

Trail-blazing investment courses launched at UCT Graduate School of Business

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Africa's top business school - the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business, launches two new courses on impact investing to bridge a critical knowledge gap on the continent.

The University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business (UCT GSB) is blazing a trail in the world of business education by offering the continent's first executive education impact investing courses.

The [Impact Investing in Africa for Wealth Holders](#) and [Impact Investing in Africa for Wealth Managers](#) short courses will equip participants to design impact investing strategies, an emerging skillset globally.

"There is huge demand in this area worldwide. A similar programme has been running at the University of Oxford for three years and this year it was completely full with 55 students from 20 countries," says course convenor Aunnie Patton, the Innovative Finance Lead at UCT GSB's Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship and an Associate Fellow at the University of Oxford.

Impact investments are investments made into companies, organisations and funds with the intention to generate social and environmental impact alongside a financial return. Patton says that the impact investment market is estimated to grow to USD \$1tn in the next five years, yet there is a huge lack of substantive information advising investors on how to implement an effective impact investment strategy.

According to Patton there are many misconceptions around impact investment - for instance, that it is a trade-off between lower financial returns for higher social return.

"But this belief is rooted less in fact than in fear. As an industry, we're only just beginning to collect quantitative data supporting the idea that a company can be for-profit and for-purpose without making long-term sacrifices to either goal," she says.

Patton, who started her career as an investment banker, later became a social investment banker before taking up her role as a Dean's Fellow at the Saïd Business School, Oxford and Innovative Finance Lead at the Bertha Centre at the UCT GSB.

The courses are designed for African investors wanting to invest in Africa and wealth managers that advise potential investors. "There are so many opportunities in South Africa and Africa at the moment. There are small to medium and even large companies focusing on social and sustainable impact, but also environmental start-ups, specifically in the field of renewable energy and solar energy," she says. According to a recent JP Morgan report, 22% of global impact enterprises are located in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Patton says investors all over the world are eager to invest in Africa and specifically in companies that help lift people out of poverty and promote education and better healthcare.

"There is a keen interest by many companies in Europe and the US to help address the challenges faced on the continent through smart investments," she says.

Many of these corporations, foundations and funds want to partner with local companies and both courses look at how fruitful partnerships can be created to the benefit of both entities and society as a whole.

"Despite the vast opportunities for social and economic impact across the continent, the regional market for impact investing is relatively immature with underdeveloped market infrastructure," says Dr Francois Bonnici, director of the Bertha Centre.

He says the new courses will help to address these issues.

"Being based in a business school that seeks to be more relevant in Africa, we have taken an expanded view of the role of a university in impact investing - beyond research alone, to that of also acting as an advocate, a convener, a knowledge source and a facilitator. We believe all of these roles are necessary to catalyse an enabling ecosystem for impact investing in Africa."

For more information about the Impact Investing in Africa for Wealth Managers and Impact Investing in Africa for Wealth Holders courses, contact Tsakane Ngoepe at the UCT GSB on 021 406 1522 or email innovativefinance@gsb.uct.ac.za or go to www.gsb.uct.ac.za/execed.

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