



# AMI Impact Report

## 2017

A report from the African Management Initiative

# INTRODUCTION

The African Management Initiative is a social enterprise delivering Africa's first scalable solution for workplace learning. We help transform African organizations, and we empower entrepreneurs, managers, entry-level workers and job-seekers through practical and affordable learning tools. This report provides an update on our impact during 2017, drawing on data from our annual survey as well as stories and testimonials from participants and clients.

## IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

Over 6,200 individuals from 11 African countries participated in **32 AMI programmes** in 2017. That brings our total reach to date through structured blended learning programmes to almost 18,000, including 14,000 entrepreneurs. 55,000 people in total have engaged with the AMI online platform, having downloaded over 1 million tools.



For the first time this year, we have data not only about our impact on individual *skills*, but also **on individual and company performance**. We're thrilled that we now have data showing that:

### AMI 'graduates' are more skilled after an AMI programme



**97%** of programme participants<sup>1</sup> apply what they learn at work



**92%** of client CEOs/leads saw improvements in management & leadership skills among their employees<sup>2</sup>

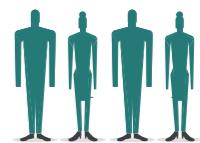
<sup>1</sup> Based on post-programme survey of participants

<sup>2</sup> Based on post-programme survey of company CEOs/client leads

### AMI graduates perform more effectively



**89%** of participants feel they are more effective at work



**100%** of CEOs saw tangible performance improvements in staff

### AMI programmes lead to better *company* performance



**100%** of clients said business improved after they ran AMI learning programmes with their employees



Companies were more efficient (**92%**) and their customers were happier (**92%**)



Over two-thirds directly link these changes to AMI programmes



**100%** of entrepreneurs on our SME programmes reported improved business performance after engaging with AMI



**75%** increased revenue, and half created new jobs<sup>3</sup>



All of them linked the improved business performance to AMI programmes

<sup>3</sup> Based on self-reported data from entrepreneurs in post-programme survey



**70%** of graduates on our Youth Employment Accelerator programme found jobs or returned to full-time education and **100%** felt more confident about finding work.



All programmes statistics are on a rolling basis ending in 2017



Developing confident, value-driven leaders for an expanding business at M-KOPA Solar - A case study

## THE PROBLEM

In 2015, M-KOPA Solar, a leading provider of pay-as-you-go solar electricity to off-the-grid customers in East African countries, had connected 200,000 homes and were adding 500 new homes **every day**. To respond to their unprecedented growth since 2012, the company created M-KOPA U to quickly train their frontline staff on operational basics. However, M-KOPA also needed a learning model to empower its leadership to adapt to their new responsibilities while sustaining growth.

## THE SOLUTION

AMI designed a one year blended learning leadership development programme, the 'M-KOPA Leadership Development Programme', to empower senior managers to deepen their personal effectiveness and leadership skills. M-KOPA wanted to enhance a performance-driven culture in the organisation, alongside its growth and expansion, and to support its leaders to implement that shift in their teams. M-KOPA also wanted to broaden managers' understanding of general management, with the possibility of more opportunities within the company in the future. Participants focused on topics like personal productivity, goal setting, motivating your teams, and dealing with challenges and opportunities through in-person workshops and our online courses. The programme included a core-curriculum and personalised learning, coaching and mentoring for department-specific skills. Participants applied their learning through team-based action learning projects which were dedicated to improving key aspects of the company and implemented by the end of the programme. M-KOPA wanted these projects to focus on deepening the practice of its values, increasing engagement across geographies and the customer experience.

"I would like to thank AMI. M-KOPA has seen tons of value from the programme and we look forward to working with you again. We've seen in the last couple of weeks with the board and some investors that a big focus has been on leadership bench strength, and just seeing the workshop today, it gives me a lot of confidence that we have great leadership strength, so thank you!"

Samuel, Chief Human Resource Officer, M-KOPA

## THE IMPACT

At the end of the M-KOPA programme, 100% of participants felt that they could apply what they learned to their work and reported improved effectiveness at work. Additionally, 100% of participants felt that they had acquired new skills in key management topics through the programme.

"The insights given during the (AMI programme) were invaluable, and I engaged well with the teaching methods and content. The Action Learning Project was also helpful in terms of engaging others and solving an important problem for the company."

