



AFRIKA KOMMT! – An Initiative of German Industry for Future Leaders from Sub-Saharan Africa

Some of Germany's leading companies in their sector recognized the potential of Africa and set up the initiative AFRIKA KOMMT!, in which they train young African professionals in their companies by giving them an insight into their work processes and management methods at the highest level. The State Office North Rhine-Westphalia of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH is organizing and steering the capacity development program on behalf of the companies.

Beneficial for both sides

In 2008, leading German companies set up a joint initiative – AFRIKA KOMMT! – to train young professionals from selected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The companies recognized that Africa has a great future and hope to harness the potential at an early stage. Young, well-qualified experts with leadership potential spend around eight months in one of the mentor companies, during which time they are involved in the company's work processes.

Beside an increase of knowledge and expertise, the participants are given the opportunity to build and establish important contacts. Sheila Simbine is currently working for B. Braun Melsungen AG. She describes her aims for taking part in the program as follows: "Participating in the AFRIKA KOMMT! program will provide me with the best knowledge, skills and business networks that will allow me to improve in my professional career. I will be able to be an active contributor to the economic development in Africa." The companies, in turn, benefit from the technical expertise of the participants as well as the cultural knowledge of their home countries; they thus invest in their cooperation with Africa. Hartwig Löffler, Human Resources Manager at Robert Bosch GmbH and speaker of the partner companies, underlines the benefit of the program for

both sides: "AFRIKA KOMMT! builds an unique bridge to offer mutual learning, understanding and respect. This bridge is the basis for a long term sustainable and sincere cooperation between all people involved."

Tilman Todenhöfer, former Managing Director of Robert Bosch Industrial Trust KG and one of the originators of AFRIKA KOMMT!, agrees that the win-win situation plays a significant role within the program: "Lastly the German companies also benefit from educating the participants, as they will spread and support the companies' interests in their home countries."

Building bridges for sustainable business partnerships

The selection of the African program participants is a demanding process in itself. For the fifth set of participants, taking part in the program from 2015 to 2017, 120 candidates from a total of 3.332 applicants were invited to a comprehensive Assessment Center in Africa. During the selection process great importance is attached to the close cooperation with the participating companies. Before the 30 selected candidates leave Africa, the young professionals acquire a basic knowledge of German. Once they arrive in Germany, they spend another three months building on these language skills. At the same time, management courses run by GIZ prepare participants for their work in the firms and continue to support them during their stay in Germany and in the companies. After eight months in their partner companies, the future managers become part of GIZ's alumni network in their home countries. Networking in the partner countries in particular plays a key role in participants' private and professional life. By sharing their positive experience of German culture and German companies, program alumni can shape Germany's image in their home countries. The alumni



are also important for German companies as they provide useful points of contact in their home countries. Thus the AFRIKA KOMMT! initiative builds bridges for sustainable partnerships between German and African businesses. Farhan Guled, currently working at his partner company Merck KGaA, shares this view: "My goals are to forge long term business relations and to share my African business perspectives with the German industries, while understanding the efficiencies in the German economic models and building bridges between German industries and Africa."

Success through experience

GIZ is implementing the program on behalf of the corporate initiative. GIZ has had many years of experience in implementing a whole range of programs for managers; this experience and GIZ's infrastructure in Germany and Africa make it an ideal partner for the initiative. Regular evaluations guarantee quality and company satisfaction. The fact that various companies have decided to take several candidates since the third program round underlines the success of the program.

Partners

The following companies are taking part in the fifth round of the program from 2015 to 2017:

- ANDREAS STIHL AG & Co. KG
- Boehringer Ingelheim GmbH
- BSH Hausgeräte GmbH
- Robert Bosch GmbH
- B. Braun Melsungen AG
- Commerzbank AG
- Continental AG
- Daimler AG
- Merck KGaA
- SAP SE
- thyssenkrupp AG
- Voith GmbH
- Volkswagen AG

The program cooperates with the foundations Robert Bosch Stiftung and the ZEIT-Stiftung Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius.

It also receives active support from the German Federal Foreign Office and the German embassies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The German Federal President Joachim Gauck supports the initiative AFRIKA KOMMT! as a patron.

Further information: www.afrika-kommt.de

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