

## EP01 - Education: Transforming Lives, Transforming Africa

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00:00:06

**Lian Biar**

**Student | Earth University**

I hope to see institutions emerging from Africa that are Ivy League, you know.

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**Albert Nsengiyumva**

**Executive Secretary | ADEA**

You cannot expect a better future for our young people if they are not equipped with education and skills.

00:00:18

**Brenda Akoth**

**Founder | Jenga Labs & Ashesi Alumni**

Quality education should not just be for the field. That's state of that access to emerging technology, access to teachers or lecturers who are really passionate about education.

00:00:30

**Reeta Roy**

**Former President & CEO | Mastercard Foundation**

The Mastercard Foundation is a real champion of education, and an education for those who, if not but for this educational opportunity, would not have it.

00:00:44

**Farai Munjoma**

**CEO | Shasha Networks**

Information is fluid. Networks are fluid. Trust is fluid. That's the future of education.

It's borderless.

0:01:10

**VO**

Africa's future rests in the hands of its young people, the leaders, innovators, and changemakers of tomorrow. Across classrooms and communities, they are shaping new possibilities. Yet turning potential into reality takes more than ambition. It requires institutions willing to stand with them, to invest, and to lead. One of those voices is Mastercard Foundation.

0:01:37

**Reeta Roy**

**Former President & CEO | Mastercard Foundation**

It's so important to invest in young people, especially young people in Africa. This is a moment in history when we are all witnessing a powerful demographic shift. This continent will be the youngest continent in the world. And so investing young people and investing in leadership is of paramount importance. The MasterCard Foundation was founded to do two things.

One, to invest in advancing financial inclusion. And the other, to create broad scale opportunities for young people in education, through education to be able to access the global marketplace. And so we are rooted in doing these two things.

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**VO**

That mandate has taken shape through partnerships that open doors, giving young people the chance to learn, to grow and to imagine new paths. And it's in those paths that each person discovers what kind of education truly matters.

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**VO**

One young voice asking that question is Lian Bior, a South Sudanese student of Agricultural Sciences at Earth University in Costa Rica.

0:03:03

**Lian Biar**  
**Student | Earth University**

In South Sudan, over 90 % of the population, they rely on agriculture. Not so many people take agriculture as a career. They see it as just an option. So I was like, it would be interesting to learn and see what people are doing in other parts of the world to feed the country.

0:03:29

**VO**

Meet Farai Munjoma, an entrepreneur from Zimbabwe who is passionate about education. In 2016, he received the first ever Community Engagement Award from the Anzisha Prize in South Africa, an award that recognizes the efforts of young African entrepreneurs in the Anzisha Fellowship who are leveraging the African leadership network.

0:03:53

**Farai Munjoma**

**CEO | Shasha Networks**

Education is it is a very big and complex machine. Education, the economy, how people get jobs is highly intertwined. But I had a moment where I had to ask myself, what is the right type of education that I should get? Is it just education to read books and memorize, or it's education to go into the world and create something?

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**VO**

All of this is important, and it begins with education.

0:04:29

**Reeta Roy**

**Former President & CEO | Mastercard Foundation**

Education that takes us well beyond reading and writing and counting, but education that opens up the mind just as it opens up the heart.

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**VO**

With the world's youngest population, Africa's future workforce will be unlike any other. That's why partnerships in education matter so deeply.

0:04:47

**Dr. Arturo Condo**  
**President | EARTH University**

Earth University believes in the collaboration with the MasterCard Foundation because we share a vision. to empower young people, particularly from rural communities, with the tools, values, and education to transform their communities and the world.

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Through this partnership, we have supported talented students and graduates from across Africa and Latin America, equipping them with practical skills, entrepreneurial mindsets, and a deep commitment to sustainability and social justice.

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**VO**

Without proper coordination, interventions by development partners aimed at promoting quality education in Africa would be futile. This is the critical task that the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, ADEA, hosted by the African Development Bank Group, AFDB, continues to undertake.

0:05:36

**Albert Nsengiyumva**  
**Executive Secretary | ADEA**

We do it in different ways. The first way is actually to facilitate policy dialogue among the key stakeholders. Our second pillar supports countries to reform their systems. How do we do that? Number one is to look into capacity required. The other example would be around technology.

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Much as countries apply technology in education, we are lacking linkage to learning outcome. And therefore, together with partners, we have initiated support countries, connecting generation of evidence, capacity building, particularly for teachers and educators. improvement of learning outcomes.

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**VO**

True reform goes beyond walls and textbooks. It's about giving teachers the tools, aligning policy with practice, and ensuring that what young people learn translates into real change.

