

Interview with

Simon Peter Kaweesi

Founder of The Student Hub

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Interview conducted by Quentin Wodon

Interview series in collaboration with the
Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate
of the African Union Commission



IICBA: Could you please tell us a bit about yourself?

My name is Simon Peter Kaweesi. I am the founder of The Student Hub, an EdTech platform providing career guidance to students in Africa. I am a Graduate of Computer Engineering from Makerere University in Uganda and I aim to use my coding and leadership skills to support students and contribute to the broader education sector by developing tools that bridge what I perceive as critical gaps.

IICBA: You founded The Student Hub, an innovative Edtech platform. How does the platform work?

The Student Hub (www.studenthub.ug) uses technology to personalize career guidance for students. Using an AI powered algorithm, the platform aligns the abilities and interests of students to emerging career paths. The model includes aspects related to Self-awareness, Career Exploration, Matching, and Action Planning. A student at any level of education can map out their career path from the classroom to the workplace as well as receive support to achieve their full potential in school, career, and life. Since 2015, we have served more than 60,000 students.

IICBA: Why is it so important to provide career guidance to students in Africa?

It is well known that Africa will have the largest young labor force in the world by 2035. Career guidance plays a critical role in shaping that labor force as students must select career paths that work for

Background: This series of interviews was prepared for Africa Youth Day celebrated on November 1 each year. Youth are defined by the African Union as the population from 15 to 35 years of age. The African Union Commission through the Women, Gender, and Youth Directorate (WGYP) is commemorating African Youth Day 2023 through month-long activities under the theme "1 Million Next Level is Knocking: Youth-led Movement that Transcends Borders." The theme is a call to all youth development stakeholders, member states, and partners to mobilize, implement and support the 1 Million Next Level Initiative through creating and accelerating opportunities for youth in the 4Es +H (Education, Employment, Entrepreneurship, Engagement + Health and wellbeing). The youth featured in this series of interviews are exemplary in their work in service to others in the areas covered by 4Es+H.

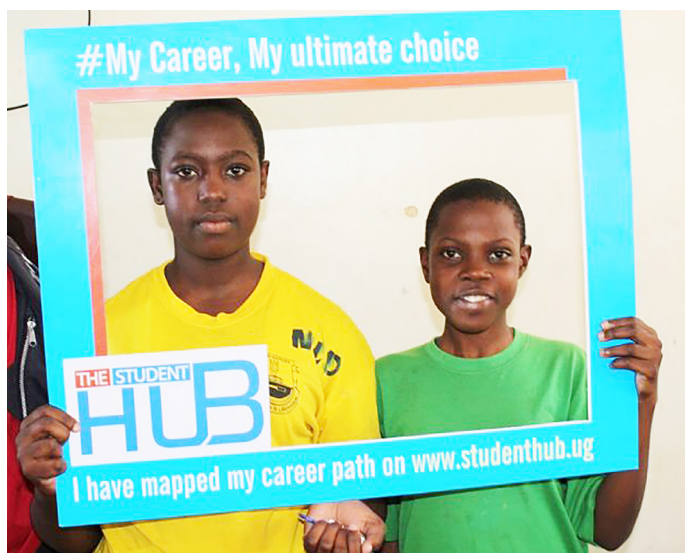


them and will contribute to the development of Africa. Students must acquire skills that relate to their abilities, and they must do so before they transition to the labor Market. Unemployment in Africa is largely attributed to a skills mismatch, a problem exacerbated by a lack of career guidance at different levels of education. The Student Hub aims to fill that gap.

IICBA: What are examples of good (and maybe not so-good) approaches to providing career guidance to students?

Career guidance is often treated as an event held once a year in many schools and it is not personalized to each specific student. This is not a good practice as career guidance should instead be a systematic process helping students discover their abilities and interests and helping them develop those abilities and interests throughout their academic and career life.

Career guidance is also not simply a course selection as handled in many schools. It rather should be part and parcel of a student's academic experience from the clubs they may select to the activities they attend outside school and even to some extent the hobbies they select.



IICBA: Why has the Hub become so successful? What was your recipe for success?

The key to our success has been our holistic approach to career guidance. As I just mentioned it, we recognize that career guidance is not just an event but a process, one where a student discovers their abilities and interests and visualizes his/her career path from the classroom to their desired destination.

IICBA: You have worked with the African Union. How have you been able to contribute to the African Union's work

We were part of the AU EdTech Expo in 2019, where we were given the opportunity to showcase our school career guidance platform. We are also proponents of Education Tourism in Africa, having guided over 1,000 students to study opportunities in Africa, including at the Pan African University, Kwame Nkurumah University of Science and Technology, and African Leadership University to mention but a few.





IICBA: What could governments and other stakeholders do to improve career advice for students in Africa?

Governments and other stakeholders should enact relevant policies that guide and inform the work of career counselors. This would include policies around Education Tourism with incentives provided to African students interested in studying in other African countries. That way we shall be able to achieve the goal of being a light unto the career paths of students in Africa.

IICBA: What advice do you have for other youth in Africa?

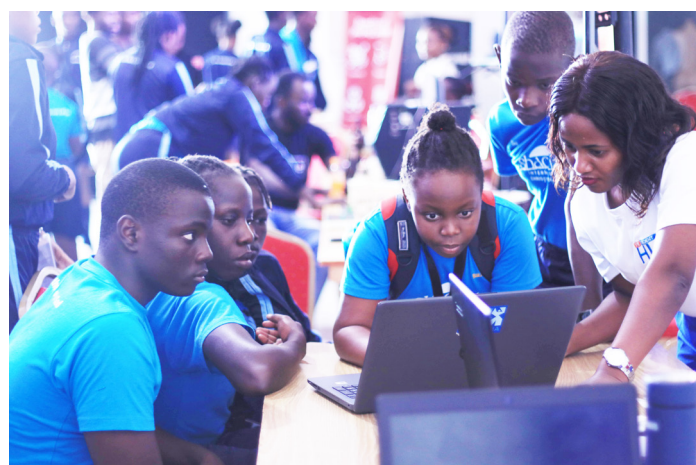
A modern and prosperous Africa will be anchored on the firm foundation of Africa's youth. African unity and grand plans such as AfCFTA (the African Continental Free Trade Area) will need to be catalyzed by today's youth. My advice to the youth is to rise up and seize the opportunities that Africa has to offer and become themselves the change that they want to see in Africa.

IICBA: Looking back, is there something you would do differently in your career?

I would have put more emphasis on doing a stakeholder mapping and building networks that influence policy makers. I would also have spent more time in the cooperate world to learn how great teams are built and managed. I basically started The Student Hub straight from the University with little experience in running a company. We have been successful, but there was a lot to learn!

IICBA: Finally, could you please share a personal anecdote about yourself?

I am a dreamer! I have a book where I write my dreams. Even random thoughts make it to my book of dreams.



Disclaimer & Acknowledgment

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