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Digital
Africa



IMPACT ASSESSMENT REPORT

**AFRILABS CAPACITY
BUILDING PROGRAMME**

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Abbreviations/Acronyms

ACBP	AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme
AFD	Agence Française de Développement
CBA	Capacity Building Award
DQA	Data Quality Assurance
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
HIR	Hubs in Residence
HLW	Hub Learning Week
KII	Key Informant Interview
MSMEs	Micro Small and Medium Enterprise
VMG	Virtual Meetup Grant



Background/Introduction

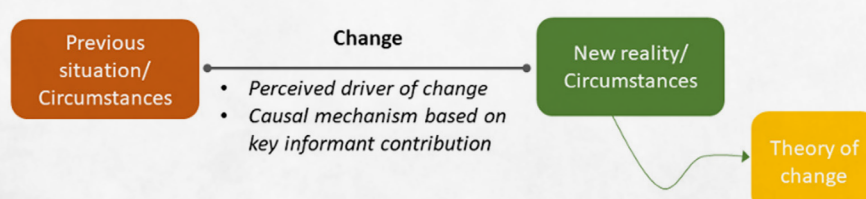
The AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme (ACBP) has since 2019 continued to uphold its mandate to build the capacity of hubs and their members within the African Ecosystem, which has contributed to the improvement of the African innovation ecosystem via the input of AfriLabs trained successful & investment-ready startups. Since 2019, the programme has supported over 500 African hubs and entrepreneurs through the AFD fund to increase their capacity, innovation, and result-focused. Several activities have occurred and an impact evaluation is necessary to document success stories, lessons learned, and next steps.

The Impact assessment exercise is aimed at evaluating the activities of the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme to see the extent to which implemented components have contributed to the proposed impact associated with the project's Theory of Change (ToC). The immediate impacts which include; Effective management of Innovation hubs, the Creation of jobs, and Improvement in the investment-readiness of start-ups in Africa will be evaluated based on the associated inputs of the project.

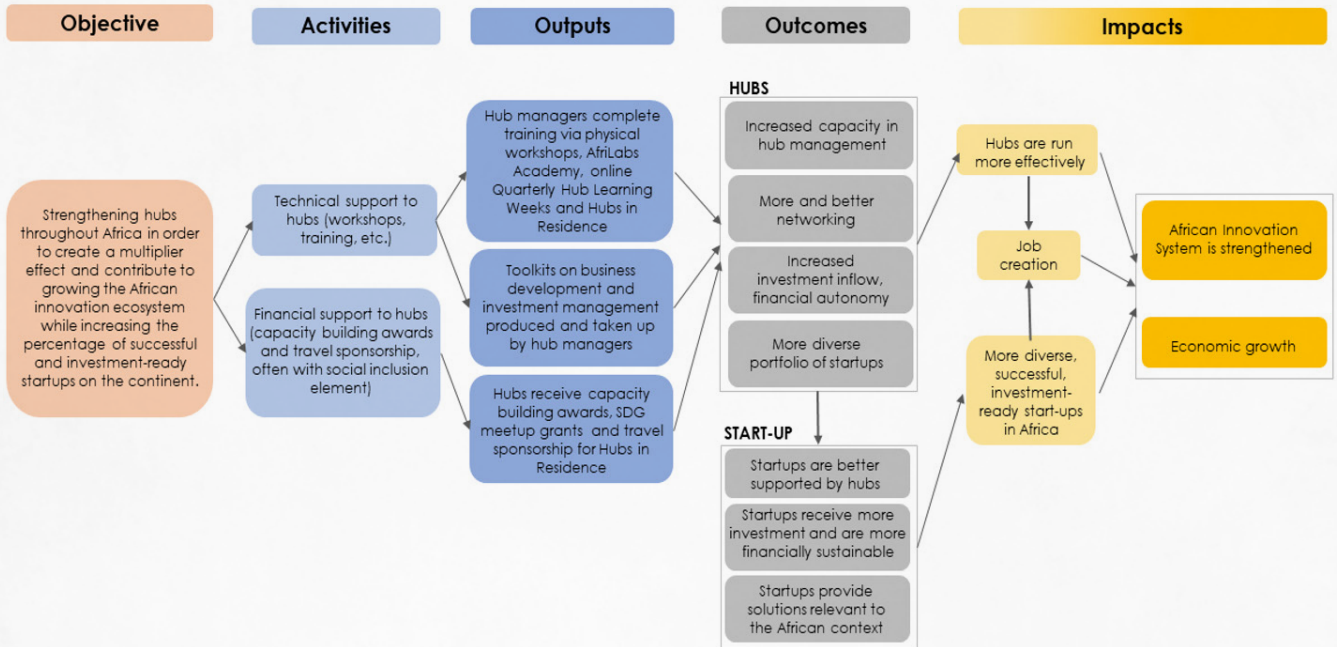
The impact assessment (IA) provides a reality check to the Theory of Change and reveals definite changes or improvements that have occurred owing to the introduction of the ACBP to innovation hubs and entrepreneurs. As outlined in the ToC, the Impact Assessment will provide checks on the outcomes and secondary impact which include; increased capacity in Hub management, improved networking capacity. Increased investment inflow, financial autonomy, and more diverse portfolio of startups, etc.

Comparisons between the baseline state (former situation) of these beneficiaries and the current situation (post-ACBP benefits) will be analyzed and measured against the inputs of the project activities. The Impact assessment covers the period of implemented activities on the programmes from the inception to the present stage.

Basically, the impact assessment tool incorporated questions that would allow participants and beneficiaries to talk about:



ACBP THEORY OF CHANGE

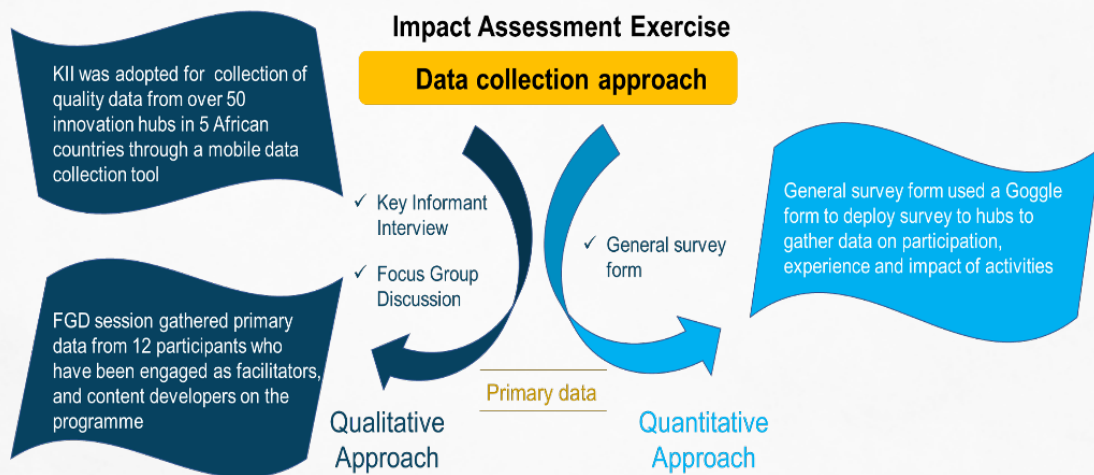




Objective

The main objective of the Impact assessment exercise is to understand the extent of changes that participating hubs have experienced as a result of their participation in ACBP activities.

In summary, the methodology of the assessment exercise adopted a mixed approach to carry out data collection on the program. These include the qualitative and quantitative research methodology. Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted to obtain primary data from innovation hubs across 5 African countries including Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, and Uganda.



About the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme

The AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme (ACBP) is a 3-year, programme funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) which aims to contribute to the achievement of better innovation outcomes within the African Innovation Ecosystem. Over the years, AfriLabs has carried out research on African hub needs, capacity gaps, and best practices needed to build successful African startups. Based on this research, AfriLabs designed a series of initiatives targeting innovation hubs. These initiatives have been updated and expanded into the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme (ACBP). The Programme is designed to equip technology hubs with the skills needed to improve their ability and capacity to support the growing number of startups and MSMEs in their communities across Africa. The programme is funded by the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) through the Digital Africa seed fund.

