



When C4DLab formulated and launched the Start-up Incubation and Acceleration Strategy just a few weeks ago, it was acutely aware that several factors would either propel the distinctive innovation vision it has, or several others would tend to stubbornly stand on its way, resulting to humiliating failure on its part.

Hence, the team has announced being very prepared to take advantage of the opportunities identified, and successfully navigate around the pitfalls.

When going about innovation, incubation and acceleration, C4DLab will have to benefit from the University of Nairobi's facilitative policies such as the business start-up Incubation Policy, the Strategic Plan, and Intellectual Property, which are already in operation.

Further, for C4DLab's advantage, Government ICT Policies are in existence. Among them are the ICT Masterplan and the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, which all encourage incubation and acceleration of disruptive technological innovations.

The soon to-be-established and operationalized government institutions on science and technology will greatly benefit the initiative of the soon-to-be the major start-up incubation and acceleration center, C4DLab: the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and the Kenya National Innovation Agency (KENIA).

Other crucial opportunities for growth successfully boil down to **Industry Ecosystem**, where there exist many technology companies establishing presence in Kenya in need of partnerships such as Microsoft, Oracle, IBM and Philips. Incubation serves as a tangible overlap of interests.

Industry Demand

Many government agencies, private sector companies and Non-Governmental organisations needing solutions and partnerships. These can be realized through supporting the incubation-acceleration program.

Convening Power of the University

The University of Nairobi enjoys a unique national social status that can be leveraged to pull all stakeholders into the incubation space.

Alumni Network

UoN has a huge pool of alumni; a strong alumni program is a great resource for funding, seed capital and market for products and services produced at an incubation lab of the university.

Referrals

Incubator can develop partnerships that give discounted services to start-ups.

Mentors

There is a rare opportunity to develop a match-based mentorship program, where mentors are identified based on incubates' needs. Through this, start-ups can gain practical guidance and coaching in creating their enterprises.

Government Affiliation

With UoN Being a leading public university in the country, C4DLab can tap into the strong government affiliation that the university enjoys. As Initiatives of the university receive significant attention when launched or operationalized, this is beneficial to start-ups.

Real Estate

The University of Nairobi is well-endowed with resources (land and buildings) that can easily be converted and utilized for purposes of enhancing innovation through incubation, exhibition, presentation, showcasing among others.

Leading Global Incubation Programs

C4DLab has the favourable chance to benchmark off and learn from other successful incubation initiatives, for instance programs from the USA, Israel and India. This can be achieved through benchmarking visits and forging strong working partnerships.

Investment Funds

There exist funds which the incubation program can tap into for example from the University, banks, Government, NGOs, Donors, Grants, Investment Banks, Venture Capitalists, Angel Investment, Crowd-funding. In addition to that, the incubator can develop its own investment fund to support start-ups as seed money.

Ranking

Growing the lab to a leading position in Africa and generally globally requires that it ventures into other initiatives beyond incubating and research.

Innovation Pool

The University of Nairobi provides C4DLab a continuous huge and diverse talent pool consisting of faculty and students that can feed into the incubation program.

Unresolved Social Problems

The existence of numerous problems in the society that C4D Lab is uniquely placed to solve.

Platform Gap

There is a dire need for an innovation platform/programme, which has world-class structure, infrastructure and services.

Technological Innovation Demand

There is a clear necessity to develop a strong innovation ecosystem founded on a Knowledge based economy.

Emerging Technologies

During C4D Lab's piloting, a 3D printer was deployed whose demand has increased quarter over quarter.

Stakeholder Support

Government, Industry and other hubs now agree institution-based Innovation "Centres of Excellence" are the missing link for a strong sustainable innovation ecosystem.

Central Location

C4D Lab has the advantage of being physically located next to the CBD. This central placement makes it convenient to access and be accessed by stakeholders and attend events.

Comparatively Good Connectivity

The university has a well-mapped stable broadband Internet connection. This kind of infrastructure is necessary for technology-based startups.

Student Workers

Easy and guaranteed access to affordable university students who can work/intern at these incubated companies therefore providing a practical opportunity to implement learned skills set.

However, threatening the existence of the nascent innovation lab are issues revolving around managing investor expectations, stiff competition, sustainability, university bureaucracy, a disintegrated community, gender imbalance in the tech arena, commitment, as well as Net connectivity.

Navigating around, controlling, adapting and adopting remain among the only effective means to ensure the hub's continued growth and development.