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IYBA SEED Hub — Investing in Young Businesses in Africa — Supporting Entrepreneurial Ecosystems Development

Biashara Pawa

INSIGHT PAPER

From Mentorship to Market Readiness

Strengthening women and youth County entrepreneurship in Uasin Gishu

Dialogue insights for market-ready enterprise growth

PARTICIPANTS	117 engaged entrepreneurs
GENDER MIX	• 60% women • 40% men
FOCUS	Mentorship to market readiness

What this carousel covers

- Mentorship as growth
- Business fundamentals
- Market readiness
- Action priorities

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CORE MESSAGE

Mentorship is a business growth strategy

For seed and pre-seed businesses, advice becomes survival infrastructure.

67%	3-10%	117	60%
YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	WOMEN IN HIGH-VALUE SECTORS	HIGHLY ENGAGED PARTICIPANTS	WOMEN PARTICIPANTS

The dialogue reframed mentorship from informal advice into a practical tool for investor readiness, compliance, market entry and long-term business survival.

Confidence | Financial discipline | Compliance | Market links | Peer learning

Strategic shift: one-off advice → structured mentorship → market-ready enterprises

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READINESS BASICS

Market readiness starts with strong business fundamentals

The strongest businesses are easier to finance, regulate, mentor and scale.

01

Financial discipline

Separate personal and business accounts, keep accurate records, track invoices and receipts.

02

Proof of concept

Validate ideas through market research and early paying customers before seeking investment.

03

Simple financial model

Prepare a one-page model that shows costs, cash flow, revenue logic and growth assumptions.

04

Compliance readiness

Register early and prepare for KRA, KEBS, NEMA, permits and AGPO-linked opportunities.

Key insight

Investor readiness begins long before the investor meeting.

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MARKET READINESS

Market-led businesses are more likely to scale

The dialogue pushed entrepreneurs to understand demand, position clearly and retain customers.

Understand demand	Research the problem, the customer and the segment before building the offer.
Build visibility	Use word-of-mouth, WhatsApp, Facebook and low-cost digital channels consistently.
Improve positioning	Strengthen packaging, value proposition and multilingual market communication.
Retain customers	Keep pricing stable, maintain supply and collect customer feedback digitally.
Collaborate smartly	Use partnerships and bulk-buying arrangements to reduce costs and enter markets.

Practical readiness beats generic marketing.

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BARRIERS → RESPONSES

The gaps are practical - so the responses must be practical growth

Entrepreneurs need hands-on support that reduces friction at the exact points where businesses stall.

Collateral & funding gaps	Financial literacy, proof-of-concept models and investor-readiness support
Regulatory complexity	Compliance clinics covering KRA, KEBS, NEMA, AGPO and county processes
Weak market visibility	Branding, digital marketing and customer-lifecycle support
Infrastructure constraints	County-backed processing, cold storage and value-addition facilities
Fragmented support	ESO-led mentorship, peer learning and coordinated ecosystem platforms

Structured, not scattered

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PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Move from one-off support to a coordinated growth system

The next phase should strengthen the environment around entrepreneurs - not only the entrepreneurs themselves.

01

Strengthen capability

Sector-specific assessments, practical financial literacy and tailored mentorship.

02

Improve access

Market links, grant opportunities, enterprise funds and investor-readiness support.

03

Deepen collaboration

County government, ESOs, private sector and partners coordinating around shared priorities.

04

Build sustainability

Green practices, affordable digital tools, processing centres and inclusive infrastructure.

Structured mentorship + finance + markets = stronger, job-creating businesses.

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