

Saul Singer urges Government to support business start-ups

The academia and government has been urged to support start-ups. Speaking at Serena Hotel during the Nairobi Innovation Workshop on August 4, 2015, Mr. Saul Singer, Israel Innovation Guru has challenged the government to give a conducive environment to the business start-ups and remove taxes to enhance innovation.

"Start-ups want to be in a free environment, " he said. Building high tech parks for start-ups may not work well, warns Mr. Singer. Kenya is in the process of building Konza City, a technology park, which is deemed to be the Silicon Savanna. According to Mr. Singer, the co-author of Start-up Nation, most business start-ups frown upon such environments. From his observation, such environments suit the corporate world best.

While majority of tech business start-ups rely on venture capitalist for funds, Mr. Singer urged the government to step forward and fund start-ups. 'Just as most start-ups fail, so are venture capitalists', he noted.

Other incentives the government could give business start-ups include opening up its data, buying from business start-ups, and removal of taxes and regulations. With the government introduction of 30% worth of tenders going to Women, Youth and Disabled Persons doing business, the government is way ahead in supporting entrepreneurs.

One other thing that is important for success of business start-ups according to Saul Singer is co-innovation. This is where businesses work as a team on their innovations. He urged the innovators to work as teams. He cited examples of hundreds of co-innovation between Israel and United States, where people work in teams to achieve some great innovations. Once the innovation has grown to some level, it's sold to multinationals like IBM, Google, Microsoft, Apple among other companies. He cited the example of Skype which had 7 founders each from a different country. The founders come from : Sweden, Denmark, USA and Israel.

Kenya is already on the global map of innovation, thanks to Mpesa and Ushahidi. Mr. Singer urged Kenyan innovators to keep the fire burning as they are far technologically advanced. Mpesa is one success story that is present only in Kenya, and even the top Israel innovators haven't been able to march.