2021 Annual Report

Preparing youth in Africa with the skills to succeed in today’s economy.
Don’t call it a comeback; our incredible team has been building toward this for years.

Our solutions for secondary school students essentially shut down when schools closed due to COVID-19, and we had to think and act fast to figure out how to reach youth in a completely altered reality. We sprinted to conduct research and test new ways of delivering our core experience to youth now that we couldn’t reach them in schools.

Thanks to the hard work of every member of our team, we swiftly modified our proven model for remote delivery and once again reached over 46,000 youth by the end of 2021. Since schools remained closed in Uganda until 2022 (the longest school closure in the world), this was the only learning experience many of our youth received.

Today, we’re eager to harness our most successful innovations of the past couple of years to strengthen what we do best: creating evidence-based, practical learning experiences that help young people thrive in the real world. The resilient and creative youth at the center of our work continually inspire us to improve. In this report, you’ll read about inventive young entrepreneurs like Bridget and Dorah, whose perseverance enabled them to overcome adversity to become young business owners. They’ve turned Educate!’s skills lessons and mentor-supported experiences into real, profitable enterprises and are now making waves in their communities.

None of this impact would be possible without Educate!’s agile teams and visionary leaders, the game-changers who work continuously to develop, deliver, and refine these practical and powerful experiences for youth. I hope their infectious optimism, ambition, and entrepreneurial drive — shared in the coming pages — will inspire you, as it has me. It’s because of this bold team that Educate!’s proven models have now measurably impacted the lives of over 200,000 youth to date, creating profound changes in areas like gender equity that make a significant difference in the lives of these young women and men.

Equipped with new skills, tools, and strong evidence of impact, we now have a bold vision to significantly strengthen and scale our solutions. In the next three years, we aim to triple our annual reach — equipping hundreds of thousands of new youth with the most essential skills they need to succeed in life. We hope you’ll join us.

All the best,

Boris Bulayev
CEO & Co-Founder
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Africa has the world's youngest and fastest-growing population.

By 2050, Africa’s youth population will reach 850 million.

This growing generation of young people will shape the future of our planet. Together, we can ensure that these youth can not only access employment or create jobs, but also be equipped to tackle complex challenges like gender inequity and climate change.

By providing youth with practical learning experiences that reflect the skills they need in the real world, we can create transformational change.

Educate! leverages an obsession with evidence and entrepreneurial drive to unlock the potential of youth on the world's youngest continent.

Since 2009, our models have supported over 200,000 youth to create change in their communities through their businesses, employment, and additional years of education. These impacts, alongside significant gender equity outcomes, have made a measurable, intergenerational difference in the lives of young women and men.

Our core innovation is a ~100-hour experience that delivers the most essential skills youth need to create economic opportunity for themselves and their communities, combining skills training, mentorship, and practical experience starting a business.
We deliver this core experience to youth in 3 ways:

**School Solutions**
Rigorous evaluations, including a randomized controlled trial (RCT), found that Educate!’s model delivered to youth directly in schools nearly doubles the income of students towards the end of secondary school. Four years later, a follow-up RCT found that youth skills significantly increase alongside improvements in educational and gender-related outcomes.

**Education System Solutions**
An RCT of our education systems change approach, which included national curriculum reform supported by a two-year teacher training model, showed that by improving teacher pedagogy, we can effectively increase youth business ownership, build key skills, and increase university access for young women, as assessed just 6 months after graduation.

**Out-of-School Youth Solutions**
Our bootcamps supporting young people outside of the formal education system are built on a foundation of evidence, including an accelerated version of our School Solutions model — an iteration proven to increase youth income and business creation, survival, and profits 3.5 years after the program.

Educate! has grown to become the largest youth skills provider in East Africa, and in the next three years, we aim to triple the number of youth we impact each year.

In Educate!’s first 12 years, we served 200,000 youth across East Africa. Now, we aim to build on our strong foundation of evidence to grow our annual impact to 140,000 youth by 2024.

As part of this 3-year Strategic Plan, we’re working to reach:

- **Expanding our impact to serve 248k new youth from 2022 to 2024**
  - **90k** new youth
  - **128k** new youth
  - **30k** new youth

**Strengthen School Solutions**
By integrating COVID-19 innovations into our in-school model to maximize impact.

**Scale Education System Solutions**
Expanding to serve 50% of all secondary schools in Rwanda, while continuing our education reform support in Kenya, and preparing for replication in a new country.