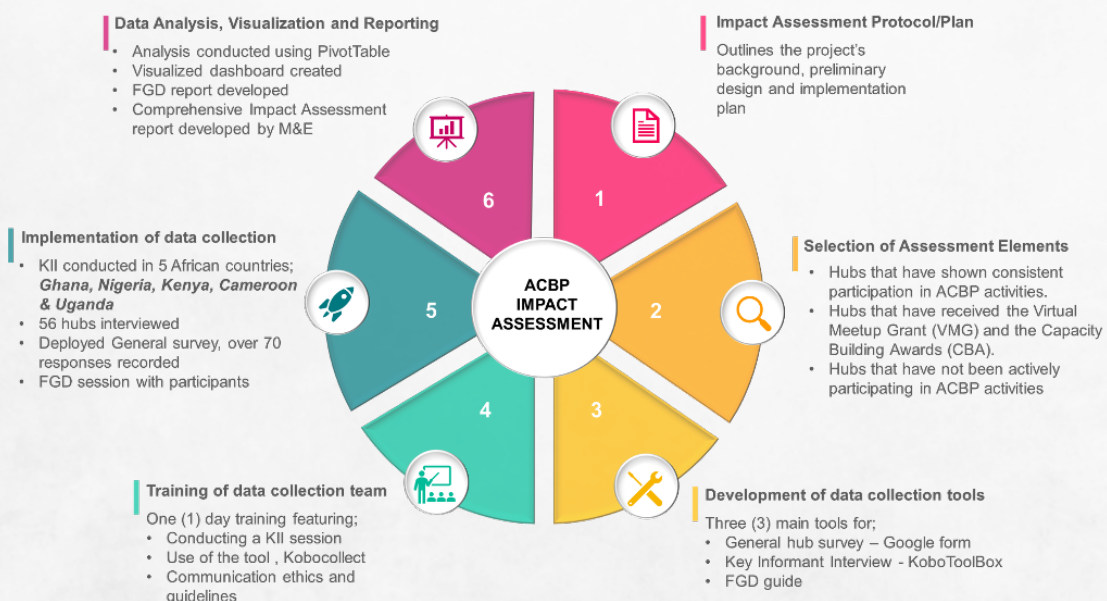
The programme implements a series of activities aimed at innovation hubs across African countries to achieve its set objectives. These activities include Hub Learning Week (HLW), Virtual Meetup Grant (VMG), AfriLabs Academy Virtual Courses, Physical Workshop, Hubs in Residence (HIR), and Capacity Building Awards (CBA)



Methodology

The Impact assessment exercise adopted structured approaches that are suitable to deliver the objective of the exercise according to the project implementation strategies and activities. Qualitative and Quantitative methods of data collection were considered during the impact assessment design.

Each stage of the impact assessment from the planning to implementation and reporting followed critical reviews and evaluation techniques. These stages include; the development of an Impact assessment protocol/plan, selection of assessment elements based on the selected data collection approach, development of data collection tools, training of the assessment team, implementation of field data collection, data analysis, and reporting.



Impact assessment protocol/plan

An impact assessment plan was developed as a major document that outlines the project's background, the preliminary design, and the implementation plan. It also outlines the inclusion criteria that were used to categorize participants, select the locations, as well as respondents at different stages of the exercise. The protocol also details the tools and data collection methods that were used. Preferences were given in terms of sample size, gender composition, and analysis and reporting methodology.

Selection of Assessment Elements

In selecting the location where the impact assessment exercise would be conducted, certain criteria were considered to maximize the data output from these sources. Based on the methodologies adopted for data collection, the Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted physically with hubs across AfriLab's hub network. Participating hubs were selected as a complete representation of all the members of the communities including hubs that have participated in the different activities of the programme and those that have not. Hubs were chosen in different categories using the following criteria:

- Hubs that have shown consistent participation in ACBP activities.
- Hubs that have received the Virtual Meetup Grant (VMG) and the Capacity Building Awards (CBA).
- Hubs that have not been actively participating in ACBP activities.
- Hubs from both the Anglophone and francophone communities, etc.

Data Collection Methods

The Impact assessment used basic data collection methods to harvest data from participants for the assessment. The methods carried out were

- General Hub Survey
- Key Informant Interviews(KIIs)
- Focus Groups Discussions (FGD)

General Hub Survey

The general survey questionnaire was developed using Google form. Questions represented were intended at evaluating the importance of ACBP activities to responding hubs. Questions were also coined to reveal the outcomes of lessons learned from ACBP activities such as the Hub Learning Week (HLW), the Physical Workshop

(PW), as well as the Hubs in Residence (HIR). In developing the questionnaire, the team considered a set of major questions that will ensure hubs provide the required response that evaluates the importance and outcomes of the activities towards their hub operations and performance and operations. The questionnaire was developed in both French and English, and deployed for response via the different AfriLabs platforms (Google groups, and WhatsApp).

Key Informant Interviews (KII)

The comprehensive KII tool was developed using the KoboToolbox. This enabled the deployment of the tool on mobile devices for data collection. The KII was conducted in 5 countries including Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Cameroon, and Uganda. The selection of these countries was done as a full representation of countries that have benefitted from the programme. Additional virtual interview sessions were conducted with hubs that were not available for physical interviews during the visit.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

A total of 10 focal persons participated in the focus group discussion which was held virtually. The selection of FGD participants followed a purposive sampling method which represented a full spectrum of the community members that have benefited from the programme, including those that have assessed grants, those that have facilitated sessions, as well as those that have not accessed grants from the programme.

The main objective of the FGD was to gather insights on the programme effectiveness and receive feedback on relevant areas that might require improvement in order to enhance the program's results.

The FGD was conducted via Zoom meeting for an approximate duration of 70minutes. The session was recorded for the purpose of documentation and accuracy of the transcription. Participants shared their views and perspectives to the questions outlined below:

S/N	Question
1	In your opinion, what did we get right?
2	What do we need to improve on the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme?
3	What is the potential of ACBP to contribute to better innovation outcomes within the ecosystem
4	In what way can AfriLabs as an organization provide better support to improve the sustainability of African hubs

Data Collection tools

The impact assessment exercise was a mixed-method study, which leveraged a combination of general survey, focus group discussion (FGD), and key informant interviews (KII) to harvest quality data capable of analyzing the impact of ACBP activities on participating hubs and individuals.

3 (three) major data collection tools were developed for the purpose of the Impact Assessment exercise. The KII tool was developed using the KoboToolbox and deployed on a mobile kobocollect application. Additionally, data were collected using the web platform option for data collectors operating non-android phones. The general survey form was developed using Google form and translated to french for the francophone community. An FGD guide was developed for the purpose of guiding the discussion during the session.

Training of data collection team

The data collection team was engaged in a one-day training session on data collection principles and guidelines. The Kobocollect Android platform was demonstrated to the team members as they carried out the data gathering procedure. Along with learning about the AfriLabs community engagement guideline, team members also received training on ethical behavior and guidelines to consider during key informant interviews.

Sampling

Selection of respondents or participating hubs for the Key informant Interviews followed criteria which include;

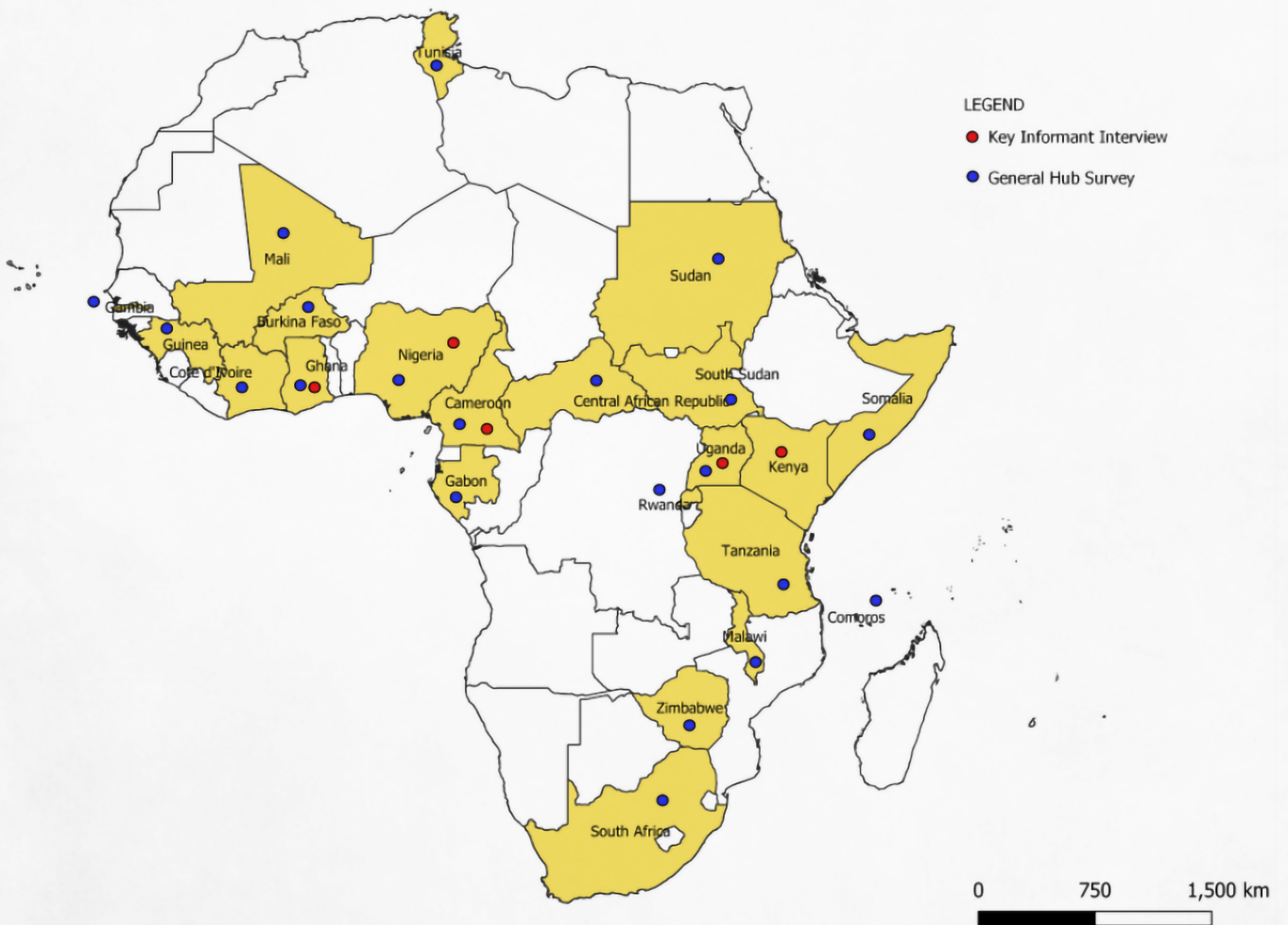
- Level of participation and engagement of hubs with the ACBP activities,
- Hubs that have accessed the VMG and CBA,
- Hubs that have attended the physical workshop, or Hubs in Residence
- Hubs that have not benefited nor fully participated in the programme

A total of **(56)** hubs were interviewed across 5 African countries including Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Cameroon, and Uganda. Hubs were selected within different states/counties of each country to participate in the KII sessions.

