these entrepreneurs are not properly equipped to manage enterprises beyond the one-person start-up phase. This is one of the reasons why African micro-enterprises suffer from poor business services: lack of record keeping, poor inventory accounts, rudimentary marketing practices, etc.[xxv] resulting in several issues, such as low profits or poor investments.[xxii] In fact, poor management capabilities have been proved to be correlated with firms' low productivity and lack of innovation.[xii; vii; xxvi] So, what effective solutions can be found for the micro-entrepreneurs to significantly improve their business skills?

Both policy and academia have mostly focused on traditional business skills trainings to teach a set of "best practices" to entrepreneurs.[xxv; vi] Nevertheless, impact evaluations of these interventions have shown mixed or null effects[xxii; xxiv] as well as being not sustainable in the long run.[xix] Moreover, traditional trainings' designs have generally not considered behavioural bottlenecks that entrepreneurs might struggle with in developing countries, such as overconfidence or scarcity of cognitive capacity and understanding,[xxxiii; xiv] which is of extreme importance for micro-enterprises, where owners are also the sole-managers and their personal biases might prevent them from making the right choices for the firm.[xxxvi; xviii]

Thus, this research aims at exploring what type of non-traditional trainings, that also use behavioural components, could improve micro-entrepreneurs' managerial skills. More specifically, this research will investigate the impact of low-cost behavioural interventions on business and management skills, as well as the identification of what type of micro-entrepreneurs have the potential to grow. The behavioural interventions will be two: role model approach (RMA) and a personal initiative training (PIT). Recent studies have shown the efficiency of these two interventions. First, role models have proved to be effective in raising low aspirations and therefore, in increasing investments in the future[xxxii] and in improving education attainments.[xxx; v] Role models research in developing countries have mostly focused on educational outcomes, but little – though promising - evidence exists on the effect of role models on entrepreneurs' future choices and growth in developing countries.[viii xiii; xxiii] Second, a recent experiment by Campos et al. (2017) has compared both a traditional training and a personal initiative training where a proactive mindset was taught to a heterogeneous group of entrepreneurs. The results were only significant for the group receiving the second treatment, showing an increase of 30% in firm profits as well as an increase in product innovation. This is in line with recent research on teaching an entrepreneurial mindset instead of just skills.[xx; xvii; x]

To examine the impact of RMA and PIT approaches on business and management skills, this study will focus on tailoring micro-entrepreneurs in Uganda. According to the African Development Bank (2016) the tailoring and textile sector is the second largest employer in developing countries after agriculture. Also, this sector represents 43% of the total national manufacturing industry in Uganda.[xxxiv] Thus, apart from the economic importance of the sector, Ugandan tailors offer the possibility of having a homogenous sample in terms of industry, which allows for a better measurement of productivity and other outcomes by avoiding confounding factors that can happen due to firms' heterogeneity.[xxv]

The methodology selected for this study is a field experiment using a randomized control trial (RCT) to assess the impact of the two behavioural interventions on several outcomes. There are many benefits in using a RCT methodology in this case. First, randomization allows identifying the causal impact of the interventions ensuring that treatment and control groups are statistically identical. Also, the design of the program allows for

a comparison across two different interventions: RMA with or without the PIT intervention, and the identification of the most cost-effective model.

In conclusion, this research is in line with the NBER - Entrepreneurship Small grant as it aims to provide more evidence on how to enhance business growth and ultimately, economic growth in developing countries.

2. STUDY DESIGN

The methodology selected is a field experiment using a randomized control trial (RCT) methodology in order to assess the impact of two behavioural interventions on several outcomes. Randomization will be stratified on gender to obtain a gender-balanced sample divided in two treatment groups and a control group: Treatment 1: RMA intervention; treatment 2: RMA+PIT intervention; and the control group will be a counterfactual that will not receive any intervention. A baseline survey will be collected before the interventions, and an endline survey one year after the baseline. Specifically, the interventions will be as follows:

(i) Role Model Approach (RMA). A one-time event where participants will receive an inspirational talk given by Ugandan fashion designers. Some of the designers will come from a similar socio-economic background while others will come from a very different background in order to test the *aspiration gap* theory proposed by Ray (2006). Taking advantage of fashion designers gathering at the *Kampala Fashion Week*[xxi] I already have contacts with some of these role models.

(ii) Personal Initiative Training (PIT). A one-time workshop given by experts in personal coaching will be offered to a group of tailors who will receive the PIT in addition to the RMA. The interventions' implementers (fashion designers and coaching experts) will be equally selected between men and women to examine if gender has an impact on skills, self-belief and aspirations.[iii]

Using as a rule of thumb for the Minimum Detectable Size with a delta of 0.3 and the standard significance level of 5%, a test with 80% power provides that this study will need approximately 175 observations per group. Hence I am planning to collect a sample of 525 tailors around the city of Kampala (UBOS (2010) has identified approximately 4,500 tailoring businesses working in the city). To select the participants before the baseline I will do a listing exercise in selected parishes around Kampala in order to identify suitable respondents. Participants will be identified at their place of work and asked a short set of initial questions to determine whether they meet the targeting criteria of gender, age and ownership of a tailoring business with less than 5 employees (micro-enterprise).