**Build Out-of-School Youth Solutions**
Delivering new bootcamps that equip youth outside of the education system with the skills to build their livelihoods.
Educate! is doubling down on our impact and commitment to equity following the intense disruptions to education and the lives of youth caused by COVID-19. From 2022 to 2024, we aim to scale our annual reach by 3x and measurably impact 248,000 new youth with the skills they need to succeed in life.

We are now strengthening our proven models by integrating key learnings and innovations forged during the pandemic, and we have a bold vision for growth in the years ahead.

When schools closed due to the pandemic, we leveraged simple, accessible technology to continue providing youth the space to build essential skills for today’s economy.

2021 in Numbers

- **Uganda**: 40,200+ Youth
- **Kenya**: 200+ Youth
- **Rwanda**: 6,000+ Youth

In Numbers

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School Solutions

Adapting Our Core Model to Meet Youth Where They Are

To help bridge the learning gap when the pandemic closed schools, we adapted our randomized controlled trial-validated, in-school model for remote delivery.

Leveraging accessible, low-tech mobile phones, we were able to facilitate:

- **13,400+** interactive lessons
- **9,100+** mentoring sessions
- **7,500+** community projects
- **14,600+** micro-businesses

with the support of over **200 peer mentors** from the safety of their homes.

As schools reopened, we resumed in-person work with youth, strengthening our model by integrating the most effective components of our distance learning model. For example, we’re engaging youth between in-person meetings with additional learning activities via phone calls and texts.

The Journey of Our First Solution

- **2009** Model Launched
  - Our team in Uganda delivered Educate!’s practical, skills-based experience to youth for the first time.
  - 324 youth

- **2013** Iterating While We Scale
  - We continued to refine this model as we more than tripled our reach.
  - 1,200 youth

- **2014** Building Our Evidence Base
  - We ran a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to test the impact of this experience on youth.
  - 7,900 youth

- **2016** Testing Our Impact at Scale
  - As we continued to reach more youth each year, we evaluated outcomes at an even greater scale.
  - 14,900 youth

- **2019** Pivoting to Distance Learning as Schools Close
  - When the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools, we developed a new distance learning model to continue engaging youth amidst uncertainty.
  - 3,400 youth

- **2022** Gathering Learnings to Further Optimize the Model
  - As we re-start in-person activities, we are strengthening our first solution by incorporating the most effective components of the distance learning model.
  - 30,000 youth

Leveraging Skills and Leadership to Create Opportunity

- **Bridget** Distance Learning Participant & Bakery Business Owner
  - “When schools closed, it was a big change that I was not expecting. I had to learn to be prepared for any situation. I also had to learn to be patient because there was no one telling me right away what to do next. I had to think critically to make decisions for myself.
  - The two biggest challenges I have faced are raising enough capital to make and distribute my products and convincing customers to buy them. However, the skills I have learned have helped me to overcome these challenges. For example, I learned a lot about communication skills, which are important for making successful sales, as well as how to make a business model that I could be excited to present to bakers that I could sell products to.”

- **Mercy** Educate! Mentor, Shop Owner & Community Project Founder
  - “Being a Mentor has helped me to improve my communication skills and has also built my confidence in leading teams, even when we are not all in the same geographic setting. Because of the training I received, I felt empowered to get involved in other community activities to support more young people during the pandemic. I had all the resources in the world; I would use them to support the marginalized people in my community. I think if I invested in everyone, everyone could contribute to the community and pay it forward.”

- **Uganda Country Director** Hawah Nabbuye
  - “During the pandemic, we knew that the youth we serve needed our guidance and program more than ever. And we discovered that remote learning without the internet is possible and can be used to reach youth that won’t be able to go back to school and don’t have time to sit through months of full-time learning sessions. Co-creating our distance learning model with the youth has been a highlight — tweaking and improving it into a model that works for them. The demand for these programs has been overwhelming.”
**Education System Solutions**

**Sustainably Scaling Impact through National Education Reform**

Leveraging what we’ve learned about the impact of delivering our core experience directly to students in schools, Educate! partners with governments to work through education systems and unlock opportunities for youth on a national scale.

