

## **2019 LIBERIA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ENTREPRENEURSHIP COMPETITION**

### **PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**Theme:**

**“Providing high school students with Entrepreneurial Skills to Increase Social Impact in Liberia”**

**Submitted by:**

Youth Network for Reform (YONER Liberia)

Horn Entrepreneurship’s Diamond Challenge Official Pitch Site Partner in Liberia

**Project Lead:**

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Project cost: US\$63,235.00

Project duration: October 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020

**Executive Summary:**

Youth Network for Reform (YONER Liberia) is seeking grand funding support to complement the support of the Horn Entrepreneurship Program at the University of Delaware to host the 2019/2020 Edition of the ‘Liberia National High School Entrepreneurship Competition’; also known as “The Diamond Challenge for High School Entrepreneurs in Liberia”. The project seeks to develop young Liberian entrepreneurs by recruiting 330 high school students from 55 schools in 4 counties for participation in the program. YONER Liberia is seeking US\$63,235.00 to complement existing support from the University of Delaware. YONER will engage earmarked high schools authorities, establish partnership, and schools nominate 20 students (gender balanced). YONER Liberia then conducts interviews to assess the students entrepreneurial ideas and passion, select between 3 to 9 students per school, form them in a group of 3, recruit mentors and pair them with student’s teams, and launch a month-long Mentorship Institute - where students with the support of mentors, conduct needed researches in their communities, identify social challenges and turn them into business solutions/ideas. The ideas are submitted into full business proposals and pitch decks at the deadline. YONER Liberia conducts preliminary rounds of competition at county levels, selected teams move to a week-long Innovation Lab for co-creation and where content and business experts further mentor them by reviewing their business proposals, and pitch decks and give feedback for improvement, and other skills including public speaking, presentation, elevator pitching, dress code for business, among others. We then host the semi-final live pitch competition, and selected teams move to the National Grand Live Pitch Competition. They live pitch their ventures to a panel of judges. The judges select the 25-best business venture/ideas and receive cash prizes/awards and further given the needed platforms inclusive of relevant tools and other resources for business start-up support to register, launch or expand their ventures. The overall first winner travels to the US to participate in our partner, University of Delaware's High School Entrepreneurship Competition for a share of US\$100,000. Participants become part of our growing network, have access to our office space and continue to work on and improve on their business ideas and compete in other competitions. Finally, throughout the entire project, YONER will also be documenting activities and creating videos to share with sponsors, partners, and the government of Liberia and for later airing/filming around Liberia.

### **About YONER-LIBERIA**

YONER Liberia is an 11-year old social enterprise nonprofit. YONER Liberia's mission is to undertake actions that nurture and build honest and able leaders to become self-reliant and agents of positive change within their communities. Since 2008, YONER Liberia has designed and implemented several innovative projects through its two Flagship Programs - "Giving Back to our Community Action Initiative" and "Entrepreneurship Education Initiative." Together, these projects have empowered over 50,000 youth and children affected by Liberia's civil war. Additionally, since 2016, the organization has recruited, trained and supported more than 5,000 high school and university students in five counties to learn and apply science, social entrepreneurship skills, and technology to their lives and to solve problems. To their credit, YONER Liberia is a recipient of the *Government of Liberia's 2018 Business and Social Economic Impact Award* and recently its Executive Director received a "Recognition Certificate" in the Entrepreneur of the Year category of the *USAID Liberia's 2019 Development Award*. As a fully registered non-profit that has met all requirements of the Ministry of Youth & Sports, YONER Liberia is poised to empower Liberia's young people by continuing to train them in entrepreneurship and technology skills in order to learn and use these tools necessary to advance themselves and live a quality life. To expand our High School Entrepreneurship Program beyond the current two counties to four counties and to strengthen our capacity, YONER Liberia is seeking direct financial support.

### **About the Horn Entrepreneurship Diamond Challenge**

The Horn Entrepreneurship Diamond Challenge at the University of Delaware is a global entrepreneurship concept competition that utilizes skills and experiences to nurture high school students in developing ideas into innovative businesses to solve community problems, generating income for themselves and their families, and contributing to the economic growth of their countries. Activities will include problem-solving, idea generation, and developing sales pitches. Under the partnership agreement, The Horn Diamond Challenge will provide \$2,000 to YONER-Liberia to support costs associated with activities related to the competition.

### **Program Goals**

The goal of the program is to identify potential young entrepreneurs, equip them with the relevant skills to shape their ideas into innovative and sustainable businesses, and expose them to opportunities that can scale up their ventures to solve pressing problems in Liberia while generating income.

