

23 August 2024

KIEP IAP-iTATU LESSONS LEARNED

1. CRM/ MIS

- a) The Customer Relationship Management (CRM) was noted to be inadequate to capture all that iTATU wanted to run the operations of the project. Needs analysis was conducted then research to find the right system, a few samples were found which were presented to PIU. In consultation with PIU, iTATU settled for an Management Information System (MIS) that could do multiple commands, requests and queries that CRM would not. This is what was set up and implemented covering various components.

2. Student Challenges

- b) There was need to keep students engaged during innovation challenges even if the project halted so as not to lose interest, this was carried out by providing news items, information on opportunities creating new connections and open communication about the status of the project
- c) It is important to streamline the registration process when it comes to applications for students. A user-friendly registration platform can help minimize barriers and encourage more students to sign up.
- d) The localized pilot challenges built on the experiences and lessons learnt from the iTATU-Demola challenges, were customized towards an authentic approach using Design Thinking model that had been adapted for the Kenyan context to allow for the creation and engagement of a larger pool of local mentors.
- e) The student selection process for innovation challenges could be learned from both the international and local setup. The localized students challenged by iTATU sought to have students self-select as a group with clear criteria for the group membership to ensure diversity in gender, university representation, and discipline representation. Thus, the scoring was based on diversity criteria and motivation which was used to select. In contrast, For the international process, Demola selection was purely based on the motivation letter of the student and Demola did the group formation. From the results observed, Demola was able to meet diversity criteria and also students seemed to be more satisfied with groups formed by a third party rather than students themselves seeking other students to form groups. The lesson learned here was that there are merits and demerits of each approach. For example, Demola process hoped that many students would apply so that diversity criteria could be met. iTATU process demonstrated that the students allowed to form groupings suffered commitment in attendance, however they formed stronger groups even after the challenge was completed

- f) Students needed to have gone for a site visit and interaction with the companies before and during challenge execution so that they can contextualize the solution they were offering and understand the company well from further interaction with the staff and operations of the company
- g) The governance of industry-academia partnership was notably better when an independent company would set up processes to run the partnership since it will target the basis and details of the partnership with specific target while the bureaucracies of the academic institutions would derail the running of the partnership. If challenge was used as a partnership then the company would need to enter into partnership with multiple academic institutions which will be a tedious affair
- h) A key lessons learnt from insights of Problem-based planning model, from the benchmarking study tour Brightlands was observed to use lecturers from industry to teach students and complement what they are taught in higher learning classrooms.

3. Mentorship

- a) On mentorship and facilitation, Demola's approach to facilitation was having a general facilitator as opposed to a subject matter expert. This provided the option of having new facilitators come in and take over as well as provided flexibility in ensuring a program continues uninterrupted in case a facilitator drops off. However, there was a drawback as some students complained that facilitators gave conflicting opinions creating some confusion. iTATU on the other hand built a pool of facilitators that were draw from industry experts and committed upon their availability to the period agreed upon. As the objective was not really to solve a technical problem (which this role was to be filled by the corporate giving the challenges) but to stimulate ideas through a design thinking approach. So Demola approach was fine while iTATU intend to use two or more facilitators for each of the group offered more knowledge and skills – even soft skills to complement the challenge relevant skills and knowledge. This was a better approach as facilitators give better attention and molded the students holistically.
- b) Developing a support process plan/schedule to run iTATU-Demola pilot challenges assisted to deliver the expected output in the short time these were weekly debrief sessions held in addition to observation, presentations made and feedback provided. These were based on the lessons learned from international challenge of Demola where the main activities concerning integrating mentorship and support to challenges were identified as; initial planning (shadowing Demola); identify areas of support; rollout the support program; post-challenge support and mentorship.
- c) Adequate time to develop presentation materials was required by the challenge students so that corrections and creative improvement was made and implemented on time. for mentors to approve before the weekly presentation to the larger team. At times when student were undertaking exams it