Together, we’re working to create sustainable, measurable impact by (1) reforming a single educational subject, (2) which is then adopted by teachers, and (3) supports practical skills development among students in the classroom. This approach aims to ensure that changes in policy lead to meaningful impact on schools, teachers, and youth.

We now have evidence that improving even just one secondary-level subject can significantly improve life outcomes. In a randomized controlled trial (RCT) of this approach in Rwanda, we saw a 100% increase in university enrollment for all youth participants and a 167% increase for girls.

What are some partnership lessons from 2021 that continue to be valuable today?

*As good entrepreneurs, we always say that problems create room for opportunities.*

Looking ahead, when you consider the African context, we have observed that even just one secondary-level subject can significantly improve life outcomes. In a randomized controlled trial (RCT) of this approach in Rwanda, we saw a 100% increase in university enrollment for all youth participants and a 167% increase for girls.

**Deborah’s Business Club Experience Expands Her Career Horizons**

From a young age, movies and television shows intrigued Deborah. She could see the power of great visual storytelling — its ability to evoke emotion, make you nostalgic, and even push you to take action. When Deborah joined her school’s Student Enterprise, she began learning about entrepreneurship. She learned about the importance of hard work, dedication, and perseverance.

Deborah’s passion for creating art was evident from an early age. She had always been fascinated by the idea of turning everyday objects into something beautiful and unique. Her talent for upcycling discarded materials into works of art quickly drew the attention of her peers and teachers.

The Kenyan government is developing a new curriculum for all students in the last three years of secondary: Community Service Learning (CSL). Educate! helped to design and pilot CSL to more schools.

To achieve long-term impact, we’ve embedded sustainability structures, such as project-based learning initiatives and a new assessment system, that the government can use to track continuous progress for teachers and students.

**Improving Students’ Learning Experiences in 3 Stages**

**Stage 1: Educate! advises governments on the reform of national education policy.**

**Stage 2: We work to build the capacity of teachers to effectively implement the updated pedagogy and curriculum.**

**Stage 3: We work to embed incentives and sustainability structures within the system so that impact is sustained long-term.**

**Rwanda**

**How has Rwanda’s curriculum reform impacted students’ learning experience?**

“The students used to learn passively without their direct contribution towards the teaching and learning process. After completing their secondary education, our students now leave with skills on how to prepare an attractive business plan and how to run a business following the example of a Student Business Club. They stay connected to us, and we keep mentoring them to relate their business activities with what they’ve learnt at school.”

Mr. Venuste Niyirora, Entrepreneurship Subject Teacher

**Kenya**

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**Rogers Patrick Kamugisha**

Director of Program Implementation in Rwanda
What were some of your team’s biggest learnings and wins in 2021?

Abba Kidenda  Head of New Program Launch for Out-of-School Youth in Kenya

“In 2021, everything was constantly shifting and each week and month had a new curveball. This led to the usual, difficult, but honestly, I think it made us focus more on decision-making challenges and solve for new problems. That’s where the interesting and meaningful work was.”

We also learned that we are better at our jobs and being adaptable overall when we take the time to learn as much as possible about our users, the out-of-school youth. For example, when we experimented with a remote bootcamp, we were surprised by the self-organized groups of youth in Kitui who held each other accountable to dial into class and gather in groups if they didn’t have phone access. This showed that even in the model’s first iteration, the value of the training was clearly higher than expected.

One of our biggest accomplishments in 2021 was designing a process for engaging with local government in our locations. It gave us both the legitimacy and community buy-in we needed as an unrecognized brand in the region, and also gave us a reliable channel for youth recruitment."

Hellen Namisi  Director of New Product Launch for Out-of-School Youth in Uganda

“For our team in Uganda, the biggest lesson that we have learned is that the out-of-school space is unique. Now more than ever, we are designing solutions which are very user-facing, making decisions based upon participant feedback and in consideration of what might be most useful to them.”