0:06:28

**Brenda Akoth**  
Founder | Jenga Labs & Ashesi Alumni

I've really been passionate about access to quality education in the continent of Africa, and so I've been working in the education space for the past five plus years. Where all this began was really where I was raised. I saw what poverty did to, you know, my friends and how it stifled their dreams.

And having that experience really made me want to dream more, to create a space where young people can get exposure to technology at such a young age. And at Jenga Labs, we're seeking to really inspire young innovators in the continent, allowing ourselves to be our, like our own creators of our own world. you know, you create the solutions for our own problems through innovation. And so we do this through fun STEM activities, a focus on electronics, a bit of coding.

0:07:23

**Farai Munjoma**  
CEO | Shasha Networks

Growing up in Zimbabwe in 2008, there was a big focus on education. Everybody had to be educated. So parents are more likely to sacrifice the good, nice food as long as they pay for school fees. So that was more than just about learning. It was a responsibility.

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You are going there to represent your family.

*We're going to launch that library first.*

Shasha we are a digital platform that connects young people with career development, soft skills, and more importantly, opportunities online. How do we ensure that young people go post - secondary with the confidence, with the social capital and with the awareness. Because most of the young people's inability to succeed is not because they do not have the ability. They simply do not know the options that exist for them.

0:08:22

***Upsound***

*I want to share my experience with this VR. It's actually my first time trying this and they're so fun.*

*I was literally in the universe, I could see the earth, I could see the oceans, I could see the land, I could see a satellite, I could see the moon.*

0:08:35

**Farai Munjoma**

## CEO | Shasha Networks

So what Shasha is looking to do is open up the spectrums and horizons of what someone is able to pursue beyond the traditional path that we have all been told are the only way.

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**VO**

Africa's young people are coding, creating and connecting, shaping new opportunities every day. Their creativity sparks change, but lasting impact depends on how those ideas are carried forward by the systems around them.

0:09:07

**Lian Biar**

**Student | Earth University**

About two years ago, I started an initiative with some of my friends back home. And what we do is we train farmers so that they can learn about practices related to sustainable agricultural production, things to do with climate -smart agriculture. So we had to first see what are the farmers lacking. Do they really know the knowledge that other farmers know? in other parts of the world, and we realize that it's not the same. Even basic things like crop rotation, things like making compost, not all the farmers know it.

We also realize that all the information that is on the internet is mainly, you know, in English, or there is some information in Spanish, there's in other languages like Chinese and Russian, but this the farmers' counter says that in my community they speak local languages. So what we do, we translate this material and then we train the farmers. So it's just like a local initiative that we do, but hopefully in the future when I graduate, it's something that I can work on to make it bigger.

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**VO**

Individual efforts, like Lian's, show what's possible. But for solutions like these to grow, they need the backing of institutions and society at large.

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**Reeta Roy**

**Former President & CEO | Mastercard Foundation**

In every society, In every country it takes government, it takes the business sector, the not -for -profit sector, it takes civil society organizations, it takes everybody to come together to talk about the society we want to live in and the society we want to see for ourselves and for our children and for our children's children and beyond.

**VO**

That vision is echoed at the continental level, where leaders are working to harmonise education systems and prepare a generation for mobility and opportunity across borders.

0:11:07

**Albert Nsengiyumva**  
Executive Secretary | ADEA

The raw data there, together with other partners, including the Mastercard Foundation, but also the African Union, in shaping education at the continental level, is really critical. Education is a must. I don't see where the continent will actually lead if we don't educate our people. Strengthening education system from countries is so important, but that's really the starting point.

The effort we are making in this regard is actually to harmonize quality assurance also strengthen collaboration to come up with a common qualification framework so that an engineer who graduates from Botswana can actually move to Ivory Coast and be able to operate from here without any problem. Because in the current circumstances, this issue of equivalence is actually killing that movement of labor.

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**VO**

The push for harmonisation points to a larger truth. Opportunity grows when education systems adapt and align with national goals.

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**Reeta Roy**

**Former President & CEO | Mastercard Foundation**

It's really important that we subscribe to a shared vision. And in the case of education, it then means enabling children, young people, to acquire the skills, to acquire the knowledge that's valuable.

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**VO**

The South-South collaboration in the education sector continues to foster a powerful exchange of ideas, innovations, and solutions.

0:12:37

**Dr. Arturo Condo**  
President | EARTH University

Through its African student body and networks, EARTH has witnessed firsthand how sharing knowledge between countries in the global South strengthens education systems and builds solidarity around common challenges like climate change, food insecurity, and youth unemployment.