Selection of participants for the FGD was purposive and covers a full representation of the community members. The categories of participants consist of individuals that have

- Facilitated sessions during the Physical workshop
- Participated in the curriculum development of the AfriLabs Academy
- Facilitated sessions during the Hub Learning Week
- Whose hub has accessed grants from the programme and those that have not.

Map showing countries that participated in the Impact Assessment Exercise



Monitoring of Impact Assessment activities

Daily monitoring of data collection activity was carried out through daily reporting using a standard reporting template which records the following variables; Name of the data collector, country, daily planned and achieved interviews, name of interviewed hubs, and comments justifying planned and achieved numbers. In addition, weekly updates were reported during the teams' meetings. The general hub survey was monitored daily to measure the rate of responses and to provide advisory on ways to improve response rate.





Result

The result of the Impact Assessment is presented based on the different methodologies implemented in deriving the data for the assessment i.e. Key Informant Interview (KII), Focus Group Discussion (FGD), and general hub survey.

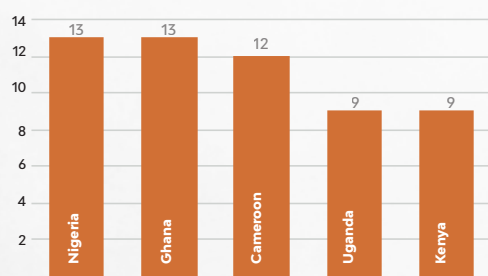
Key Informant Interview (KII)

Majority of hubs implements incubation program

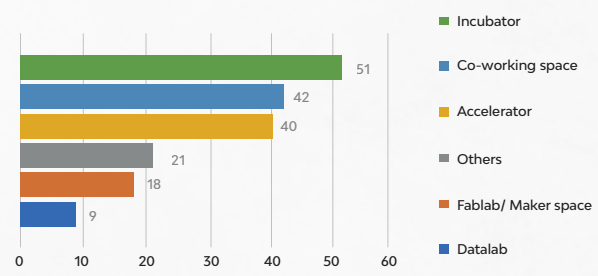
A total of 56 hubs were visited across 5 African countries including Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Cameroon, and Uganda. The different hubs that participated in the KII sessions exist as incubators, co-working spaces, accelerators, Fablab/maker spaces, and datalab. Other hub types recorded include; Biolab and creative hubs. The analyzed data shows that over 90% of participating hubs conduct incubation programs for infant startups by providing mentoring and training activities including the provision of workspace at their early stage. Only 16% function as Datalab

Hub participation per country

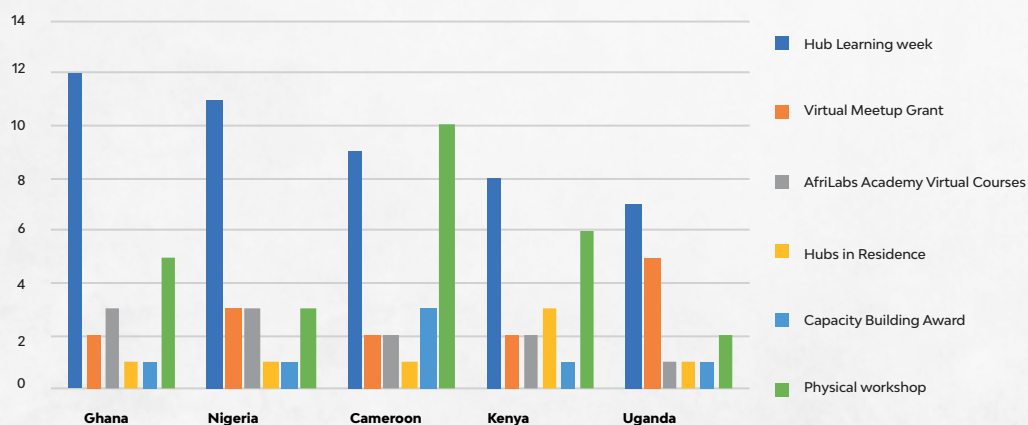
n= number of hubs



Hub type (n=number of hub)



Participation in ACBP activities per country

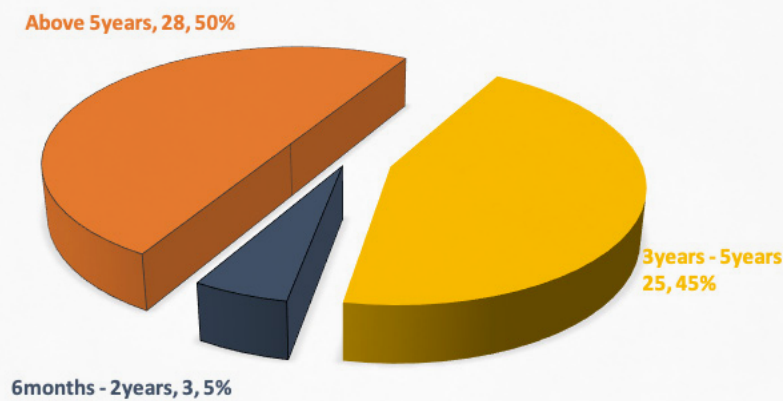


Hubs provide support across multiple sectors including AgriTech, EdTech, FinTech, etc.

Major sectors or communities supported by hubs include Agri tech, ed tech, financial tech, software tech, hardware tech, clean tech, and creatives. 34% of hubs support startups within the Agri tech sector and only 13% support creatives. Startups within the Agricultural sector engage in the production and preservation of edible agricultural products leveraging technology to maximize profit and effectiveness. 50% (28) of the hubs mentioned that they started hub operation above 5 years ago, 45% (25) have begun between 3 - 5 years ago, and 5% (3) are within 6 months - 2 years old.

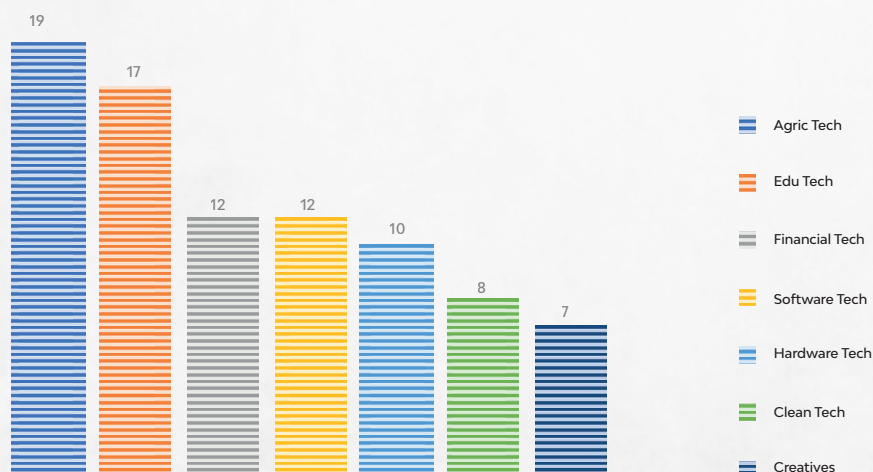
Age of hubs

n= number of hubs per age bracket



Sectors supported by hubs

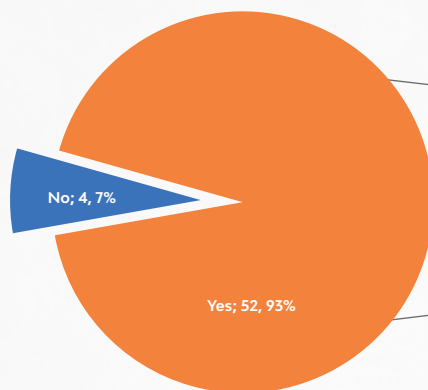
n= number of hub



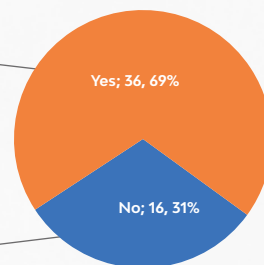
Lessons from the ACBP activities have proven effective in revealing the need for adequate staffing capacity within innovation hubs

Out of the 56 hubs interviewed, 52 had participated in ACBP activities, and over 65% had engaged additional staff as a result of lessons learned from the programme activities. 86% have participated in Hub Learning Week (HLW), 48% have attended Physical workshops, while over 20% of the hubs interviewed reported that at least 1 member of their staff has enrolled and completed a course on the AfriLabs Academy, despite its recent launch. However, participation in ACBP activities varies across different countries where the KII was conducted.