I am planning to collect data on the following outcomes: (i) Business best practices (ii) Business success (profit, sales) (iii) Innovation (new products and designs) (iv) Personal Initiative (v) Aspirations and (vi) Expectations.

3. POLICY RELEVANCE

According to the World Bank, the development of the micro and small enterprises in Sub Saharan Africa could have a great upshot on economic growth and poverty reduction[xxxvii] as well as on women's and youth's empowerment[xxxi]. In fact, authors have emphasized that entrepreneurship could enhance economic growth and employment creation, but to do so, policies must correct market failures that hamper the growth of an entrepreneurial economy.[iv] For this reason, international parties have started major programmes to boost entrepreneurial sectors, such as the *Fashionomics* programme of AfDB[xv] that aims at pushing the textile, tailoring and garment sector because it is the second largest employer in developing countries after agriculture,[i] and especially in East African countries, it has the potential of becoming a major global player and job creator.[ix; xxvii] For the same reasons, policies at the national level have been put in place to enhance national production and local entrepreneurship, such as the ban of second hand-clothes combined with incentives to local manufacturers in the East African Community.[xxxv] Therefore, the policy relevance of this project is in line with the international and national efforts to improve entrepreneurship in Sub Saharan African countries in order to enhance economic growth, jobs creation and empowerment of women and the youth, especially in the apparel sector.

4. PHOTO-DOCUMENTARY

I intend to produce a photo-documentary during and after the field research in Uganda, in order to provide more visibility to the research and its results. I have extensive experience as a photojournalist and I have collaborated with international organizations such as the World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development of the UN (IFAD), TechnoServe, CEGA and more. You can see some of my photo-documentaries here.