By supporting African students and graduates when they return home to lead change, Earth and partners like the MasterCard Foundation help catalyze scalable, locally grounded impact initiatives across the country.

0:13:08

**Albert Nsengiyumva**  
**Executive Secretary | ADEA**

The MasterCard Foundation is a long-term partner over there. It's about empowering youth to get meaningful work and life as well, which connects with education. You cannot expect a better future for young people if they are not equipped with education and skills.

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**VO**

These alliances show what is possible when governments, institutions and foundations move in the same direction. Designing for transition means linking education directly to the labour market and to the values that shape society.

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**Reeta Roy**

**Former President & CEO | Mastercard Foundation**

For young people to travel both worlds and make that transition requires the world of business, the world of employment, to speak to the world of education, but a real exchange of ideas that in many ways the world of work is just an extension of the classroom.

And so while a young person is in school, he or she can establish internships in the world of work and really experience what it means to show up, what it means to be on a team, and to just process, absorb various kinds of information. This doesn't happen by accident. It has to happen by design, and that design needs to be part of the society and that national plan.

0:14:34

**Albert Nsengiyumva**  
**Executive Secretary | ADEA**

I think it's an absolute transformation we want to see. There's no other alternatives for a continent. We all claim we have resources, and yet, yes, we have resources in this continent. How do you grab all this to get the right set of education that meets the needs of our society today? and tomorrow as well. And this is where education becomes so important.

This is where we need to look at beyond just talking about capacity building. Understanding the transformation we want to see will only be achieved by addressing, by fixing education, the one that makes sure that it connects with the needs of the labor market, but also the needs of the society. We're not just looking at providing technical skills. We would like also to be able to create some value, creative values in our young people. So to me, that's where we need really to put more emphasis.

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**Dr. Arturo Condo**  
President | EARTH University

Perth University's educational model is experiential, holistic, and purpose - driven. We prepare and empower ethical leaders through a hands -on curriculum that combines ethical entrepreneurship, community engagement, appropriate technology, and environmental leadership.

The students live and learn in a multicultural, immersive environment where they create food - related startups, participate in professional internships, and lead real -life problem -solving. This approach nurtures critical thinking, resilience, and a strong sense of social responsibility.

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**(Speaker 3)**

Behind every system are individual journeys. Young people whose lives are shaped by teachers, mentors, and the opportunities they encounter.

0:16:12

**Brenda Akoth**  
Founder | Jenga Labs & Ashesi Alumni

If I reflect on the people who've shaped my journey, I think of the lady owning a shop in Yalenda, and I think about the church, I think of Palm House Foundation that sponsored my education, and then I think of the amazing team at Ashesi University that really groomed me to be the person that I am.

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**Reeta Roy**

**Former President & CEO | Mastercard Foundation**

Instilling of the sense and the spirit that you could be anything you so desired. If you were to just invest, And education is a pathway there, but you're going to have to work hard and really apply yourself to ensure that you have a path forward.

VO

For many, that belief is unlocked through the guidance of those willing to invest time, trust, and knowledge in young people.

0:17:03

**Farai Munjoma**  
CEO | Shasha Networks

I was very fortunate at the beginning of my journey that I had two entrepreneurs take me under their wings, all in the education space. The first organization that I worked with was an ED tech organization in Kenya. Eneza, the CEO, took me under his wing. said, Hey, I am going to fly you to Nairobi. You're going to learn everything. And it was that ability to number one, be humble as a young person to be able to get into those spaces and say, I am here to just learn.

So number one, you need someone that has high learnability skills. It's always a challenge when If a young person goes into the world of work and they already think they've figured it out, it's going to be very difficult. And the reality is when you get into the workspace, all the stakeholders, they are looking for the person that they can pour all their wisdom and knowledge in. And there's nothing more satisfying than a young person that says, hey, I'm ready to do the work.

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VO

Yet even with talent and readiness, barriers remain. For many students, the biggest challenge is simply getting through the door.

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**Lian Biar**  
Student | Earth University

The most challenges that I've seen so far are mainly financial constraints, not having someone who can pay for you to study. The other challenge is access to opportunities because it's not everybody that knows that there are scholarships. Some people don't even know that scholarships exist.

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**Reeta Roy**

**Former President & CEO | Mastercard Foundation**

And so it's meant that we've had to apply ourselves and work with organizations, other partners, to go looking for young people who would never have even heard about the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program and to enlist others, whether it's headmasters and teachers, whether it's imams in the mosques, whether it's sisters teaching at the convent school, to look out for those young people in their midst, in their community. We're not speaking of charity. speaking about availing ourselves to the talent which we would otherwise not see and not benefit from.