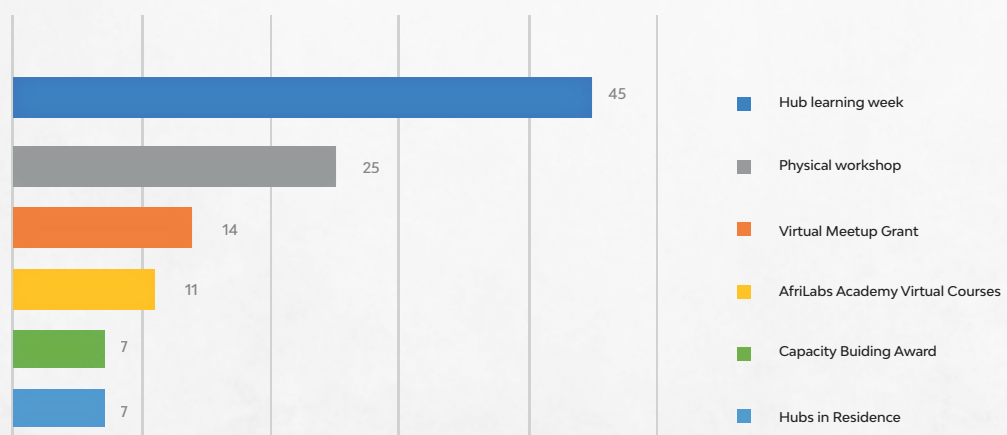
Participation of hubs in ACBP activities
n= total number of hubs



Engagement of new staff
n = no of hubs that have participated in ACBP activities



Participation of hubs in ACBP activities
n = no of hubs that have participated in ACBP activities

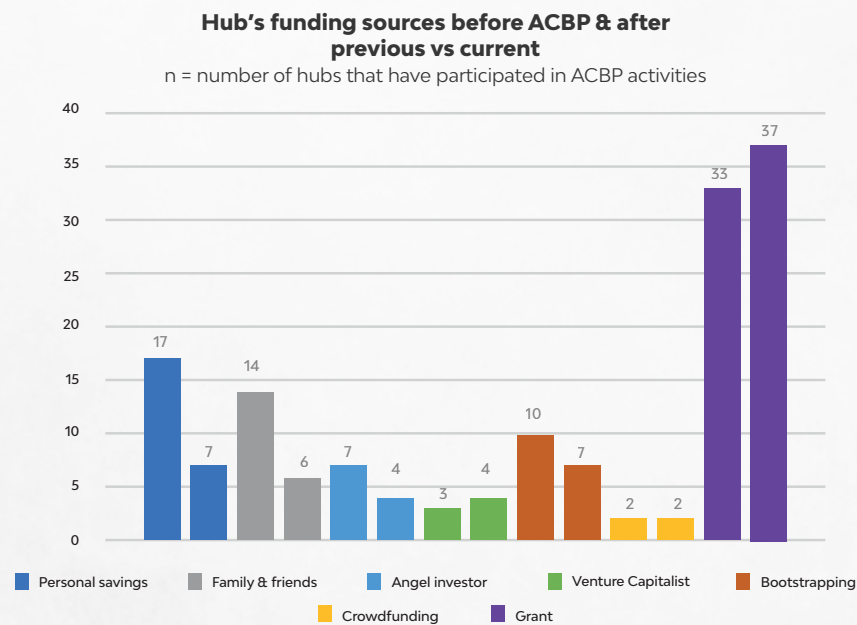


Increase in the acquisition of sustainable funding sources for participating hubs

One of the objectives of the ACBP is to ensure the sustainability of hubs through the provision of quality learning sessions on management and fundraising techniques as the sustainability of a hub’s operations could depend largely on its funding source. It is however expected that hubs are able to transition to more sustainable funding sources through the application of lessons learned on the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme (ACBP).

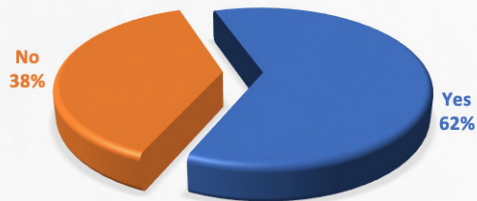
A comparison of the data between the hub’s funding sources before the ACBP and after shows that there has been a general drop in the use of unsustainable fund sources such as personal savings, family, and friends for running hub operations and activities. An increase has been recorded in the acquisition of new funding opportunities including grants and venture capitalists.

There is a 4% increase in the number of hubs that mentioned **grants** as one of their current funding sources and a decrease in the unsustainable use of personal savings for implementing the hub’s operations. 10 hubs have mentioned they stopped running hubs operation on personal savings, and 8 hubs stopped relying on contributions from friends and family for implementing hub’s activities. Similarly, there is a reduction by 3 hubs in the number of hubs that depend on bootstrapping as an unsustainable fund source.



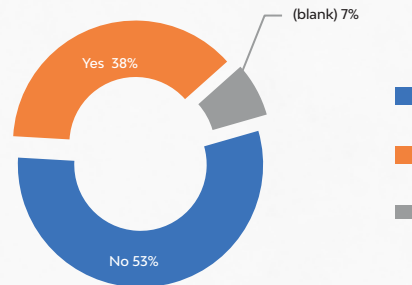
Other major sources of funds include sales of company products and services including consultancy, co-working space charges, partnerships, and government funding. 62% of hubs have experienced an increase in their grant value between 2years ago and now. Additionally, 55% have been able to access other fund sources through the application of lessons learned from the ACBP.

Hubs have experienced increase in highest grant value between 2yrs ago & now



Hubs have accessed Non-AfriLabs fund as a result of the lessons learnt through ACBP

n = number of hubs that have participated in ACBP activities



Hubs have shown increased capacity in managing hubs

The programme’s theory of change outlines critical outcomes expected as a result of the participation of hubs in the programme activities. Hubs are expected to have built capacity in the area of hub management, improved networking capability, and increased investment flow.

The impact assessment exercise evaluated specific areas of hub management where positive outcomes have been achieved as a result of lessons learned on the ACBP. 86% of hubs reported that there has been improvement in their management outcomes as a result of applying lessons learned from the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme. Areas of noticeable improvement include; Project management, leadership, work culture, communication and visibility, and financial management.

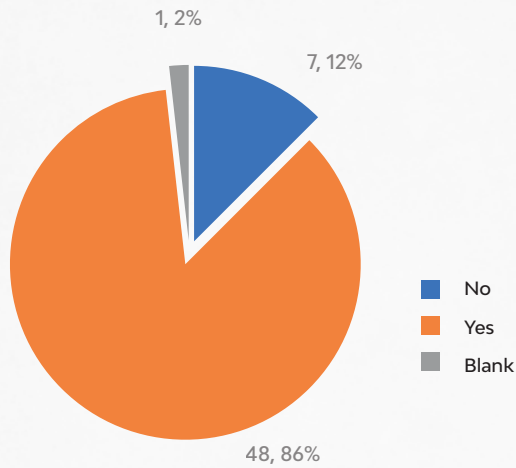
Other areas reported include Grant management, Management of incubatee, and relationship management.

38 out of 48 hubs mentioned project management as one of the areas of improvement through ACBP lessons, 32 hubs reported improvement in their leadership style and composition. 60% (29) of the hubs stated improved working culture which includes diverse staffing, adoption of remote work operations, etc.

69% (36) hubs reported increased knowledge in hub management as a specific impact of ACBP activities, 35 hubs mentioned improved partnership and collaboration, 50% of hubs were able to increase their support to their community. Approximately 33% have created jobs within their community. Other specific impacts include; exposure to the pan-African innovation space and an increase in knowledge-based resources.

