

Interview with Aiducation CEO Florian Kapitza: “At first I underestimated the meaning of partnerships”

IFJ celebrated its 25th anniversary in 2014, but it wasn't the only one. In fact, UNICEF's "Convention on the Rights of the Child" came into effect 25 years ago. The Swiss organization Aiducation, which was created in venturelab courses and later won 130'000 CHF with venture kick in 2009, provides a considerable amount of educational promotion in developing countries. In this interview, Florian Kapitza, CEO of Aiducation, reveals us their latest projects and plans for 2015.



Florian Kapitza, CEO of Aiducation, venture kick winner and venturelab alumnus

Florian, you describe Aiducation as a „for-impact company“. What does that mean and why not simply call it an „NGO“, or a „non-profit organization“?

In our opinion the term „for-impact company“ expresses more accurately what we do: we are an enterprise which maximizes the impact it has, not its profit. Otherwise we are and act just like any other company: we have sales channels, marketing channels, a marketing strategy, a turnover, a financial plan, milestones, products and projects.

But really, why would we define ourselves in terms that do not describe what we do? In entrepreneurship it's a matter of undertaking things!

You are on the way of becoming an international educational organization. Next to Kenya, Germany, Great Britain and of course Switzerland you are now expanding into the United States and have been providing a support program for students in the Philippines since 2014. How does your idea work with people abroad?

The idea appeals to donors from abroad as well, because we can demonstrate the impact of their own personal contribution very clearly. Indeed, each of our donors receives a personalized, direct, annual impact report, which shows the stipendiary's progress. Moreover, 90% of our scholarship donations are invested directly for educational use. Besides, our concept is thorough: we support talented, poor students, who will become multipliers in the next years or decades and who will eventually contribute to the progress of their own country in political, social and economic ways. Together with our scholarship recipients, ex-recipients and partners we are building up a network of funding agencies, so that the scholarship recipients' talents and abilities are more easily shared for common projects.

What are your plans for 2015?

We would like to expand and be able to remit at best 200 scholarships next year. This is very ambitious and would be a new record, but we stand here in order to give people in developing countries access to their own potential. In our opinion, this works best by using educational scholarships. Furthermore, we launched a Start Up Fund in 2015 with which we want to promote selected “for profit”, and “impact” Start-ups from our Alumni in Kenya. They have excellent ideas on how to bring themselves forward in Kenya and this is what we would like to use. Together with the new and existing partners we would like to expand the ideal support for our scholarship recipients with prizes, Mentorship Academies and workshops.

What was your personal Aiducation- Highlight in 2014?

My biggest highlight was definitely the first scholarship coming from our fellows' community: it was remitted by our ex-stipendiary Gift Pola.

On an organizational level, the first implementation of the two Swiss Re Start Up Academies was surely a breakthrough. 50 scholarship recipients worked on the latter, following the example of venturelab business plans for the development of their own Start Ups. Many of these Start Ups are currently being founded.

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

More than CHF 13m invested, over 350 startup projects financed, more than 602m in financing volume and 3.038 jobs created - this is venture kick's track record since the private initiative was launched in the fall of 2007 by a private [consortium](#).

[annual report 2014](#)

Moreover, in the 3rd week of December we will be carrying, together with the Ernst-Schmidheiny-Foundation and atDta, a pilot project called the Economy-weeks to Kenya. The concept has been successful in Switzerland for 40 years: during one week, an economic simulation takes place in which our scholarship recipients slip into the shoes of company directors, develop marketing and selling strategies, recruit (and fire) staff, and in the end take part in a general assembly to which representatives of the media are invited.

You were able to support around 800 stipendiaries since your enterprise was founded in 2006. Moreover the scholarship offered by Gift Pola demonstrates the effectiveness of your selection procedure. What are your selection criteria for a scholarship? And how can one help as an individual?

We select according to 3 criteria:

1. School grades: The candidates must belong to the top 10% of their class.
2. Need: The candidates must come from a poor background.
3. Personality: The application must clearly show that the candidate wants to commit to his country.

The scholarship recipients usually get financed by private individuals. This is easily done online.

In 2009 you were able to convince the jury of venture klick. What were your benefits from the startup program?

Without venture klick, Aiducation wouldn't be what it is today: the concept was developed thanks to the venture klick coaches' feedbacks. The high flexibility regarding the use of the money helped us place the funds where we needed them most – a dream, which was decisive for our success.

On your website students tell us about their dream jobs... one youth who applied for the Aiducation program. What was your dream at that age?

I wanted to be a football player and bank officer on a part time basis. Interesting but nothing compared to the inspiring life visions of our stipendiaries.

What did you think of the IFJ's support?

The IFJ supports Swiss start-ups with four important points: courses, tricks, contacts and the financial kick.

You were founded in 2006 and you have now acquired a considerable experience. Is there a tip you wish you had before starting?

I underestimated the significance of having partnerships at the beginning. In comparison to 2006, we have now several partnerships (including some we did not originally make, but should have), some of which are real win-win-win partnerships with great benefits for all parties.

More on Aiducation

Aiducation is a "for impact company" which awards scholarships to talented and needing youths from Kenya and the Philippines. The High School scholarships give these young people access to schools in their home countries and to an ideal support implemented by partners of Aiducation. One part of this ideal support are Start Up Academies, study prizes, and (starting in December) the Start Up prize "Wonderland Award" for Kenyan Start Up, who devote themselves to fighting discrimination.

2014 was an exceptional year for Aiducation with the expansion towards the Philippines, the 800th scholarship since its foundation, as well as the upcoming launch of Wonderland awards. Aiducation was able to develop with the help of the concepts Swiss Re Start Up Academies and the Economy-weeks, an individual offer for companies and foundations regarding "skill-based volunteering".

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