4. Corporate availability to give out and support the open challenges

- a) Engagement and onboarding of academia and corporates required high-level approval (at the board of directors). It took a while to sign up for corporates. Most

corporate approached didn't commit to any challenge, while other took log to make decisions. The lesson underscores the importance of early engagement and the need to engage at a very high level from the word go to get buy-in

5. Launch event as a precursor of Annual Event

- a) When it comes to organizing an event, the preparation of communication materials and invitation of guests needs to be done early enough to allow room for adjustments where needed
- b) Setting up communication channels for streaming the launch event was conducted but pre-testing of channels did not happen, and new channels had to be set-up in the morning of the event. This resulted to online participants who complained about sound quality and audibility of the event sessions being poor. The lesson was for better coordination with KIEP communication team (APN) was needed to set-up and test channels before the event.
- c) In the use of social media that is Facebook during the launch event limited participants accessed it as some did not have accounts and sound was inconsistent. The use of an alternative streaming sites besides Facebook was recommended. The Zoom platform and youtube channel would have been a better alternative as they are more stable.
- d) Other lessons observed from launch and annual events were;
 - a dry run or rehearsal was important before the event day
 - two-week training of student teams conducted were of importance because it brought about successful presentations with improved slides, posters for pitching, students communicated clearly, solutions were better designed. This was a great improvement from the pitch sessions held previously.
 - half a day program worked very well and kept the audience engaged and interested throughout. While ensuring many stakeholders participated in the sessions as seen in panel discussions and presentation by students
 - There was need to foster long-term relationships between iTATU with industry partners and Academic institutions office of the VC

6. Collaboration with International Corporates and academic institutions

- a) When interacting with the international community, some ethical practices and social preferences should be considered to conform to their culture. A case of Demola and the registration process of students showed that gender disaggregation was not to be disclosed which was of high concern and demand respect from the registration process.
- b) The study tour to Brightlands Triple Helix partnerships in the Netherlands and EIT Food in Belgium offered several significant lessons;
 - Knowledge Transfer and Learning Opportunities where participants had an opportunity to observe and learn from successful Triple Helix Partnerships at Brightlands Triple Helix and sustainable innovation platforms at EIT Food. By understanding the intricacies of these models and their implementation, valuable

insights and lessons learned were garnered, which would be leveraged to further develop and enhance the Industry Academy Platform (IAP)

- The key lesson learned by the PIU and iTATU was the need to evolve the IAP to a triple helix partnership where industry, academia and government work closely together. The partnerships observed encouraged a potential unique partnership between iTATU-Kenyan government Ministry of education-Corporates-Academia to move forward on running innovation challenges as started by iTATU platform and with improvement coming from holder one challenge to another.

7. Other Social lessons learnt were:

- a) While in Africa the challenge is youth unemployment, in Europe the bigger challenge is aging population and thus shortage of workforce. The aging populations are also much less adept at digital skills and thus the opportunity presented by digitalization and AI maybe missed. Furthermore, as informal sector grows in Europe, there are lessons that can be drawn from Africa. Platforms are also creating opportunities for Europe skills gaps to be filled by African youths and at this time provide opportunity for rapid skills transfer. As Europe (and the collective West) seek to reduce the risks engendered in current global supply chains that are increasingly vulnerable to geopolitical pressures and pandemics (as Covid-19 demonstrated), there is need to re-engineer supply chains through nearshoring. Africa is the natural partner of Europe in this endeavor. It is also a Win-Win proposition as it will promote industrialization of Africa. This nearshoring will crucially depend on digital platforms.

The situation above underscores the need for Africa and Europe to have a clear understanding of future of work with a keen eye to understand how different jobs will be impacted and who will be the losers and who will be the winners. In this way policy can be better crafted to prepare for a future workforce.

The key target stakeholders are the policy makers, developers of AI and 4IR solutions and workers in industrial clusters in African countries and EU. Policy makers are keen to pursue just digital transition and are worried about the potential negative impact of digitalization on jobs and require evidence (data) to support their policy and decision-making.