After working in the in-school program far a very long time, we had built a good method to understand the challenges that youth in school face, but out-of-school youth have very unique circumstances. Being able to run bootcamp pilots at scale in Kenya for this learning was a big win that gave us very valuable insights for the out-of-school demographics. If we hadn’t run these pilots, we would make different assumptions about these youth.

Dorah Builds a Brighter Future  Image 15

Dorah was forced to leave home and drop out of school at age 14 due to an unplanned pregnancy in her early years of secondary school. Dorah was forced to leave home and drop out of school. She moved in with her sister and earned an inconsistent income providing laundry services in her community. Soon after, Dorah enrolled in Educate!’s out-of-school youth bootcamp in Kenya, which provided her the skills and support she needed to start and sustain a profitable fried fish business. Now saving $39 per week, Dorah is able to meet her toddler’s needs and even makes time to mentor other girls in her local youth group.

She hopes to continue scaling her business and one day purchase her own home.

Eucatel is working to build alternative pathways to employment for the 50% of youth in East Africa who cannot access secondary school.

These youth enter a labor market where the informal sector makes up as many as 85% of jobs and do so without many of the skills that would enable them to earn a sustainable living.

Girls, in particular, face greater barriers to success in the labor market. In rural areas of East Africa, less than 1 in 20 girls graduate from secondary school. That’s a lot of lost potential. Young women left behind by traditional secondary education urgently need agency-building tools to improve their livelihoods and become drivers of positive change and development in their communities.

In 2021, we invested deeply in piloting bootcamps that help close the gap for youth who cannot access secondary school, especially young women and girls. We are building this solution on a strong foundation of evidence. A similar model we helped run resulted in an income boost of 30% for youth three and a half years after participating — earning recognition from the lead of the World Bank’s Africa Gender Innovation Lab.

These bootcamps aim to give this marginalized population of youth the skills and support to thrive in the labor market.
We can create change within Educate!, our models, and the broader systems youth participate in… Which drives impact across gender equity-related outcomes for young women, men and their communities.

Facilitating Engaging & Reflective Experiences where staff study the challenge of gender inequity, identify trends, and brainstorm solutions

Aligning Tools Across Functions & Processes related to staff recruitment and performance reviews; teacher-Mentor and youth commitments to themselves and others; and facilitator guides

Modeling Equitable Practices including identifying internal "gender champions" across all teams and delegating responsibilities with gender norms in mind

Measuring Our Progress Internally & Externally through annual org-wide reviews which contain gender-disaggregated program monitoring and impact data

Creating Equitable Access to our entrepreneurial and leadership skill-building opportunities

Designing Gender-Responsive Learning Environments which are built around gender-sensitive curricula, gender barrier-breaking pedagogy, and mixed-gender learning spaces

Surrounding Young People with a Community of strong female mentors, role models, and equity advocates

Our multi-level strategy creates intergenerational impact by engaging youth participants, community stakeholders, and Educate! team members in the fight to dismantle the barriers that hold girls back.

Independent evaluations have shown that our core model fundamentally alters the life trajectories of youth, especially for girls and young women. External research partners note that these results are comparable to models that target gender equity and family planning outcomes alone, all while also significantly improving youth skills and educational attainment.

This outsized impact on girls and gender equity-related outcomes is intentional and a direct result of Educate!’s approach. Recognizing that girls and young women face unique barriers in life and work, we are committed to ensuring that our solutions are gender-transformative.

We work to address the root causes of gender inequity, and we know that in order to create real and lasting change, we must develop solutions that address inequities at the individual, institutional, community, and governmental levels. Our partnerships, including those with young people themselves, offer incredible opportunities to tackle the prohibitive social norms and systematic barriers girls face and change the landscape for youth and their communities, at scale.

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Boosting Education Outcomes by improving secondary school graduation parity, increasing tertiary enrollment, and improving a girl’s likelihood of selecting a higher-earning major, earning a higher GPA, and completing tertiary-level education

Expanding Participation & Decision-making by increasing girls’ agency and aspirations and empowering them through the development of skills like self-efficacy, negotiation, and creativity

Improving Livelihoods Equity by supporting girls with the skills and tools to gain equitable income and employment and own businesses at a similar rate to male counterparts, or more

Increasing Girls’ Reproductive Agency by improving their decision-making power in family planning; decreasing intimate-partner violence; and increasing sexual consent
Game-Changing Leaders

Educate! was born in Uganda over a decade ago to tackle the complex challenge of youth unemployment. Throughout every stage of our journey, our vision for our team has been to hire and nurture the most creative and innovative problem solvers. We prioritize hiring and developing African talent and promoting gender equity on our team, and we’re proud to support exceptional leaders who have gone on to thrive both within and outside of Educate!.

