

# Share Alliance

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## Could Africa benefit from Incentivised Learning?

Hardly a day goes by without a reminder of the huge differences which beset the free world; so many tragic migrant journeys speak volumes of the sheer desperation causing young people to leave their home countries. Our time zone is not alone in experiencing mass migration, but conditions in Africa are by far the greatest challenge. Throughout that great continent we see conflict, tensions and corruption – but still there are grounds for hope.

This proposal therefore looks to take inspiration from one of the most encouraging routes towards a more egalitarian form of capitalism – [incentivised learning](#) – and to suggest a way to lift conditions to such a degree that young people in Africa would see the opportunities to change things for the better.

The Share Foundation has been operating its [‘Stepladder Plus’ incentivised learning](#) for young people in care for a number of years, but 2023 has seen a major expansion of the programme. In January the charity received a donation of over £400,000 from the British Bankers’ Association to underpin its expansion for young people from all local authorities across the United Kingdom; since then 900 young people have registered in order to earn money for their starter savings accounts (Junior ISAs and Child Trust Funds), with starters achieving an average of nearly four steps out of the six in the programme.

This connection between life skills education and building financial resource is a world apart from welfare benefits: it achieves an attitudinal transformation in teaching a young person how to grow for the future. Encouraged by the Stepladder Plus take-up, The Share Foundation has [commissioned a major business case](#) with which it hopes to persuade Government and philanthropists to provide long-term funding for Stepladder Plus across the UK.

So far as Africa is concerned, it has been a combination of international aid and commercial investment which has provided support thus far. There are some good charities operating in various countries, such as Five Talents, and other enterprises such as All Across Africa show how to produce social change for the better through equitable marketplace innovation.

However, a major media organisation such as CNN, focused on improving conditions in Africa, could embrace incentivised learning, inviting its audience in the developed world to provide the funding for incentives in order to power life skills learning programmes for young people throughout Africa.

This could be supplemented by a portion of inheritance levies from European and American ‘first world’ countries, and by voluntary provision from the wills of philanthropists. It would therefore be a global lead for inter-generational rebalancing, a key part of working towards a more egalitarian form of capitalism, and it would build on [groundwork on inheritance levies](#) undertaken by the OECD.

There would be significant logistics to put in place, but I am confident that CNN’s partners such as Afrexim Bank or Zenith Bank could help set these in place.

Incentivised learning is not a one-off phenomenon for young people in care in the United Kingdom: it could contribute towards a massive improvement in global stability, as new generations grow up inspired by their acquisition of life skills and starter savings resources. It’s for this reason that this aspect of the [SHARE research programme](#) in Cambridge is so important, and we look forward to the progress it makes over the coming year.

Gavin Oldham OBE

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