5. REFERENCES

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Item	Amount	Unit	Unit category	Unit cost	Curr	Total (UGX)	Total (USD)	Total (UGX)	Total (USD)
1. Pilot and Training (for baseline)						**2.742.000**	**734**	**2.879.100**	**770**
Allowance enumerator for piloting the questionnaire	1	2	Days	35.000	UGX	70.000	19	73.500	20
Per diem enumerators for training	15	3	Days	10.000	UGX	450.000	120	472.500	126
Per diem team leaders/auditor	1	3	Days	10.000	UGX	30.000	8	31.500	8
Conference room	1	3	Days	300.000	UGX	900.000	241	945.000	253
Food and drinks	19	3	Days	16.000	UGX	912.000	244	957.600	256
Printing	19	100	Pages	100	UGX	190.000	51	199.500	53
Materials (pens, notebooks, etc)	19	1	Total	10.000	UGX	190.000	51	199.500	53
2. Enumeration - Staff (Baseline)						**10.501.250**	**2.809**	**11.026.313**	**2.950**
Wages enumerators	15	9	Days	35.000	UGX	4.593.750	1.229	4.823.438	1.290
Wages TLs	1	9	Days	40.000	UGX	350.000	94	367.500	98
Per diem enumerators	15	10	Days	35.000	UGX	5.118.750	1.369	5.374.688	1.438
Per diem TLs	1	10	Days	45.000	UGX	438.750	117	460.688	123
3. Enumeration - Logistics (Baseline)						**7.943.707**	**2.125**	**8.340.892**	**2.231**
Airtime field staff	16	1	Weeks	10.000	UGX	160.000	43	168.000	45
Local transport (TL)	1	9	Days	45.000	UGX	393.750	105	413.438	111
Local transport (Enumerators)	15	9	Days	45.000	UGX	5.906.250	1.580	6.201.563	1.659
Local transport buffer	5	0	Days	40.682	UGX	0	0	0	0
Intra district travel - transport (advances request)	1	1	travels	40.682	UGX	40.682	11	42.716	11
Photocopy - informed consent	525	1	Copies	100	UGX	52.500	14	55.125	15
Photocopy - invitation letters to the event (treatment)	350	1	Copies	100	UGX	35.000	9	36.750	10
Photocopy - introletters	525	1	Copies	101	UGX	53.025	14	55.676	15
Printing - tracking forms / other	525	1	Copies	100	UGX	52.500	14	55.125	15
Storage rooms for field materials	1	1	room	200.000	UGX	200.000	54	210.000	56
Gift for respondents	525	1	Gift	2.000	UGX	1.050.000	281	1.102.500	295
4. Intervention						**26.290.300**	**7.033**	**27.604.815**	**7.385**
Airtime Eumerator + Team Leader	3	1	week	10.000	UGX	30.000	8	31.500	8
Wage Enumerator + Team Leader	3	5	Days	40.000	UGX	600.000	161	630.000	169
Transport of respondents to site (treatment)	350	2	Trips	10.000	UGX	7.000.000	1.873	7.350.000	1.966
Transport of staff to site	3	10	Trips	10.000	UGX	300.000	80	315.000	84
Drinks	353	5	Day	3.000	UGX	5.295.000	1.417	5.559.750	1.487
Printing	353	1	Pages	100	UGX	35.300	9	37.065	10
Materials (pens, notebooks, etc)	353	1	Total	10.000	UGX	3.530.000	944	3.706.500	992
Fashion designers renumeration	4	1	Total	1.000.000	UGX	4.000.000	1.070	4.200.000	1.124
Workshop leader renumeration	4	1	Total	1.000.000	UGX	4.000.000	1.070	4.200.000	1.124
Conference room	1	5	Days	300.000	UGX	1.500.000	401	1.575.000	421
5. Training (for endline)						**2.868.000**	**767**	**3.011.400**	**806**
Per diem enumerators/mobilizers for training	17	3	Days	10.000	UGX	510.000	136	535.500	143
Per diem team leaders/auditor	1	3	Days	10.000	UGX	30.000	8	31.500	8
Conference room	1	3	Days	300.000	UGX	900.000	241	945.000	253
Food and drinks	21	3	Days	16.000	UGX	1.008.000	270	1.058.400	283
Printing	21	100	Pages	100	UGX	210.000	56	220.500	59
Materials (pens, notebooks, etc)	21	1	Total	10.000	UGX	210.000	56	220.500	59
6. Enumeration - Staff (Endline)						**11.796.250**	**3.156**	**12.386.063**	**3.314**
Wages enumerators	15	9	Days	35.000	UGX	4.593.750	1.229	4.823.438	1.290
Wages TLs	1	9	Days	40.000	UGX	350.000	94	367.500	98
Per diem enumerators	15	10	Days	35.000	UGX	5.118.750	1.369	5.374.688	1.438
Per diem TLs	1	10	Days	45.000	UGX	438.750	117	460.688	123
Wages mobilizers/trackers	2	9	Days	35.000	UGX	612.500	164	643.125	172
Per diem mobilizers	2	10	Days	35.000	UGX	682.500	183	716.625	192
6. Enumeration - Logistics (Endline)						**8.165.660**	**2.184**	**8.573.943**	**2.294**
Airtime field staff	18	1	Weeks	10.000	UGX	180.000	48	189.000	51
Local transport (Mobilizer & TL)	3	8	Days	45.682	UGX	1.096.360	293	1.151.178	308
Local transport (Enumerators)	15	8	Days	45.682	UGX	5.481.800	1.467	5.755.890	1.540
Photocopy - informed consent	525	1	Copies	100	UGX	52.500	14	55.125	15
Photocopy - introletters	525	1	Copies	100	UGX	52.500	14	55.125	15
Printing - other	525	1	Copies	100	UGX	52.500	14	55.125	15
Storage rooms for field materials	1	1	room	200.000	UGX	200.000	54	210.000	56
Gift for respondents	525	1	Gift	2.000	UGX	1.050.000	281	1.102.500	295
7. Field Manager and Support						**4.038.250**	**1.080**	**4.240.163**	**1.134**
1st Field Manager salary & benefits	1	2	months	1.245.375	UGX	2.490.750	666	2.615.288	700
Communication + internet	1	2	months	160.000	UGX	320.000	86	336.000	90
Per diem field management	1	20	Days	45.000	UGX	877.500	235	921.375	246
Local transp field management	1	18	Days	20.000	UGX	350.000	94	367.500	98

Exchange rate	UGX/USD 3738	
Pricing structure		
		UGX
	Wage enumerator/mob/tracker	35.000
	Wage Team leader/auditor	40.000
	Per diem field staff	35.000
	Per diem field management	45.000
	Training per diem	10.000
	Travel allowance	30.000
	Boda full-day	45.000
	Boda full-day FM	20.000
General Assumptions		
	# of total respondents	525
	# of treatment respondents (RMA + AT)	350
	# of districts	1
	# of regions/language groups	1
	# of mobilizers	0
	# of enumerators	15
	# of team leaders	1
	# of auditors/tracker	0
	# of total field staff	16
	length of visit (hours)	1
	# of respondents per mobilizer	0
	# of respondents per enumerator	4
	Total # of mobilization days	0
	Total # of enumeration days	9
	# of Sundays	1
	# of travel and buffer days	0
	Total # of days	10
	Total team size (inc. PI & FM & ACC)	19
	# mobilizer / tracker for endline	2
	Total team size (inc. Pi & FM & ACC) for Endline	21

