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[See table of contents](#)

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Capacity Building in Developing and Emerging Countries: From Mindset Transformation to Promoting Entrepreneurship and Diaspora Involvement

Elie Chrysostome, State University of New York. (2019), Springer Edition

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Bringing together nearly twenty scholars from multiple academic disciplines, this publication on capacity building was carefully edited by Elie Chrysostome, a professor of international business and strategic management at the State University of New York. Over the last two decades, Professor Chrysostome has specialized in topics related to international entrepreneurship, immigrant entrepreneurship, small business internationalization, and capacity building in the context of developing countries just to cite a few. Indeed, southern countries are at the crossroads of challenging development priorities, significant human and resource potential, and international cooperation opportunities. Within this setting, southern nations also known as developing and emerging nations must choose the right development policy mix based on the potential each country has and the international partners available.

In this regard, capacity building appears to be an important goal that many developing nations are pursuing. Meanwhile, capacity building also as the bedrock of any successful development policy is a topic that is still poorly documented in the context of emerging and developing countries and even more so in Africa. Therefore, this book brings a novel contribution on the topic by analyzing four major aspects of capacity building with regards to economic transformation that should aim to close the gap between where nations are at the moment and where they want to be within the next few years. The book also raises the issue of capacity building from an entrepreneurial perspective that aligns with sustainable development in those nations under investigation. Moreover, the topic of diaspora remittances was included in the book as well as ways to revamp the business environment in developing and emerging countries through more impactful fiscal instruments and anti-corruption strategies.

Although not only focused on Africa, in the context of African developing countries, it is important to highlight specific mentions made in the book. In the early parts of the book, the authors raise the need for Africans to transform their mindset to enable long term and prosperous capacity building revolution across the continent. Such mindset transformation requires Africans to innovate from a human cognition standpoint to free themselves from backward thinking that is tainted by superstition and counter-productive elements of some subcultures among other things. Also, it urges Africans, particularly policy makers, to comprehend the circumstances that support capacity building while revisiting and improving the policies and strategies surrounding Africa's sustainable transformation.

Meanwhile, for capacity building to occur, the role of female entrepreneurship in developing countries was strongly emphasized, particularly in the case of African countries where women represent a significant portion of the workforce and entrepreneurs such as in Madagascar and Kenya, where organizations like the African Capacity Building Foundation are increasingly supporting girls and women as change makers, enhancing effective governance in Africa, and creating leaders in development management (ACBF, 2020). This is even more important when regions like Africa have women as the majority of the population but also youth as the dominant portion of the population, prompting a capacity building strategy that puts younger generations at the forefront of the capacity building strategy. Therefore, the promotion of grassroots entrepreneurship that generates more value-added but also aligns with sustainable development goals across Africa and beyond is important.

Besides, supporting SMEs from emerging and developing countries that are intensive exporters is key to achieving the goal of capacity building in those nations. Some interesting examples of case study in the agribusiness with a focus on West African countries like Burkina Faso is included. Another important factor for capacity building is the role that diaspora and its remittances can play in the context of developing countries, particularly in the regions of Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean Islands. All these factors when accompanied by fiscal policies while reducing corruption can help developing countries and their companies become globally more competitive through strong capacity building and the maximization of their potential regarding the abundant resources (both human and natural) they possess toward higher economic performance in those regions. For this, international collaborations may be necessary.

Although the book made a short mention to ways capacity building can take advantage of international collaborations, the connection can be extended into how developing countries can learn from emerging and transitioning economies, like South Korea, Singapore, or China, which have made tremendous progress in that regard. Indeed, China for instance, although not perfect, is one of the most interesting examples about successfully developing and implementing capacity building policies and strategies. The question now is what and how can African countries and other developing nations learn from China: Can China be an example, catalyst, or partner for capacity building in Africa? A simple answer may be yes, but more so through international collaboration and knowledge transfer. It is indeed

part of what explains China's success in capacity building in the seventies and eighties when the country encouraged and supported, with significant incentives such as subsidies and administrative rules, its companies to collaborate with foreign partners, mostly American and Japanese organizations, to enable significant knowledge transfer from the West toward China. This is something that African countries can learn from, meaning governments and companies in Africa must prioritize knowledge transfer as a way forward for capacity building as emphasized earlier by Strang and Chrysostome (2018). The book has generously offered some cases in Asia in this regard, but this must be customized to African nations. This means that China can serve as an inspiration for African governments, but also African companies can engage into partnerships with Chinese companies to access more knowledge. Indeed, many African partners have already successfully been collaborating with Chinese partners through which they gained significant knowledge (Ado, 2018; Ado, Su & Wanjiru, 2017). One of those ways to mobilize knowledge transfer toward improving capacity building is by establishing joint ventures between African and Chinese companies, and this can happen only when governments from both regions engage into bilateral and multilateral cooperation that facilitates and supports inter-organizational collaborations and partnerships.

Although the book presents interesting aspects about capacity building, it is important to notice that it did not cover a significant number of emerging countries. Also, it would have been more enriching if at least half of African countries have been covered by the study or that many Asian countries were

analyzed. Therefore, there is a need for extending most of the topics discussed in this book to capture more generalizable aspects of capacity building in the context of developing and emerging countries, particularly for African nations that desperately need this. In fact, organizations like the African Capacity Building Foundation are interested in such studies, and even in collaborating, so researchers specializing in such topics can take this issue to next level by studying more countries and adding more knowledge to the meagre existing literature.

For more details on the book, visit: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-030-16740-0>.

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