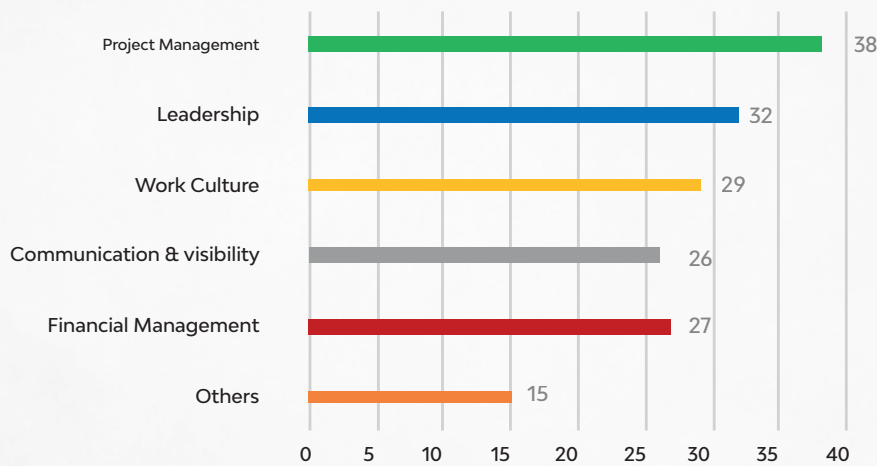
Improvement in hub management outcomes

n = number of hubs



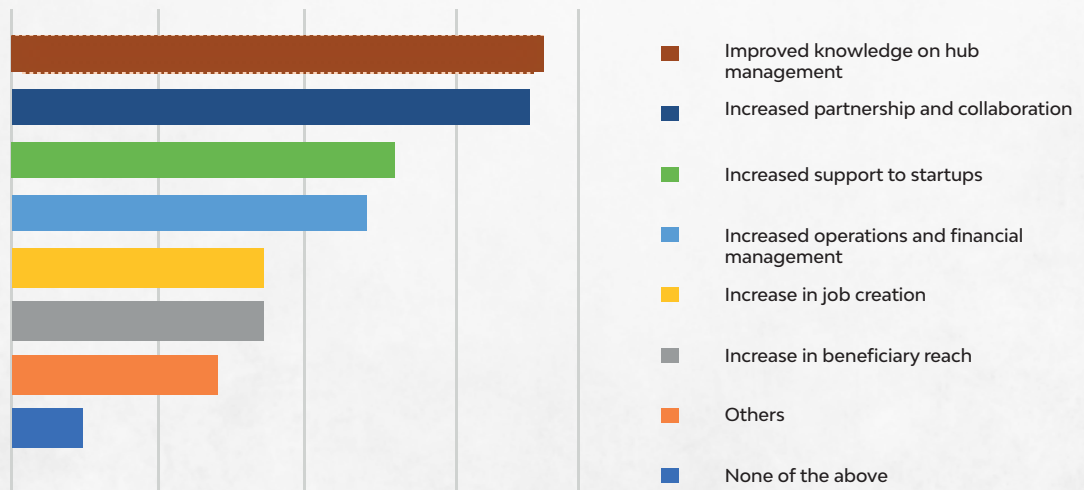
Areas of noticeable improvement based on lessons learnt from ACBP

n = number of hubs that have noticed improvement



Specific impact ACBP activities had on your performance

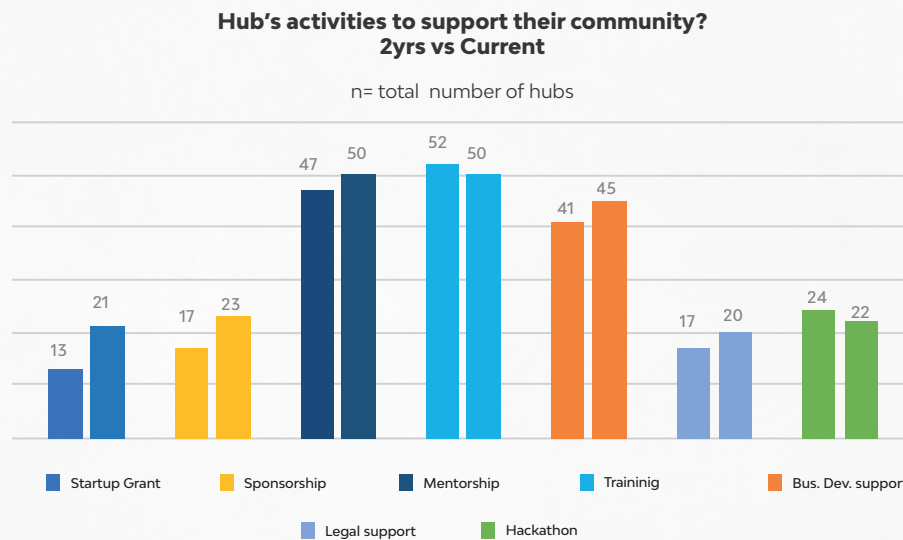
n = number of hubs that have participated in ACBP activities



Increased support towards hub’s community including startups

As a result of the lessons from participation in ACBP activities, it is expected that hubs should derive insight into the design of impactful activities that support their community better. Hubs’ support to the community can include training, sponsorship, business development, legal, grants disbursement, etc.

The data revealed additional 8 hubs that have added startup grants as a current activity to support their community. There was an increase in hubs that introduced sponsorship, mentorship, business development, and legal support. Some hubs reported the Covid-19 pandemic as a deterrent to achieving some activities initially planned including training but will pick up soon.



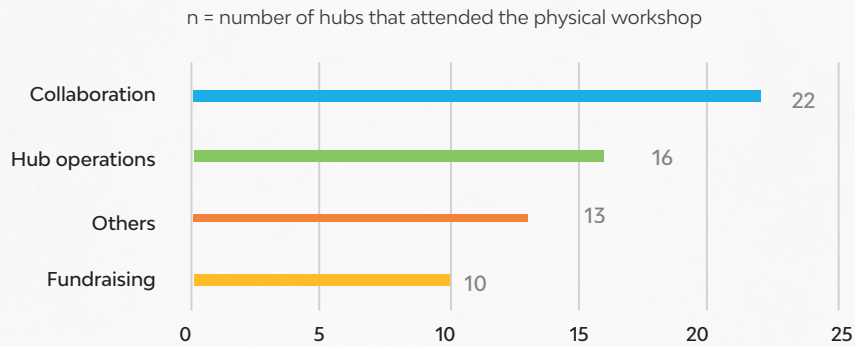
Physical Workshop as a platform for Collaboration and Improved networking capacity

The physical workshop delivers sessions of capacity-building knowledge aimed at improving the hub’s personnel skills in hub management, investment readiness, and collaborations. KII participants were asked what major lessons they learned from the physical workshop. Over 80% of KII participants who attended the physical workshop chose “collaboration” as one of the major lessons from the event, this includes both theoretical knowledge and practical networking outcomes. Followed by 64% who mentioned increased knowledge in hub operations. 40% mentioned fundraising as a major lesson from the workshop.

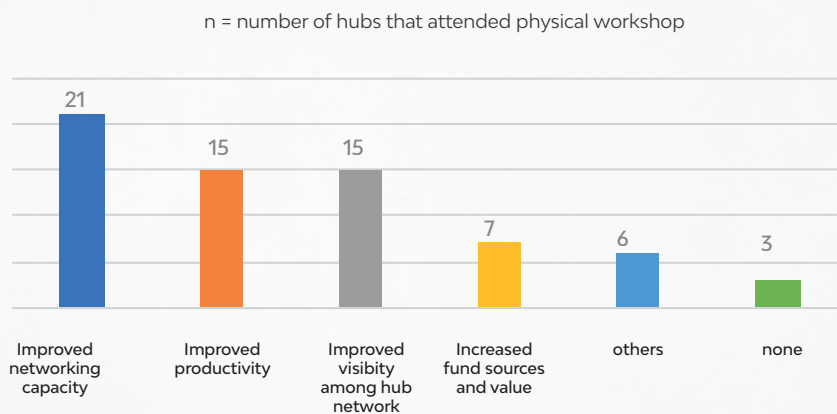
Out of 25 participants that attended the Physical workshop, 22 learned effective collaboration techniques, 16 mentioned lessons on hub operation, and 10 hubs reported fundraising techniques. Other lessons include improvement in proposal development techniques. As shown below in the chart, the outcome of the application of these lessons

is commensurate with the lessons learned. 21 out of the 22 who reported collaboration has increased capacity for networking. In the same vein, 15 hubs reported improved productivity and visibility among the hub network. While 7 reported an increase in fund sources and value.

What lesson did you learn from the physical workshop



Outcome of application of lessons from the Physical workshop



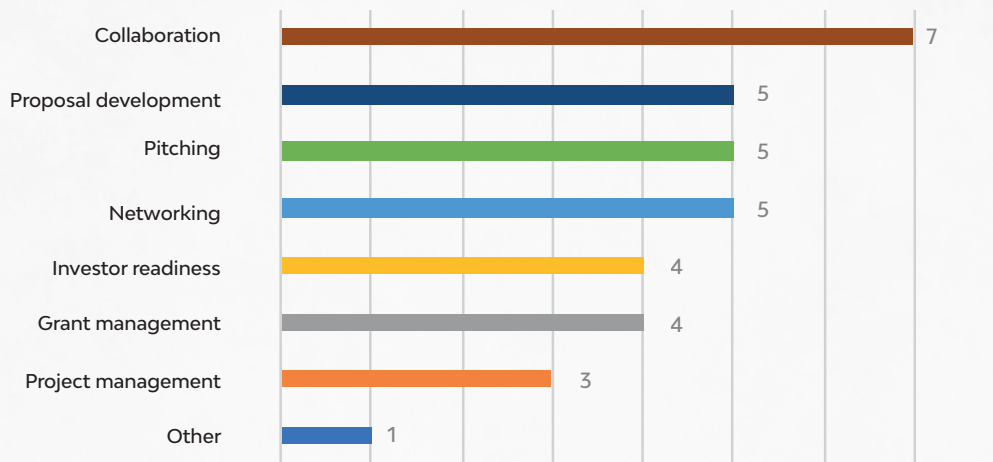
Hub in Residence (HIR) delivers practical lessons on Proposal development, Pitching and Networking

The HIR allows participating hubs to explore ideas to develop a proposal on an existing intervention or new idea, either solely or collaboratively. Each resulting proposal or idea is pitched before a panel that selects and awards the best proposal. This chain of activities presents learnings or lessons in the aspect of proposal development, pitching, collaboration, project management, investment readiness, etc.