8. Field logistics						**9.999.475**	**2.675**	**10.499.449**	**2.809**
Bags	21	1	bags	40.000	UGX	840.000	225	882.000	236
Umbrellas/Raincoats	21	1	units	20.000	UGX	420.000	112	441.000	118
ID cards	21	1	units	5.000	UGX	105.000	28	110.250	29
Office equipment and supplies	21	1	Total	50.000	UGX	1.050.000	281	1.102.500	295
PDAs/Smartphones fee	18	1	Units	100	USD	6.728.400	1.800	7.064.820	1.890
Data collection platform (Survey CTO)	1	2	Months	100	USD	747.600	200	784.980	210
Accident insurance	1	1,0	units	29	USD	108.475	29	113.899	30
10. PI and RM time						**12.081.600**	**3.232**	**12.685.680**	**3.394**
Flight ticket	2	1	ticket	600	USD	4.485.600	1.200	4.709.880	1.260
Rent house (3 months)	4	1	month	500	USD	7.476.000	2.000	7.849.800	2.100
Logistics (transport)	4	1	month	30.000	UGX	120.000	32	126.000	34
TOTAL						96.426.492	25.796	101.247.816	27.086
REQUESTED AMOUNT TO NBER									20.000

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PERSONAL INFORMATION

Nationality: Bolivian & Italian

Development economics; behavioural economics; field experiments in East Africa.

EDUCATION

Sep. 2017 – Present **Maastricht University & UNU-MERIT – The Netherlands**
PhD in Development Economics

Sep. 2012 – Sep. 2014 **University of Ghent - Belgium**
International Master of Science in Agricultural Economics
Department of Agricultural Economics
Obtained with ***Great Distinction (Cum Laude)***

Sep. 2013 – March 2014 **Humboldt University of Berlin – Germany**
International Master of Science in Agricultural Economics
Department of Resource Economics (Exchange period)

Sep. 2006 – Sep. 2010 **Roma Tre University - Italy**
Bachelor in Political Science

WORK EXPERIENCE

March 2017 – Aug. 2017 **Field Coordinator at World Bank - Tanzania**
Impact Evaluation (RCT) on the Africa Gender Innovation Lab's program: "*Business Women Connect*".

Oct. 2015 – Nov. 2016 **Research Associate at Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) & World Bank - Uganda**
Impact Evaluation (RCT) on the World Bank's program: "*Transparency, Accountability and Anti-Corruption*".

Nov. 2014 – Sep. 2015 **Consultant at Bioversity International (CGIAR) - Uganda**
Data analysis of the project: "*Gender Agricultural Value Chains of the Banana Beverages sector*" in 5 East African countries.

June 2014 – Oct. 2014 **Researcher with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and University of Pisa – Côte D'Ivoire**
"*Reintegration of ex-combatants using agriculture*".

March 2014 – June 2014 **Intern at the International Fund for Agricultural Development - Italy**
Office of the President and Vice-President.

Sep. 2006 – July 2012 **Part-time Office Assistant at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) - Italy**
Conference and Protocol Office.

May 2006 – Aug. 2006 **Volunteer at the World Food Programme (WFP) - Italy**
Walk the World Office – Children End Hunger program.

Feb. 2004 – Nov. 2004 **Volunteer at Indigenous School "El Pedregal" - La Paz, Bolivia**
Music and Dance Teacher for Indigenous Children.

OTHER (EDUCATION)

March 2016 **J-PAL & IPA Global Staff Training – Nairobi, Kenya**
Impact Evaluations through Randomized Control Trials.

June 2013 – July 2013 **Ettore Rolli School of Arts – Rome, Italy**
Digital Photography Degree.

LANGUAGE

Spanish & Italian: Mother tongue;
English: Proficient (PhD and Master studies in English and TOEFL certificate 112/120);
French: Intermediate;
Luganda & Swahilli: Basic.

IT SKILLS

Econometric software	STATA; Splus; SPSS
Survey programming	SurveyCTO; SurveyToGo
Qualitative analysis	NVIVO
Digital Imaging	Photoshop; Camera Raw

WORK IN PROGRESS

Coordination Constraints in Complex Markets, with Gharad Bryan, Jonathan de Quidt and Tom Wilkening
Improving Refugees' Livelihoods: Evidence from a Network Experiment, with Francesco Loiacono

GRANTS

May 2018 **Peace and Recovery Program (IPA) Exploratory Grant**

September 2017 **UN - PhD Fellowship**

OTHER

Marijo Silva Photography: http://cargocollective.com/MarijoSilvaPhotography
Dancing studies: Classical ballet, Flamenco, Salsa
Organisation and participation in musicals in Bolivia and in Uganda

REFERENCES

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