Greetings!

Corporate Social Responsibility through knowledge sharing

It has become evident that only the crème del a crème are the ones most sort after. It is also important to note that experts are not made overnight, they are groomed overtime into what the job market requires. Once again just like any other benefit/resource that is utilised by many, harnessing talent and competence require concerted effort. Student, teacher and the job market need to be in consensus to achieve the success required for the development of the economy.

In the progressive development among the graduands/student community in institutions of higher learning several factors need to work in unison. These factors include: the job market, the institutions and the student, hence forming a triangle of relations. All the three factors have a role to play to ensure continuous flow of the human resource needed for economic development of the country. According to UNDP the six pillars of human development namely: equity, sustainability, productivity, empowerment, cooperation and security are necessary for expansion of human capabilities.
The role of the institution of higher learning is to train the future members of the occupational group requiring higher education. They provide the desire to contribute to the development of the Country’s national and cultural heritages. This has been received well among the young citizens of Kenya due to the high number of graduates leaving these institutions which range between fifteen to thirty thousand every year. It is therefore the responsibility of the institutions to equip and empower the students with the knowledge required as the foundation for personal development.

Mentorship programs like the Leadership and Mentorship program run by Ecotourism Kenya come in to bridge the gap between the job market and the student/institution. They equip students with the necessary soft skills which they use in translating classroom knowledge into useful practical ideas. Eco Tourism Kenya since 2011 has been hosting continuing students for training and mentorship after which they are placed with Ecorated facilities, Community Based Tour Operators and Tour Agencies/Operators that need assistance with their sustainability journey.

While out in the field, Ecotourism Kenya makes follow up on the progress of the students to ensure utmost uptake of skills required by the industry. The placement host is also encouraged to ensure the students are exposed to all sectors of the facility as well as ensure to tap the knowledge passed to them by Eco tourism Kenya on matters responsible tourism. Recently we have engaged students as Ambassadors of sustainability who have walked the journey of responsible tourism with tour operators and agencies.

The Sustainability Ambassadors have been very instrumental in ensuring the entire tourism supply chain is in compliance with the responsibility bestowed on tour operators/agencies. They have assisted these companies in ensuring any partnerships they get into moving forward enhances their purpose for the tourism industry. Some of these Ambassadors include: Chantal Esperance, attached at Kifaru House in Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Peter Muthanji who was sent to Eco adventures, Job Maina of Mau Safaris, Mercy Chepkosgei of Belo Luxury Safaris and Ida John of Buymore adventures just to name but a few. Most ambassadors have been incorporated as staff members in the companies they first engaged with, due to the critical role they played and are still playing at the various companies.
The role to be played by the various companies and facilities is now coming out clearly. As the host of the students deployed by Ecotourism Kenya, they become the body that shapes the students’ understanding of the real world. They inculcate the required work ethics, sharpen skills as well as monitor the developmental progress of the student. The facilities are also instrumental in strengthening the existing interests of the student. It has been noted previously that, after the end of their internship students decide to pursue a passion/interest turning it into businesses. The entrepreneurial capacity can be modelled during the internship allow for diversity of the tourism products. It is also important that facilities assist the student in identifying gaps in the industry to fuel their business desires. This works out for the best since more businesses translate to more jobs created thus reducing pressure on the few existing entities. A good example is Esperance Chantal who is currently reusing wine bottles to make flower vases.

The academia requires information about the changing trend in tourism from the various players of the industry who employ the products of the academic institutions. This aids in the revision of the curriculum to feed the needs of the industry. It also ensures the academia provides relevant courses in order to fill human resource gaps that may arise from lack of the necessary personnel.

It is therefore clear that SDG 17 “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development” can be localized too in the smallest of way with expectation of great impact.