

NIU is bringing this economic literacy program to South Africa through after-school programs at YMCAs in Durban, Soweto and other learning centers on the Western Cape. Additional sites are being sought to expand the program globally. Children who participate in the NIU E & E programs learn to:

- Understand their roles in the economy as producers, consumers and savers
- Understand that they have choices and that the choices they make every day will impact their future
- Develop good decision-making skills
- Demonstrate the ability to set personal goals
- Recognize the value of education/training as a way to improve their earning capacity and improve their future opportunities
- Recognize the opportunities to create their own business and develop skills needed to do so

Units 1-3 of the series (for grades 4-6) provide an economics foundation for the entrepreneurship and workforce readiness programs of Units 4-6 (for grades 7-9).



## NIU is engaged in Africa

- Jon Furr works with Link Community Development, an international NGO working to improve the quality of education in Africa. Link operates in Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, South Africa and Malawi. Furr is also introducing a web-based school performance reporting system to African educators.
- Andrew Otieno and Teresa Wasonga founded an all-girls school in Kenya; Otieno also works in Tanzania and other African nations as a representative of Engineers Without Borders.
- Kurt Thurmaier co-founded the Tanzania Development Support program and works to improve the lives of young women at the Nyegina Secondary School.
- Paul Crawford manages the North American center for PASCAL, an international organization focused on community development, and has participated in PASCAL and UNISA work in South Africa.
- NIU's Division of Outreach, Engagement & Information Technologies hosts the Global Economic Education Alliance (GEEA), providing teacher training programs and curriculum consulting in economics, financial literacy and entrepreneurship to countries around the globe.
- Joanne Dempsey, former president of NIU-based Econ Illinois, a statewide organization focused on economic education for K-12 schools, is spearheading the Global Economics and Entrepreneurship Education efforts in South Africa.



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## NIU Global Economics and Entrepreneurship Program

*Future Business Builders*



## Teaching our way to a healthier economy

In today's world, the key to creating jobs and improving standards of living is educating a new generation of entrepreneurs.

Those with the drive and discipline to establish new businesses are the people who will create jobs for others. But successful entrepreneurs need a strong foundation in basic economic principles, and many schools don't teach that.

NIU's Global Economics and Entrepreneurship Program strives to fill that gap with after-school programs for 4th through 9th graders. These hands-on sessions are led by local teachers, and involve engaged learning activities tied to the local community and its economy. Children learn experientially about work and pay, saving and spending, and basic concepts about running a business. Students earn "pay" for attendance and completion of certain activities, and can spend this fiat money in a classroom store. More sophisticated topics are introduced over time, with older children exploring opportunities to establish their own businesses.

## Developing an entrepreneurial mindset

For many children around the world, owning their own business seems like a dream that is far out of reach. The NIU E & E program strives to empower children with the knowledge that they do have choices, and that good choices can lead to financial security.

The NIU E & E project is based on a program developed in America's heartland more than 30 years ago. The curriculum was created in Peoria, Illinois, by an educator who saw multiple generations of families mired in poverty. By teaching them how our economy works and how to be a successful player within that system, she saw children's minds opening to a world of new possibilities.

Today, that educator is sharing what she learned through a global network, including other international groups based at NIU. Together, they're collaborating on a model that brings together local, regional, state, provincial, national and international resources in a focus on economic literacy that supports local economic development.

## Building skills for economic growth

NIU's E & E program is based on several key beliefs:

- Economic education must start young and be continuous to create an entrepreneurial mindset.
- Children in poor rural and inner-city areas need to be taught that opportunities exist and can be created
- Young people must realize the value of creating jobs within their own communities.
- Basic, foundational economic principles must be understood before entrepreneurship can begin.
- An entrepreneurial mindset is a great asset in the workforce, whether a young person goes on to create their own business or not.