Edwin, Head of Department at M-KOPA and participant of the AMI Leadership Development Programme



The most successful aspect of the programme were the Action Learning Projects, which are practical team-based mini-consulting projects that focus on a particular challenge or opportunity in the business. One project identified the M-KOPA 8 - key qualities of an M-KOPA manager - and focused on strengthening their application in a measurable way.

**Because of the success of the first cohort, M-KOPA signed on for a second and third cohort of the Leadership Development Programme with AMI, and is extending their work with AMI to include a large programme to develop middle management skills.**

"When I heard about the AMI Programme I was very keen to be part of it... All in all the concepts were simple and easy to understand and the project and discussions with the rest of the colleagues were very fruitful and engaging."

Pauline, Director at M-KOPA and participant on the AMI Leadership Development Programme



## What does AMI do?

AMI has developed a unique blended learning model for African organisations and individuals. We partner with Africa's top business schools and practitioners to develop world class content designed specifically for Africa, with a focus on management, leadership, and core business and soft skills. Content is delivered at scale through our web and mobile social learning platform, and through in-person blended 'Learning Lab' workshops. Courses are combined with innovative coaching and development tools and peer accountability to ensure that managers apply what they learn on the job. And we leverage the power of social networking functionality to make learning fun and engaging. AMI can deliver world-class learning and development at 10-20% of the cost of high-quality African business education, hour for hour, creating huge potential for scale.

### AMI serves the following groups:

- **Employee learning and on-boarding programmes** for companies, including our '[Thrive at Work](#)' programme for workplace effectiveness, '[AMI Focus](#)' short courses and our new '[Company Academy](#)' – a customised one-stop shop for all your company's learning needs
- **Management and leadership programmes** for middle to senior-level managers in a wide range of organisations in the private, public and NGO sectors.
- **Entrepreneurship & business skills programmes** for owners of small businesses (offered through intermediary organisations such as banks, funds, accelerators, enterprise development programmes and foundations). These range from [micro businesses](#) to growing companies seeking investment.
- **Youth Employment Accelerator** for recent graduates or unemployed young people (offered in partnership with other implementing or donor organisations).



# Our progress in 2017

In 2017, we directly trained and developed 6,219 people from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Somalia, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Zimbabwe and South Africa. We partnered with the Shell Foundation on a large project to support access-to-energy companies with human capital to strengthen their teams, and with Equity Group and KCB to empower thousands of small businesses. We expanded our portfolio, working directly with growing businesses. We engaged with several high-growth impact enterprises like Kenya's M-KOPA and Copia and South Africa's Qualihealth, to help them expand and deliver on their missions of serving the marginalised. We also worked to strengthen capacity at large local employers like Unga, Dawa pharmaceuticals, Ngao Credit in Kenya, MediaMark and Property Point in South Africa. And we worked for the first time with the local offices of multi-nationals, such as KLM, Nestle and SC Johnson.



"I really enjoy AMI's approach and how different it is from other training programmes. Most training programmes are very theoretical while AMI's learning labs are action-oriented, you are able to see the results firsthand. The impact is seen and measured by the tools that we are given."

Kennedy, Entrepreneur and participant of AMI's Grow Your Business Programme with KCB Bank



AMI has always believed in the power of effective management to impact the public sector as well as the private sector. We were delighted in 2017 to start reaching organisations in health, education and civil society. We trained 25 head teachers in Tanzania through our partnership with the [Goodall Foundation](#), helping them boost teacher morale and attendance and embedding systems to ensure exams are held on time! We launched an exciting and impactful programme with AMP Health, a programme within the Aspen Institute, to support managers in public health departments in Kenya, Sierra Leone, Malawi and Zambia. And we worked with civil society managers to improve the sustainability of their organisations in Zimbabwe and Nigeria – where a particularly enthusiastic group logged in to weekly virtual workshops at 6am with very impressive attendance rates!



Alongside our work with businesses and entrepreneurs, AMI is scaling up its employability work, which has huge potential for making a dent in Africa's rising youth unemployment rates. We finished our [Youth Employment Accelerator](#) pilot in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation (MCF), demonstrating a model that helped over 70% of participants transition into jobs or full-time education, at around 25% of the cost of traditional employability programmes. 100% said they felt more confident about finding a job after the programme and would recommend it to peers. MCF published this [very positive case study about the pilot](#).