How did Educate!’s culture evolve in 2021?

“From my point of view, Educate!’s safe to fail culture — and teams actually embracing it — not only reduced pressure from people in 2021, but also became a catalyst to lots of learnings, innovations, and improvements needed to continue creating impact for youth.”

What are you most proud of?

“The Talent Team launched a centralized and standardized promotion process that empowers individual staff to have more agency in their career development. This has become one of the best benefits open to any high-performing staff and has seen us recognize some top talent across the organization.”

96% of our team is based in Africa

3% U.S.

97% of our team is African or of African descent

7% Rwanda

1% Other Countries

79% Uganda

50% of our leaders are women

10% Kenya

Richard Olupot
Head of People Operations in East Africa

In 2021, our Uganda Country Director found herself in a meeting accompanied by an incredible set of sector experts, many of whom she used to work alongside at Educate!. After catching up with them, she realized just how many former staff credit Educate! with their professional development and the impact they’re now making in their careers.

We followed up with a few of the all-stars who shaped our organization into what it is today and asked them about their time at Educate! and how it might have shaped their career paths.

Jane Nantayi Sebuyungo
Senior Programme Manager Design, STIR Education

“Whenever you are part of Educate!, you become passionate about what you do. You’re intrinsically motivated. It’s a passion for the youth that is long-lasting; how to support the youth to get better, and how to acquire skills to make them thrive — a heart for quality education and for impacting your community. The culture — Youth First — is really a part of me forever. I think it changed me permanently.”

Solomon Kayiwa Mugambe
Co-Founder and Executive Director, Wezesha Impact & Little Dreamers Education Academy

“For me, the experience of being a part of Educate! really got me to change completely. It changed my mindset about education. It’s supposed to be experiential and something that prepares children for the future, facilitating the unlocking of somebody’s potential and getting them to tap into it so they can be a very useful person in the community and in their life. Those are things that I can never forget. In fact, Educate! really formed the basis for why I co-founded Wezesha Impact and the Little Dreamers Education Academy.”

Learn more about the experiences of each of these incredible disruptors and more on our blog!

Christine Nagawa Sseny Jongo
Country Director, Elevate; Partners for Education

Emma Mutaka
Alumni Officer, Teach for Uganda

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Alumni Officer, Teach for Uganda

Solomon Kayiwa Mugambe
Co-Founder and Executive Director, Wezesha Impact & Little Dreamers Education Academy

for Uganda

Samson Mwuvanguzi Wambuzi
Chief Innovation Officer and Co-Founder, Yiya

Unia Nakityo
Regional Program Manager, PEAS

bit.ly/educate-gamechangers
Applying COVID-era Innovation to Create More Equitable Education Systems

Uganda Country Director Hawah Nabbuye and Director of Operational Strategy Sarah Kayondo published a piece in Brookings detailing Educate’s approach to program development during COVID-19 and lessons we believe could be applied to increase equity in education. Applying COVID-era Innovation to Create More Equitable Education Systems

Leveraging Learnings to Build and Assess Youth Skills Remotely

In a World Bank webinar, CEO and Co-Founder Boris Bulayev, Director of New Product Launch Helen Namali, and M&E Director Meghan Mahoney presented our core skill-building experience and lessons learned as we adapted it for remote delivery.

Partnering to Improve Learning at Scale

The Global Partnership for Education (GPE) published an article on our education reform work alongside impact results from a randomized controlled trial on this solution in Rwanda, which showed a 167% increase in university enrollment for girls.