All 7 respondents who had attended the HIR revealed that they all learned about collaboration, and were able to collaboratively engage with other hubs to implement prospective ideas from the event. 5 respondents mentioned proposal development, pitching, and networking as the major part of the lessons derived from the event. Although some of the respondents reported that they have prior skills in project management, the HIR rejuvenated their project management knowledge and further increased their practical experience in pitching.

Lessons learnt from HIR

n = number of hubs that attended the HIR



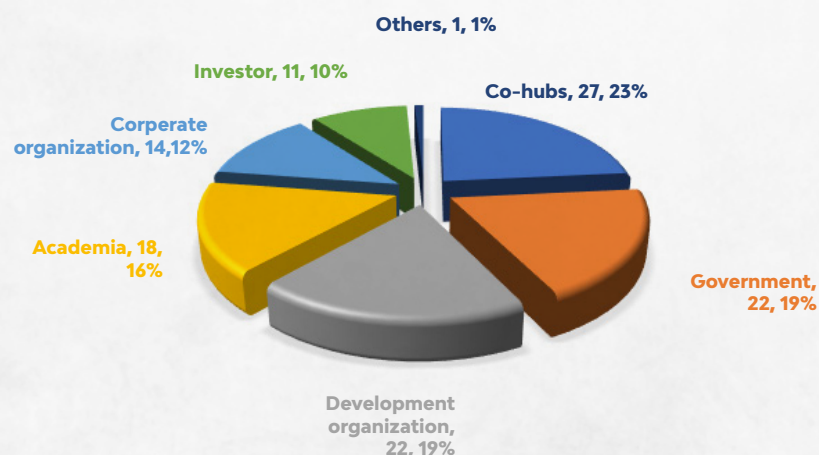
ACBP activities have increased hub’s engagement with relevant stakeholders

According to the AA1000 Stakeholder Engagement Standard, Stakeholders are those groups who affect and/or could be affected by an organization’s activities, products, or services and associated performance. The impact assessment further measured the involvement and engagement of hubs with relevant stakeholders within their respective communities.

The ACBP activities have stirred up and promoted engagement opportunities between hubs both internationally and locally. 23% of hubs reported to have engaged with a co-hub mainly for the purpose of collaboration and implementation of new projects. 19% named Government and development organizations as one of their stakeholders. Also, engagement with educational institutions has been encouraged. Other stakeholder categories include bilateral organizations.

Types of stakeholder engaged as a result of lessons learnt from the ACBP

n = number of hubs that have participated in ACBP



Startups have received streams of support from hubs through Training, Mentorship, Networking, and Business Development Support

The KII tool incorporated Data Quality Assurance (DQA) questions to ascertain support that startups have received from innovation hubs as a result of their activities.

Over 50% (12) of startups that responded to the KII revealed that they have received support from their hubs through training. Training aspects include product development and management, investment readiness, and business and strategic plan development. Approximately 40% (9) mentioned mentorship, and 35% (8) named networking and Business development as part of the support received. 25% (6) mentioned that they have received support through funding while 4% (1) through sponsorship. Other forms of support include access to the workspace and access to machines and other learning material.

Support received from your hub

n = number of startups that responded



Focus Group Discussion

The Impact assessment exercise featured a focus group discussion that brought together 10 experts to share insights on the effectiveness and areas of the programme that require improvement as a result of their participation in the programme. Participants were drawn to include representatives from both the Francophone and anglophone communities. Also, gender disaggregation of at least 40% was considered during the sampling process. However, only 30% of female participation was recorded during the course of the activity (i.e. 3 female and 7 male participants).

Participants are high-level community members with multiple years of experience working in the African Innovation Ecosystem who have participated in one way or the other in the ACBP activities. The discussion spurred conversations on the success of the programme, but more importantly, had contributions on noticeable aspects of the programme that required improvement.

Below, are questions and a summary of contributions from the FGD session

Question 1: What did we get right? Which of the components of the programme has delivered great benefit?

The different ACBP components include the Hub Learning Week (HLW), Physical Workshop, Hubs in Residence (HIR), AfriLabs Academy, Virtual Meetup Grant (VMG) and Capacity Building Awards (CBA) have delivered great contents and value to the ecosystem, and further built the capacity of African hubs on hub management, investment readiness, and sustainable networking. FGD participants highlighted that it has been highly impactful and helpful so far, in passing down knowledge to help improve the operations of the hubs and has further inspired the design of similar local programme across the ecosystem.

Question 2: What do we need to improve on the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme?

Participants mentioned certain aspects of the programme that needs improvements based on their previous engagement. These include inclusivity, community interaction, resource availability, and content management. Inclusive participation should be encouraged during virtual meetings. Effective translation systems should be provided so that francophone and anglophone members can maximize each session. Training resources should be digitalized so that members of the network can utilize them for

personal capacity building.

All suggestions and comments have been noted and would be taken into consideration by the AfriLabs team.

Question 3: What is the potential of ACBP to contribute to better innovation outcomes within the ecosystem?

Participants attest to the contribution of the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme toward its community. The AfriLabs Academy is very great and interesting with great potential to support current and prospective hub managers with pre-requisite knowledge on the development, management, and sustainability of hubs. The next step should be to track the use of these lessons and how hubs are translating the knowledge to improve the quality of programmes they are developing

Question 4: In what way can AfriLabs as an organization provide better support to improve the sustainability of African hubs?

Respondents shared their insight on approaches to support the sustainability of African hubs. This includes expansion of AfriLabs capacity building programme and contents to support hubs that are transforming into new thematic areas such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blue Ocean Technology, etc. Secondly, AfriLabs should provide support to in-country training, where all hubs will gather to share learnings and country-specific issues. In addition, this will promote AfriLabs as a community and improve advocacy efforts.

Furthermore, AfriLabs should initiate clustering of hubs based on location, needs, or thematic areas, such as IT hubs, social hubs, etc. This will help them share ideas and collaborate better in implementing sustainable solutions.

Testimonials



The programme has been very helpful to us, there's no negative feedback. Also to mention that the programme has inspired the Tanzania ecosystem to develop something similar and more localized for Tanzania which is pioneered by the Commission for Science and Technology, Government Agency for Innovation.

This is a big testimony as inspiration from AfriLabs

Francis Omorojie -
Ennovate Venture, Tanzania



The inference drawn from the focus group discussion is that the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme has deposited great benefit within the African Innovation Ecosystem. Apart from other immediate outputs recorded through training and learning weeks, a lasting impact is evident in the repository of knowledge towards hub management support and sustainability. However, innovative approaches are required to maximize the opportunities and improve the outcome of the programme.

General Hub Survey

The general hub survey received a total of 70 responses from the francophone and anglophone communities. However, responses include hubs that have earlier participated in the Key Informant Interview. To avoid duplication of responses and contributions, hubs that have previously responded to the KII questions were eliminated yielding a total of 46 unique survey responses.

Analysis of the data shows that, out of 39 hubs that have participated in ACBP activities, 82% have noticed an improvement in their hub management outcomes which agrees with over 85% who confirmed affirmatively that they use the knowledge gained from ACBP activities. An extensive look into the specific areas revealed hub operations (25) as the recorded area with the most improvement, followed by the leadership and management structure of the hub. 25% (8 hubs) reported financial management as an improved area. This suggests the need to intensify content development and delivery on financial management techniques and best practices for African hubs.

General Survey Summary

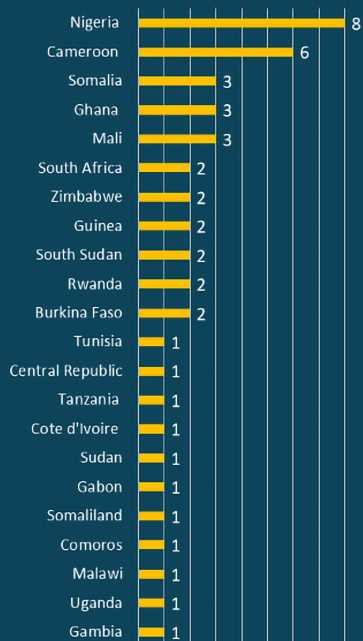
22 Countries surveyed

46 Unique hubs responded

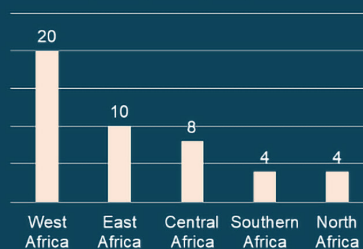
82% Hubs have noticed improvement in hub management outcomes

64% Hubs have increase knowledge on hub management

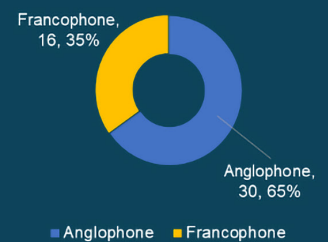
Chart showing number of reponses per country



