



## Regional Initiative in Science and Education (RISE)

Workshop at the PEI #scienceAfrica UnConference, July 21, 2015, London  
*Better Together: Young Scientists' Perspectives on Academia & Industry*

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RISE supports scientists pursuing PhDs and master's degrees in sub-Saharan Africa through university-based research and teaching networks in selected disciplines. Its primary purpose has been to strengthen science research and education in sub-Saharan Africa by increasing the population of qualified academic staff in the region's universities.

The RISE networks assign first priority to research projects that address pressing regional issues and contribute to problem solving. The scientists are doing research with tremendous implications for African industries.

### For Discussion

A typical science or engineering PhD graduate has expertise in designing a project to its execution, strategically proving or disproving a hypothesis, gathering supporting data and evidence, analyzing data, devising conclusions from the relevant findings, and imagining how those findings might be developed further or put to practical use.

But when it comes to the development of actual technologies, most of these graduates have no idea how to commercialize an idea, and they lack the financial and physical resources necessary to launch a business.

On the other end, there are the needs of industry. Industries look to hire specialists but are often frustrated that graduates of African universities and technology institutes do not have relevant backgrounds and must be trained on the job or turned away in favor of applicants from outside Africa.

We believe academic communities, the private sector, and governments have a responsibility to work together to drive scientific and technological development to support sustainable and inclusive growth across Africa.

## Discussion Questions

- How can institutions ensure their course content is relevant to industry needs? National/regional development needs?
  - How can industry best support university research? Internships? Equipment? Curriculum development? All of the above?
  - Should scientists in Africa be trained as entrepreneurs? Or should partnerships between scientists and entrepreneurs be established? How can the gap between scientific research in universities and the needs of African industries be bridged, for their mutual benefit?
  - What kind of policies and/or structures need to be created to facilitate dialogue, interaction, and mutual support among universities, governments, industry, entrepreneurs, and philanthropists?
  - What are the roles and responsibilities of the private sector, governments, university administrations, and others in supporting research for development?
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