



Achieving goals with Agile and Scrum

Kenya: Competa and sequa train IT experts in Agile software development



The challenge

Kenya is considered a leading nation for information technology in Africa, but the country has not yet fully exploited its digital potential. Many projects go to international companies in the USA and India because Kenya does not have enough skilled IT experts. While its software developers may have the necessary programming skills, they often lack practical experience of project management – expertise that is crucial to delivering complex projects successfully. As a result, the country is frequently unable to meet local demand for complex IT services.

‘The scale of the develoPPP.de programme is just right for a mid-sized company like ours to try out an idea without having to commit to an excessively large investment.’

Andy Haxby, Director of Competa IT B.V.

The Dutch IT service provider Competa IT B.V. has first-hand experience of the challenges the sector poses. To enable it to gain a foothold on the African market, it joined forces with the Kenyan IT companies BTI Millman Ltd and Dew CIS Solutions. However, Competa still found it difficult to recruit suitable experts to manage local and international contracts.

The solution

To enable it to recruit skilled software developers for its projects in Kenya, Competa decided to invest in locally based practical training and embarked on a development partnership with sequa GmbH. The cooperation centred on a training programme specially developed by Competa to train software developers and IT students in the basics of Agile software development. Competa contributed its expertise in IT sector methodology, while sequa has several years of experience in vocational training.

Support for the project was provided by develoPPP.de, a programme run by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) that promotes private sector involvement in projects combining business opportunities with scope for development policy action.

Our services

At the heart of the development partnership was the design of the CodePamoja training programme. CodePamoja translates as ‘Programming together’ and reflects the project’s core aims. Andy Haxby, Director of Competa, says: ‘We believe that Kenyans have a very promising future in information technology, but they lack role models to show them how best to use the technology.’ Through CodePamoja, Competa provided Kenyan software developers with experienced mentors familiar with the standards



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and methods used in the IT sector. Video chat enabled software developers, external IT experts and students in Kenya to interact with colleagues in the Netherlands and to work together on real-life projects, such as programming an IT platform on preventing HIV/AIDS among young people.

Training course participants also acquired the basics of modern project management methods, such as Scrum, which support Agile software development. Such tools are widespread in the IT sector and help software developers to design their projects flexibly by replacing detailed specifications and rigid deadlines in favour of regular discussions with clients to ensure that programming can be adapted on an ongoing basis. Complex projects can then be broken down into manageable units, making implementation more efficient. One trainee summed up the benefits: 'A project used to take me up to six months. With an Agile method like Scrum, I can do it in less than a month.' A total of 17 individuals were trained as 'Scrum masters' to pass on their skills and embed the expertise sustainably.

Meanwhile, back in the Netherlands, the project has met with enthusiasm not only from customers but also from young software developers. As Haxby explains: 'CodePamoja has helped us enhance our reputation and develop our brand. We used to find it difficult to recruit enough young developers, but the develoPPP.de project has raised our profile among graduates. Over the past month alone, we have taken on 30 interns and trainees keen to work in international teams.'

Impacts and results

- **Improving job prospects:** those completing the training programme have acquired solid basic skills in Agile project management and improved their prospects of finding skilled employment, with 80 participants going on to find jobs and a further six setting up their own business.

- **Embedding expertise and skills on a sustainable basis:** 17 'Scrum masters' have been trained and are passing on their expertise to new colleagues.
- **Disseminating methodology:** cooperation with a local university has raised awareness in the Kenyan training sector of the Agile and Scrum project management methods. Around 90 IT experts and students have received training and have gone on to find employment using their newly acquired skills.
- **Securing contracts:** the training has enabled Competa's partner companies BTI Millman and Dew CIS Solutions to become more competitive and BTI Millman has won a major contract from Barclays Bank.
- **Enthusing new generations of developers:** Competa can now position itself as a training promoter and reliable partner, enabling it to recruit young developers to work for the company.
- **Investing in additional markets:** Competa plans to roll the project out to other African countries, not only boosting its own commercial success but also creating job prospects for African software developers.

At a glance

Duration	May 2015 – April 2017
Country	Kenya
Objective	Improving the job prospects of 90 IT experts and students through practical continuing training in Agile project management.
Partners	Competa and sequa
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CodePamoja has provided practical training for 90 IT experts and students in the Agile project management method, Scrum.• 80 former participants have gone on to find relevant employment after completing their training.• 6 former participants have set up their own IT business.• 17 'Scrum masters' have been trained, sustainably embedding the programme.

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