Improving Secondary Education Quality through Single-Subject Curriculum Reform

Dzongai Mutumbuka of ADEA, UNICEF’s Global Director of Education Robert Jenkins, The World Bank’s Harry Anthony Patrinos, Shujaaz Inc’s Maryanne Ochola, BRAC’s Meghan Kellner, and Educate! CEO Boris Bulayev discussed the value and viability of alternatives to formal secondary school for young people at RewirEd. Improving Secondary Education Quality through Single-Subject Curriculum Reform

Convening a Community to RETHINK EDUCATION

This World Bank Blog by Gender Innovation Lab lead Markus Goldstein highlight the results of the 3-week bootcamp we helped run in 2013, which increased youth income by 70%+ three and a half years later.

Establishing an Alternative Pathway to Employment

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Developing Critical Skills and More in a 3-Week Bootcamp


Supporting UNESCO’s TVET Strategy for 2022-2029

J-PAL Africa highlighted Educate! within its call to support evidence-based education initiatives for girls, noting that “effective approaches from across the world can provide a menu of promising interventions to invest in.” Investing in Effective Girls’ Education Interventions

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Thanks to the generous support of our partners, Educate! has measurably impacted over 200,000 youth.

$400,000+
Anonymous
Atlassian Foundation International
Dubai Cares
Echidna Giving
Imaginable Futures
Livelihood Impact Fund
Ray and Tye Noorda Foundation
Rippleworks

$100,000-399,999
Anonymous
Centre of Excellence for Development Impact and Learning (CEDIL) funded by UK aid
Hampshire Foundation
Imago Dei Fund
Pilot House Philanthropy

$50,000-99,999
Anonymous
Bohemian Foundation
ECOM Foundation
Efrusy Family Foundation
John F. and Mary A. Geisse Foundation

$5,000-49,999
Big Win Philanthropy
Lisa and David Issroff
Mission Meats
Radhika Malpani
Rockefeller Philanthropic Advisors
Tab for a Cause
Umsizi Fund

$1,000-4,999
Brian and Claire Makare
Enis Moran
Frank T Lauinger
Johnson & Johnson Foundation

“Many orgs claim to be learning organisations. However, Educate! demonstrates what it looks like to do so — continuously refining and iterating, building learning into their team culture, and regularly challenging their own assumptions. Educate! is quick to adapt in changing circumstances while delivering directly to meet the needs of those they serve.”

Atlassian Foundation International

“Ivan Ssenfuma
Chief Financial Officer

“In 2021, we achieved the best audit reports to date in all our countries of operation.
Throughout the year, we also learnt how incredibly critical customer orientation and flexibility are to a successful finance–operations–product loop, especially when working together in the innovation stages of new products. We have continued to listen keenly to our colleagues to ensure finance is the wind in the sails of innovation.
During challenging times, the different product innovations under development by the Educate! team have held a great promise of lasting impact.”
The Educate! Brain Trust is an advisory group that supports the collaborative innovation and development of our solutions for out-of-school youth.

Board of Directors

Dzingai Mutumbuka
Former Minister of Education
Zimbabwe; Former Senior
World Bank official; Former
Chairman of the Association for
the Development of Education in
Africa (ADEA) and the Zimbabwe
National Commission of UNESCO

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Founder and Chief Strategist, The
Aludo Group; Former Regional
Managing Director, Africa
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Kates Kesler (part of Accenture);
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Cornell University

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of Product, Dooly; Former
Group Product Manager, Trello
(Atlassian); Former Principle
Product Manager, Newton

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Co-Founder, Educate!; Founder &
CEO, Watson Institute

Boris Bulayev
CEO and Co-Founder, Educate!

Dedo Baranshamaje
Director of Strategy, Segal
Family Foundation

Hendrina Chalwe Doroba
Division Manager; Education
and Skills Development,
African Development Bank

Kim Kerr
Education & International
Development Consultant;
Former Director of Regional
Programs, Mastercard
Foundation

Nick Burnett, Chair
Former Managing Director;
Results for Development;
Former Chair of the Board and
Assistant Director-General for
Education, UNESCO

Patrick Obonyo
Programme Manager, IKEA
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Paul Atherton
Founder, Fab, Inc.; Former
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Shubha Jayaram
Senior Officer; Strategy,
Planning and Management,
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Teresa Mbagaya
Principal, Imaginable Futures

Xiaoyan Liang
Lead Education Specialist
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Board Member Dzingai Mutumbuka shares his
latte art talents at a board meeting