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**VO**

Finding and nurturing talent where others might overlook it is what turns education into opportunity and opportunity into transformation.

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**Dr. Arturo Condo**  
**President | EARTH University**

Education must prepare students not only to understand the world but to actively make it a better place. Aligning education with employment and entrepreneurship ensures that graduates are ready to create opportunities, not just for themselves, but for their communities. At Earth, students start and manage real enterprises during their studies, aligning environmental, social, and financial objectives.

Through this experience, they gain the confidence to launch their own ventures or lead innovation in existing organizations, which is the key to addressing youth unemployment and driving inclusive economic growth.

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**VO**

Education is most powerful when it transforms both the learner and the world they enter. That transformation is seen in new skills, wider networks, and the confidence to grow.

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**Lian Biar**  
**Student | Earth University**

I would say I've learned a lot of things. I've gained a lot of things. Mainly, I wouldn't say I'm the same person like how I came here. I would say I know more now about sustainable production. I know more about agriculture. Not only that, my skills as a person, how I interact with people, even my professional network has also widened. So these are things that I've gained here during my time at Earth, and these are things that I really value.

0:20:53

**Farai Munjoma**  
CEO | Shasha Networks

The future of education looks at people at the level of their talent, and we invest in them. We don't look at people as a single artifact or template. We are actively looking for the best footballer, for the best academic, for the best astrophysicist from the day one.

And as we start to address young people as the future roles that they are, then we will be able to connect them to the right knowledge, resources and networks early on so that they can explore those possibilities rather than that being an afterthought. It should be at the centre of why they're in school.

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**VO**

For policy makers, the challenge is clear. Align education, not just with exams, but with the labour market and the society it serves.

0:21:45

**Albert Nsengiyumva**  
Executive Secretary | ADEA

To do that, a partnership is a starting point. It's so important. No one can achieve whatever we need to achieve alone, so we definitely understand the need to create this ecosystem. and engage appropriately. Secondly is to actually review our policies, to keep going back into policies. So it's not really just something that you do once.

It's something that you keep doing, learning from practices, learning from external factors, and adapt as much as possible. So adaptive system can only be the ones to help. change and get whatever result we want to get.

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**VO**

And at the heart of every system are the people who make learning possible. Passionate educators and constantly evolving curricula.

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**Brenda Akoth**  
Founder | Jenga Labs & Ashesi Alumni

For me the aspiration is to really get everyone access to quality education, like that state -of -the -art access to emerging technology, access to teachers or lecturers who are really passionate about education. Having passionate teachers is really critical in someone's educational experience. So how do we get educators who really love teaching? And how do we have a curriculum that is constantly being updated?

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**VO**

Africa's young people remind us of a simple truth. Talent is everywhere, but opportunity is not. And when opportunity is scarce, belief becomes the first act of leadership.

0:23:18

**Lian Biar**  
**Student | Earth University**

Don't let anyone make you believe that you know less just because you're on the African continent. What you know, what someone else knows is the same thing. It's just access to resources and access to opportunities.

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**VO**

That call for confidence is echoed by institutions that see Africa's future as inclusive, transformative and already in motion.

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**Dr. Arturo Condo**  
**President | EARTH University**

Earth Ambition is a future where education in Africa is inclusive, transformative and purpose - driven. Our goal is to contribute to an education system that prepares leaders who transform food systems to be positive for people and planet, and to improve the livelihoods of producers all across the continent.

With the continued support of networks like the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program and the MasterCard Foundation Earth University Fellowship Program, and strong South -South collaboration, we believe this future is not only possible, but already underway.

0:24:12

**VO**

Building Africa's future will depend on more than resources or ambition. it will hinge on how deeply leaders and partners are willing to believe in one another.

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**Farai Munjoma**  
**CEO | Shasha Networks**

The future of partnerships in Africa is going to be based on trust. Will we trust each other to drive? to collaborate, to partner, and will funders and partners look at a young entrepreneur and say, I'm going to trust you and write you that check. Is the government going to look at a young person and say, I'm going to trust you and build the essential environment that is important for you to build?

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**VO**

And at the heart of it all lies believe, believe in agency, in possibility, in the journey towards dignified and fulfilling work.

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**Reeta Roy**

**Former President & CEO | Mastercard Foundation**

And just like everything that opens a door, one door opens another door. which you're going to walk through. And so it's important to recognize that it's a process and to believe. Believe in your own agency and to believe that you're journeying closer to that what you would call dignified work, your opportunity, your passion.

*transcribed with cockatoo*