Finally, we translated our online learning platform and a selection of courses into Arabic for use initially in Egypt, where we are supporting 3,500 micro-entrepreneurs who are engaging with online learning for the first time, and exclusively through their mobile phones, with training on financial literacy, market awareness and digital financial services.



# Impact

We are thrilled that our data is starting to demonstrate the link not only between AMI programmes and individual skills, but also between AMI programmes and **company performance**. We now have data from the majority of CEOs/Client leads with whom we worked in 2017.

Among our B2B clients, 100% of CEOs/decision makers responding to our surveys/interviews reported a **tangible improvement in company performance** since engaging with AMI, and over two-thirds attributed at least some of the improvement in company performance **directly to the AMI programme**.

100% of clients reported **Improved Company Performance** and over two-thirds linked this directly to AMI



We asked the CEOs/decision makers to identify which metrics were most affected, with **operating efficiency and customer satisfaction** coming out in front, both at 92%. 100% of the CEOs/client leads reported a tangible improvement in the performance of the participants who took the programme, with 92% noting an improvement in the participants' ability to lead/manage others.

81% of participants found AMI programmes better/or much better than any other training they had received. 7% were experiencing training for the first time.



92% of business clients reported improved productivity across the whole company (not just AMI participants) & 96% noted improved employee engagement



We've had great results before on individual improvements and satisfaction, but this is the first time we've had a large enough sample of CEOs drawing a **direct link between AMI programmes and the performance at a whole workforce and company operational level**.

## Data from entrepreneurs & SMEs

The data so far from entrepreneurs and small/medium sized enterprises that engage with AMI through intermediaries is even more positive than data from larger employee learning programmes with business clients, although possibly less reliable, since it is based on self-reported feedback, and without the distance of a CEO/client lead commenting on her staff's performance.



100% of entrepreneurs reported improved business performance after the AMI programme and all attributed this at least partly to AMI. 91% improved operating performance, 75% improved revenue and 50% created new jobs.



100% of entrepreneurs who completed a post-programme survey saw a change in their business after engaging with AMI. Again, operating efficiency was the most affected, with 91% of respondents noting a difference. 75% noted an improvement in revenue, 73% increased profit, 50% created new jobs and 35% secured debt or equity funding. All of them attributed that change at least partly to the AMI programme. We do think this data (which is a rolling average across all AMI programmes to date) might have been skewed by a particularly large and successful programme in Nigeria. However even much less positive data would be encouraging given the very low cost per user of many of our intermediary programmes.

In 2018 and 2019, we will be taking our data analysis and research to the next level. We are working with MIT, a leading US research university, to conduct a Randomised Control Trial (RCT) to provide even more robust testing of our programmes with SMEs and entrepreneurs, with funding from the Argidius Foundation. We will share findings as soon as they are available.





A South African food retailer helps managers empower their teams

## THE PROBLEM

Pie City in South Africa was seeking a practical programme that would equip their team with the necessary skills to more effectively manage their store network and build a more empowering culture in the organisation. The company also wanted to develop some key skills for their middle and line managers.

## THE SOLUTION

AMI and Pie City designed a three-month management development programme for 32 Area Managers. The programme focused on skills such as influencing others, having challenging conversations and empowering team members. Participants worked through a series of online courses, that were relevant to their needs, and engaging workshops, which included an opportunity for managers to discuss and solve real-life challenges in communication and team empowerment.



## THE IMPACT

100% of participants reported improved effectiveness at work since engaging with the programme. 97% said they were able to apply immediately what they learned in the programme to their daily work. While previously 54% of managers felt that they were able to empower staff, after completing the programme, 72% felt that they are able to empower their staff. 66% of participants found that they had the confidence to influence others and the ability to motivate them to believe in a shared goal, an improvement from just 18% at the beginning of the programme.

"It wasn't what I expected – I have to admit that I wasn't looking forward to wasting another day in training, but what we did was incredibly helpful."

Area Manager at Pie City and participant of AMI's Management Development Programme

"I learnt to work with people, giving ownership to others and not taking all the responsibility."

