# HOW TO SUPPORT LOCAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP WITH CLOUD BASED ERP AND E-MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

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## Abstract

### Purpose/Objective of the paper

Small Business Enterprises are core drivers of development in the global world today, however in developing countries like Zambia, many local entrepreneurs have not utilized the opportunities technology to manage and grow their businesses. This paper seeks to explain how locally based Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can benefit from cloud based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System to manage and grow their businesses. It also explains how local business mentorship programs can be better supported with electronic managed systems to help grow the spirit and culture of entrepreneurship among local people endeavoring to start and grow their own businesses.

### Design/methodology/approach

In November and December, 2015 a need assessment research survey was conducted by a team of three researchers and entrepreneurs in system development from Zambia Research and Development Centre (ZRDC). They wanted to understand the needs and challenges of SMEs and startup entrepreneurs on using business software packages and other ICT based tools in managing and growing their businesses. 150 small business owners were randomly selected from their place of work. Those that were interviewed where all from the central business center in city of Lusaka and they each had at least one employee and one customer for their business. Findings of the research were going to help the team come up with electronic system solutions tthat is now on pilot phase to enhance competence levels in Business Intelligence (BI) among would be and existing small business owner.

**Findings**

Research finding shows of that 80% of respondents did not received any form of training or mentorship on how to use a Business Software Package to manage their business, while only 30% agreed to have used a software to manage their businesses. On the other hand, the majority (75%) of respondents agreed to have had access to internet on a daily basis, however only 45% stated that they had internet access via a computer on a daily basis. All (100%) of the respondents were interested in a one stop business software that could enable them generate documentation on their daily business transaction, view their financial reports, assign and receive feedbacks on their employees tasks, as well as communicate to their customers and suppliers within the enterprise platform.

**Originality/value**

The demand for technology support for small local businesses cannot be over emphasized as per statistics from this survey. This paper demonstrates how small local business owners could be supported not only with an easy ERP solution, but also with a user centered e-mentorship program to help improve their competence levels in managing their financial aspects and human resource of their business. This could quickly help them better their business performance, create employment and grow sustainable local enterprise industry.

**Keywords:**

Entrepreneurship, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), e-Mentorship, Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Business Software Systems

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