

A Critical Review of East African Entrepreneurship Ecosystems: Innovation Hubs in Contemporary African Context

N, a, l, e, d, i, N, k, o, s, i, ,, S, i, p, h, o, v, a, n, d, e, r, M, e, r, w, e, ,, K, a,
g, i, s, o, B, o, t, h, a, ,, T, h, a, n, d, i, w, e, M, b, e, k, i

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18533495>

| Abstract

The study of entrepreneurship ecosystems is an expanding area within African Studies. This book review analyses a recent publication that investigates the role of innovation hubs in East Africa, incorporating comparative insights from South Africa. This review aims to critically evaluate the book's contribution to understanding the structure, challenges, and effectiveness of contemporary entrepreneurship support systems in East Africa. It assesses the author's arguments concerning how these hubs promote innovation and economic development. This is a critical book review. The methodology entails a close reading and thematic analysis of the book's content, appraising its theoretical framework, use of evidence, and overall coherence against the wider literature on African entrepreneurship. The review finds the book offers a nuanced analysis that avoids romanticised narratives of technology in Africa. A central theme is the tension between hubs' ambitions to nurture globally competitive start-ups and the imperative to address local, often non-digital, socio-economic challenges. The author persuasively argues that a significant portion of hub activity remains donor-driven, which can distort objectives. The book constitutes a substantive contribution that usefully complicates the frequently hyped discourse on African innovation. It provides a sober assessment of the actual functions and constraints of hubs as catalysts for sustainable entrepreneurial development. The review recommends the

book for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners in African development and entrepreneurship. Future research should build upon its critical foundation to investigate longitudinal impacts and the integration of informal entrepreneurial networks. Entrepreneurship, Innovation Hubs, East Africa, Ecosystem, African Studies, Economic Development This review synthesises the book's critical insights for an academic and professional readership, underscoring its value in fostering an evidence-based discourse on development models in Africa.
