

# Enhancing Skills in Key Sectors in Africa

How AMI partnered with Shell Foundation to transform managers and employees in two of Africa's fastest-growing industries.

As Africa continues to experience rapid growth, the energy and mobility sectors have been identified as two key industries supporting this boom. Social enterprises are taking the lead in providing quality sustainable solutions in energy access and transport. But many of these businesses are struggling to leverage their human capital for greater performance and impact.

## Customised Programmes that Address Real Needs

Hillary Kirui, operations manager of solar company Azuri Technologies, had trouble getting his direct reports to perform. "Previously, I would tell them what to do and it would not get done," he shared. His experience, according to a Shell Foundation assessment, is fairly common.



### AMI OFFERED THREE CUSTOMISED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

- ▶ AMI Offered Three Customised Professional Development Programmes
- ▶ Businesses sent up to 15 middle and senior managers to open learning programmes, geared specifically toward improving leadership and management skills.
- ▶ Intermediaries, such as investors and foundations, had access to customised entrepreneurship and SME business acumen programmes to offer to SMEs in their network, enhancing the performance of their clients or portfolio companies.



AMI provides the practical tools and training that world-changing entrepreneurs need to quickly strengthen their teams and support growth.

Sam Parker, director of Shell Foundation



After assessing more than a dozen portfolio companies, Shell found that one of the greatest needs is improving the ability of middle managers to lead teams, enhance ownership and accountability, and improve communication.

"Human capital is often the missing link for high-growth companies, and many of our entrepreneurs work in markets where business and management skills are in short supply," said Sam Parker, director of the Shell Foundation. "AMI provides the practical tools and training that world-changing entrepreneurs need to quickly strengthen their teams and support growth."

Shell Foundation partnered with AMI to develop a customised series of programmes for growing enterprises in the energy access and mobility sectors in Africa. The programmes leverage AMI's innovative, research-backed blended learning platforms and are designed to build leadership, communication, and effectiveness across every level of the organisations, from entry-level positions to senior management.

Each business had the opportunity to select their participants and choose the programmes that best fit their needs.



The AMI programme has transformed how I work and my relationship with the team.

Hillary Kirui, operations manager of Azuri Technologies

### IMPACT OF THE SHELL FOUNDATION - AMI PARTNERSHIP

After completing a series of customised professional development programmes:

- ▶ 88% of participants were more effective at work
- ▶ 71% of participants acquired and applied new skills
- ▶ 63% of managers saw a greater sense of ownership among their teams
- ▶ Up to 34% increase of knowledge in self-management and people-management skills



## Tangible Improvements in Management and Performance

In total, 188 participants across 21 companies participated in the programmes, learning tangible skills and tools in areas like building teams, managing new hires, and goal setting. Many, like Hillary Kirui, began implementing their learnings right away.

“The AMI programme has transformed how I work and my relationship with the team,” he said. “Now, I check for understanding when I ask them to take on a task and the team is able to deliver. I have more time to think strategically as the team is taking ownership of tasks and projects and we’re able to co-create solutions to the challenges that we face. This has resulted in process improvements, leading to cost savings.”

At finance institution Grofin, managers learned practical tools to problem-solve, improve processes, and support their teams. Karim El Marashly, regional credit administration manager, said that he “learned how to prioritise my tasks, how to adapt my communication style to a specific situation, and how to find creative ways to motivate my team to perform.”

Sylvester Olo, supply chain manager at PayGo Energy, feels like he can more effectively lead new employees in his department now.



I learned how to prioritise my tasks, how to adapt my communication style to a specific situation, and how to find creative ways to motivate my team to perform.

Karim El Marashly, regional credit administration manager of Grofin

“The interaction with new members has been fulfilling as I applied the skills learnt in Building a Great Team and Managing New Hires courses to successfully on-board them,” he said.

After completing the programmes, 88% of participants reported increased effectiveness on the job, while 71% learned new management skills and applied them. Their knowledge in core self-management and people-management skills increased by as much as 34%.

### HOW AMI PARTNERED WITH THE SHELL FOUNDATION

Shell Foundation wanted to provide valuable capacity-building support for its portfolio companies in the energy access and mobility sectors. They asked AMI to develop a customised series of programmes to strengthen the management, communication, and overall performance of the teams. Based on AMI’s expertise in innovative, research-backed learning, we developed three types of programmes: in-house programmes for all levels of employees and open programmes for managers and leaders.

The cost of the programme was shared between Shell and the participating companies, and each company was able to select the programmes most relevant to their needs. Many companies used the programme to offer human capital support to their staff for the first time; six have continued to engage AMI and another five have invited AMI to offer customised in-house programmes.



I have learned to adapt my communication and the way I approach my team, so as to get their buy-in to what I'm proposing

Andriette Richards, investor relations of GroFin

## Strengthening Organisations and Sectors

Within the companies, high-level managers could see the impact of the programmes, with two-thirds reporting improved attitude, performance, and ownership across their teams.

“Since taking the AMI programme, Hillary has more time to focus on his core responsibilities, as he is able to delegate to his team and trust that they will complete their tasks and assignments,” explained Azuri group finance controller Sapna Shah. “He no longer needs to work long, late hours because his team is now doing what they’re supposed to.”

“The programme was transformational for the participants,” agreed Nick Quintong, COO of PayGo. “I immediately noticed a difference in one of the manager’s communication and ability to manage upwards, which made my job easier. The manager was also more confident with his team.”

This partnership with Shell Foundation enabled AMI to empower employees within 21 high-impact businesses across Africa. Six of these organisations found the programme so helpful that they have continued to work with AMI to support their managers; another six have invited AMI to run customised in-house training programmes for their teams.

As they learn how to successfully leverage their human capital, these businesses will no doubt have an even greater impact in the energy access and mobility sectors, allowing them to help lead Africa to even greater growth.



**To learn more,  
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