Total unique responses per region

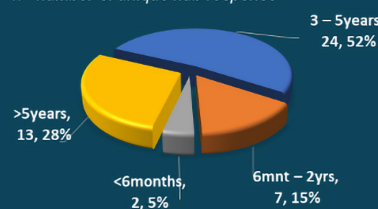


Response per language section

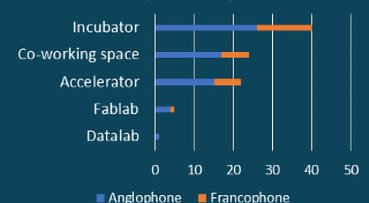


Age of hubs

n= number of unique hub response

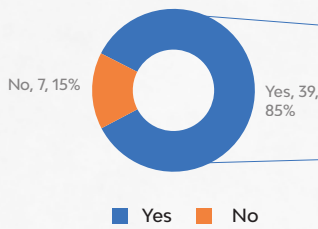


Hub types by Anglophone and Francophone composition



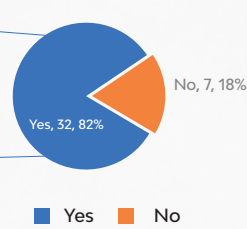
Hubs that have participated in ACBP

n = no of general hub survey response



Noticeable improvement in hub management outcomes since 2 years ago

n = no of hubs that have participated in ACBP



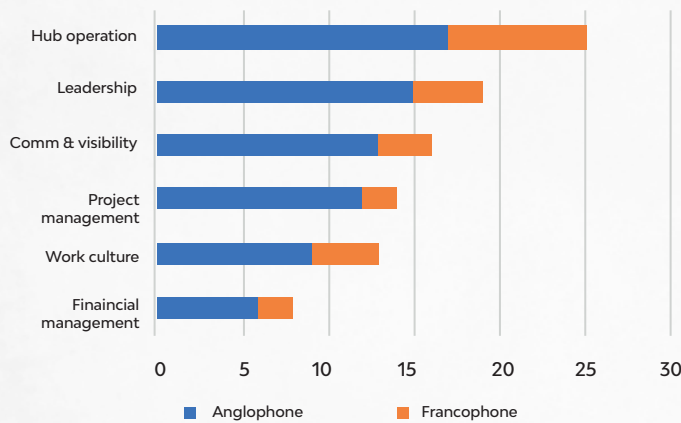
Use of skills learned during ACBP training afterwards

n = no of hubs that have participated in ACBP



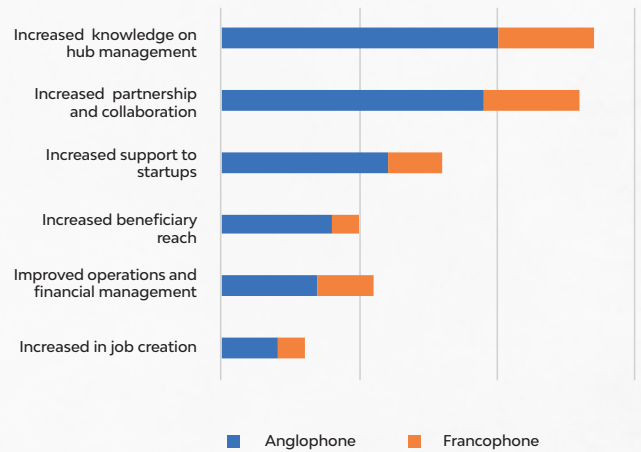
Area of improvement

n = no of hubs that have noticed improvement



Specific impact from ACBP activities

n = no of hubs that have participated in ACBP



Qualitative Result

The impact assessment obtained qualitative feedback from hubs on the impact of the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme activities on different outcomes. Narrative responses were interpreted and grouped under well-defined thematic areas.

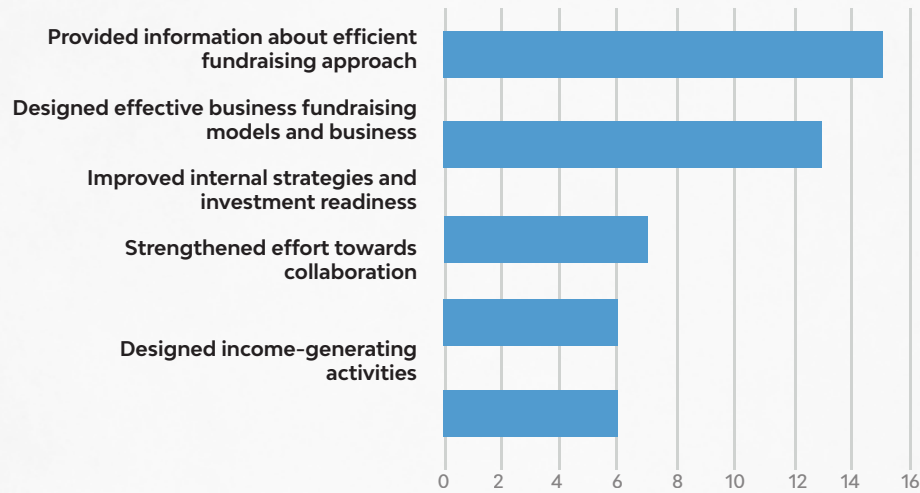
Briefly describe how the lessons from ACBP activities have improved your fundraising, and hub management approach

Various narrative responses received for this description were coded into the following thematic areas:

- Provided information on efficient fundraising approaches
- Designed effective business fundraising models and business plan
- Designed income-generating activities
- Strengthened effort towards collaboration
- Improved internal strategies and investment readiness

Respondents revealed that ACBP activities have given insights on new partners and collaboration strategies. Also, the lessons learned have built their capacity for effective programme design for income generation.

Briefly describe how ACBP lessons has improved your fundraising, and hub management approach



Testimonials



With The Afrilabs Learning series we were able to Reach out to a telecom company for partnership, this will give us more visibility and allow us to have more projects. We are also planning to implement a new management strategy which is all staffs will need second job. All the above are things we got to learn about through the Afrilabs learning series.

The Hub Limited, Gambia



Through the ACBP activities, the hub has been able to develop and mapped out specific local and international stakeholders for our fundraising activities. Through the mentorship program, important steps were taken to improve project impact communications to project partners and the public. New connections in terms of relevant stakeholders were established

Recycle Up, Ghana Hub



We are able to effectively get the best out of the teams/ workers, improve organizational culture and attract new funding opportunities, which were all challenges in the past.

Node Eight, Ghana

The lessons from ACBP activities have improved my approach to fundraising and hub management approach in a tremendous way. The lessons I learned from ACBP are amazing. It has changed the status quo in my overall strategy, process, and procedures.