Anita Padayachee, Area Manager at Pie City and participant of AMI's Management Development Programme



# Lessons learned in 2017

Every year, we deepen our understanding around how adults learn in our markets, and critically, how we can best help participants translate learning into improved on-the-job effectiveness for themselves, their teams and their businesses. In 2017, we learned that:

- **Investing in a few key people can lift a whole workforce:** We've always hypothesised that investing in key managers, either at senior, middle or even line manager level, would not only improve the performance of those people, but could affect employee engagement and productivity across a whole workforce. We now have the data to support this. We hope it will be encouraging for growing businesses that may have a limited budget to spend on talent, and might feel overwhelmed by the scope of the challenge, to see that carefully targeted investment can have a ripple effect across much larger numbers. We hope this data will encourage even cash-strapped smaller companies to invest early in their people, to quickly see the benefits across their team and the business more broadly.



"I appreciated how AMI created an environment that allowed us to share personal insights with other team members and come up with interesting solutions."

Kennedy Kiura, Manager at Nestle Kenya and Participant of AMI's Management Development Programme

- **Entrepreneurs want tools not courses:** The data continues to validate our early assumptions that entrepreneurs (as opposed to employees in salaried jobs) prefer informal and practical tools alongside peer networking opportunities to structured courses and workshops. This hunch, along with some initial data, has informed the design of our new Grow Your Business programme for entrepreneurs, which aims to provide scalable business development support by giving SMEs the tools and support they need to embed good business practices into their companies. Our programmes with entrepreneurs consistently show very good download metrics for tools and resources (informal learning) but course completion rates that are usually significantly lower than for our employee learning programmes. They also seem more likely to show up for a networking event than an event billed as a training workshop. This makes logical sense – impatient and busy business owners want to find exactly what they need, when they need it, and are not interested in showing up for a workshop and taking an online course that someone else thinks is important. Employees, on the other hand, are more likely to complete structured company-mandated workshops and courses if they think it might yield a certificate and enhance their career prospects.



YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS INITIATIVE

"It has been a unique experience, I can't imagine any other school or course [where] I could have acquired what I have in AMI in just two months. AMI is impressive."

Participant on a programme offered by the Young African Leadership Initiative (YALI) in partnership with AMI



- **Learning is a practice not a one-off event:** We have for some time been explaining to our clients that learning is an ongoing practice that must be embedded into an organisation, rather than a series of 'events'. We've re-worked our product range to support this more explicitly, moving clients from a 'programme' to a 'partnership' approach, extending the relationship over multiple years and encouraging them to see AMI as their learning partner/advisor. This will take time, and will not work for every client, but we're experimenting with more affordable products like [open programmes](#) and the [AMI Focus](#) short courses that allow us to stay connected with clients between larger programmes. We have also soft-launched a new Company Academy, which is based on an annual membership model and allows organisations to provide a one-stop shop for diverse learning needs across their organisations at an affordable price. We're excited about the potential for this approach, as more and more companies are willing to invest long-term in embedding learning into the fabric of their organisations, rather than seeing 'training' as a one-off box ticking exercise.



"The service we received from AMI was excellent. The learning programme they offered was very engaging, practical and addressed many of the key issues our staff face. Their workshops were highly engaging and their online courses valuable in terms of the tools and concepts covered. The skill gaps that we identified in our team were addressed and we have seen positive and tangible behaviour and performance improvements. We were impressed by the level of service and professionalism we received – their staff made a real effort to engage with participants throughout the programme to ensure they felt supported and engaged. They really sought to understand our organisation and the challenges we had, and then addressed them appropriately.

Trevor Kimani, Group Chief Operating Officer at Ngao Credit



## Learn More

To explore a partnership, or to learn more about how AMI can support your learning needs - whether for your own staff or for the entrepreneurs or youth you support, please contact:

**Rebecca Harrison** [rebecca@africanmanagers.org](mailto:rebecca@africanmanagers.org) - for pan-African partnerships or programmes in West or North Africa.

**Joan Kamau** [joan@africanmanagers.org](mailto:joan@africanmanagers.org) - for programmes in East Africa

**Andrea Warriner** [andrea@africanmanagers.org](mailto:andrea@africanmanagers.org) - for programmes in Southern Africa

Explore our offerings at <https://www.africanmanagers.org>.

Watch a short video about [who we are, what we do and why](#).

Watch AMI on [CNN](#).

Read more about AMI's learning approach in our '[Training Talent](#)' report.





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