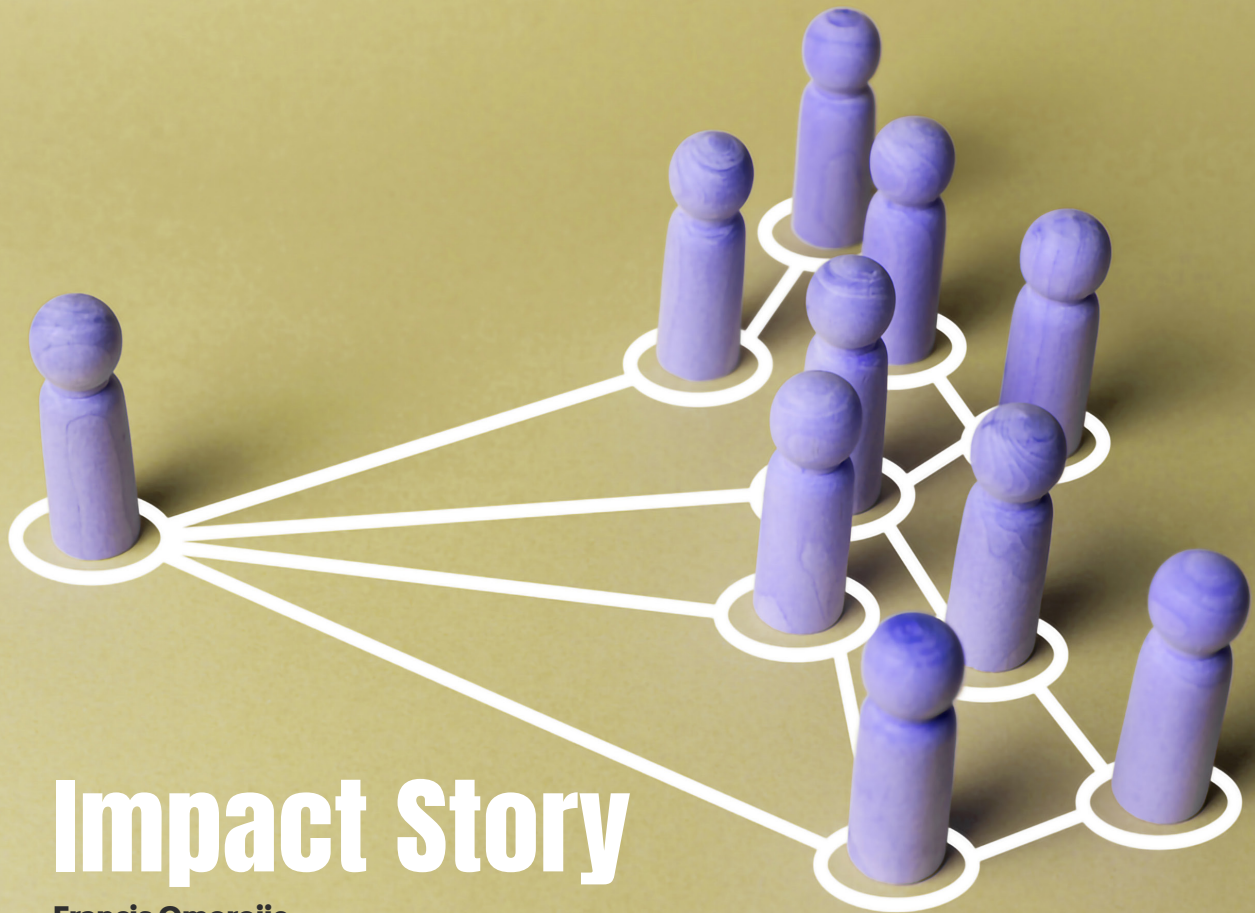
Artificial intelligence Hub, Nigeria

The lessons on visibility and fundraising have helped us to develop successful project proposals. Further the lessons on defining the business model and the products and services being offered has enabled Purple Innovation to have viable products and services and increase sales. As well as to offer relevant services mainly incubation to women-led businesses. Further, as a leader, I have gained insights on the flexible work culture required for people to thrive in a Hub and I am now more flexible and staff are somewhat more motivated.

Patricia Mtungila, Malawi

Our branding has improved and this makes people call us directly for opportunities.

Burkina Business Incubator, Burkina Faso



Impact Story

Francis Omorojie
Founder, Ennovate Ventures, Tanzania

Before the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme (ACBP), we were trying to figure out major aspects of our hub management, programming, and service delivery approach which include - what could be the right business model? What key role do we want to play within the ecosystem? how to build the competence of our team to deliver the different aspects of our programmes, and most importantly, how to evolve sustainably in terms of the programme we were implementing.

Then, we participated in the Hub Learning Week (HLW) which taught us practical ways of developing sustainable programmes and partnerships through peer-to-peer learnings from other hubs in the AfriLabs network that have been able to navigate similar challenges. The HLW also provided a platform for us to learn and share knowledge on sustainable business practices during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have also received the Virtual Meetup Grant (VMG) which has improved our activity and support to startups. We supported 2 innovators, NovFeed and A-trader with 1000 Euro. Through our support via the ACBP and the grant, one of them has also won the Total Startup challenge

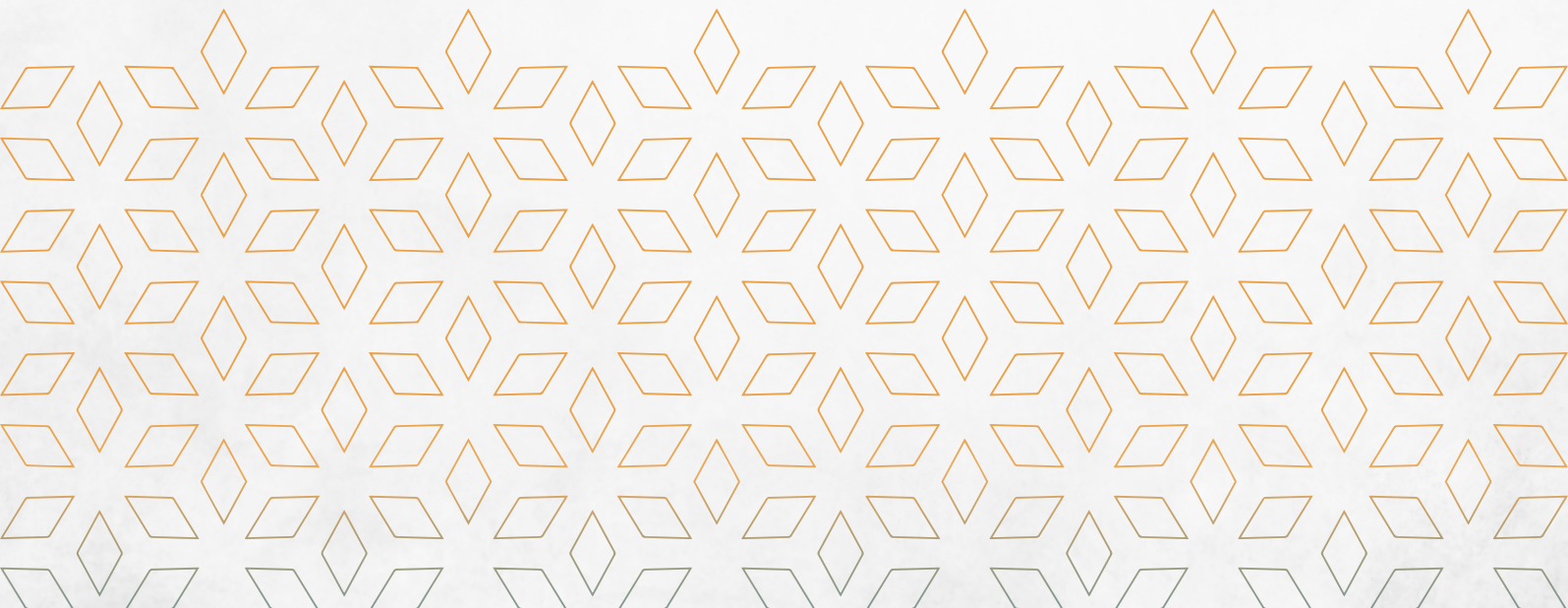
We also applied for, and won The Capacity Building Award (CBA) grant of 15,000 euros that served a key role in our hub's transformational journey. Through the award, we have been able to pilot our business model and restructure our activities as a venture builder. We supported 11 startups with top-level venture building support, and today, 2 of them (Farm Boski and Lyfplus)

have received follow-up investments from other investors. While 4 of them are in the accelerator stage.

The ACBP Physical workshop provided the platform to facilitate sessions with 25 hubs within the content which opened up networking opportunities for us. Our collaboration has improved with co-hubs to implement new ideas. Following the physical workshop, we were able to initiate our expansion to Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda through stakeholders' engagement opportunities during the Physical workshop.

To sustain the activities implemented via the 15,000 Euros ACBP Capacity Building Award, we have set up an angel network that invests and co-invests alongside other networks within the region. We have been able to improve our internal capacity efficiency, External stakeholders' engagement, and support to startups. Ennovate Ventures is currently coordinating the creation of a Tanzania Eco-founders initiative with 22 hub members.

ACBP has helped us to be well positioned as a significant player and build a more favorable brand, not just within the Tanzania ecosystem but also in the East African region.





Conclusion

The impact assessment process of the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme has revealed considerable results on the benefits of the different implemented components of the programme towards its participants and more importantly, to the African Innovation Ecosystem as stated in the objective of the exercise.

The adoption of different data collection methods proved effective as it gave access to gathering a comprehensive set of data from the different partner's perspectives. The Key Informant Interview also gave an opportunity for a face-to-face interview with respondents and as well, the opportunity to implement the data quality assurance.

Analysis of the KII data revealed a trace of impact achieved from the inception of the programme to date. Evidence of impact can be seen from the improvement associated with respondents' hub management outcomes, networking, and collaboration capacity, as well as improvement in investment, finances, and startup diversity, which are also traceable to the introduction of ACBP activities and lessons. Even though hubs participate in other learning activities and not all advances are entirely attributable to their involvement in the ACBP program, the importance of ACBP's contribution cannot be overstated.

Outcomes associated with these activities align with the envisaged secondary impacts from the ToC; Hubs are run more effectively, Job creation, and more diverse and successful investment-ready startups in Africa.

The FGD provided a new perspective from the stakeholders who have jointly delivered output to the programme as facilitators and content developers. The testimonial agrees with the impact of ACBP as an inspiration for sustainable program design. This also validates its potential to contribute toward a better innovation outcome within the African Innovation Ecosystem.

Similar to the KII, the general survey gathers data from new respondents on the outcome of the programme on their hub's performance. Specific impact points to knowledge increase, improved partnership and collaboration, operations and financial management, as well as job creation.

The ACBP has evidently achieved a broad quota of its objectives as designed in its programme theory of change. However, more innovative strategies are required to deliver maximum impact in the lowly reported variables from the Impact Assessment exercise.



Recommendation

Increase content on financial management

Report on hub's improvement on specific management outcomes shows a low result on the application of lessons in the area of financial management. Financial management techniques should be incorporated into training sessions during the hub learning week, physical workshops, hubs in residence, and other activities in order to increase awareness and outcomes on this indicator.

Expansion of program delivery into new Tech thematic areas

There is the need to provide knowledge-based support to innovation hubs that are transitioning into new technologies such as the blue ocean technology, Artificial Intelligence (AI), etc. This support can be delivered through the training components of the AfriLabs Capacity Building Programme (ACBP) such as the hub learning week, This could stir up interest and improve collaboration among hubs within this space.



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