### **Objectives**

- To promote the creation of innovative ideas by young entrepreneurs that can be developed into sustainable business models to solve problems in Liberia;
- To recruit, train and mentor 330 high school students to develop their ideas into businesses;
- To build the capacities of high schools in identifying, harnessing, developing, and empowering potential entrepreneurs in their various schools;
- To build a network that can encourage synergy among high school entrepreneurs to share ideas, knowledge and experiences and provide mentorship and opportunities to grow and develop.

### **Expected results**

- - 55 high schools in Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Bong Counties engaged and partnered with for the project;
- - 330 high school students recruited from the 55 high schools and grouped into 110 teams for the competition;
- - 110 mentors/advisors hired and linked with students for mentorship and development of the ideas into business models;
- - 10 judges recruited and decide on the best innovative solutions
- - 110 scientifically proven business ideas/solutions developed and live pitch to panel of judges

- - 25-best business venture/ideas selected and received cash prizes/awards for business start-up support to register, launch or expand their ventures.
- 100,000 high school students and stakeholders indirectly reached and acquire skills and experiences in business and entrepreneurship.
- Increased awareness and knowledge among high schools of the impact of entrepreneurship on community development and economic sustainability;
- Proactive participatory methods employed by high schools to promote entrepreneurial culture in the schools;
- Increased capacity of beneficiaries in turning ideas into business models and making success sales pitches and creating successful prototypes.

### **Activities**

The project will consist of several activities that lead to achieving the overall goal and objectives of the program. *The activities will include:*

1. Form a Project Management Team, designs our project and fundraising
2. Partnership establishment with schools and selection of students and mentors
3. Launch Mentorship Institute
4. Business ideas development and submission
5. Recruitment of Virtual and Live Judges
6. Virtual judging
7. In-County Live Competition
8. Innovation Lab
9. Semi-final live competition
10. National Grand Live Pitch Competition
11. Grand Award Ceremony
12. National Winner travel to the United States of America
13. Implementation and continual support needed platforms inclusive of relevant tools and other resources for business start-up support to register launch or expand their ventures

### **Recruitment of Schools and students**

YONER will engage earmarked high schools authorities, establish partnership, and schools in the four counties to nominate 20 students (gender balanced) each. YONER Liberia will conduct interviews to assess the students' entrepreneurial ideas and passion, select between 3 to 9 students per school, form them in a group. The project will select a total of 330 students and form them into 110 teams. The nomination of students will be done by the Administrations of the Schools based on the academic performances and entrepreneurial passion of the students and the students' willingness to fully participate in the project.

### **Recruitment of mentors**

YONER-Liberia will publish a Call for Applications for 110 interested individuals to serve as mentors for the Diamond Challenge Competition. Mentors are to be individuals who have the relevant skills and experiences in entrepreneurship and business management. The mentors will be paired with each team and will be responsible to mentor or guide students to develop sensible innovative solutions with sustainable business model to solve some of the major challenges in Liberia. The mentors will support students during the month-long Mentorship Institute to conduct needed researches in their communities, identify social challenges and turn them into business solutions/ideas. The ideas are submitted into full business proposals and pitch decks at the deadline.

### **Recruitment of Live Judges**

YONER Liberia will recruit 110 experienced individuals to serve as judges during the final Grand Pitch Competition to determine the winning innovative solutions for the Diamond Challenge Competition. Judges are also, to be individuals who have the relevant skills and experiences in entrepreneurship and business management. The judges will be responsible to decide winners.

### **Innovation Lab**

In February 2020, selected teams from the county level competitions will move to Monrovia to attend the Innovation Lab, one week of intensive training and social networking. They will be taught and guided to shape their ideas into business solutions as well as problem-solving, ideation, prototyping and pitching a project. This is a co-creation and teambuilding Lab where content and business experts further mentor them by reviewing their business proposals, and pitch decks and give feedback for improvement, and other skills including public speaking, presentation, elevator pitching, dress code for business, among others. The Lab will also involve interactive hands-on-experience tours, entrepreneurial courtesy visits to companies, government institutions and foreign missions and social development events.

### **Mentorship Institute**

The Mentorship Institute will provide the platform for participating teams to work with their mentors on their ideas and how to develop the ideas further for presentation during the Grand Pitch Competition. The role of mentor will require flexible time commitments up until the Pitch Competition. Mentors will guide the students in human-centered design thinking process for one of the United Nations' eight sustainable development goals UN SDGs): *1) Zero Hunger; 2) Quality Education; 3) Good Health and Well-being; 4) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; 5) Affordable and Clean Energy; 6) Clean Water and Sanitation; 7) Climate Action, and 8) Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.*

### **Grand Pitch Competition**

The Grand Pitch Competition will convene participating teams and mentors, judges, school administrators, parents, stakeholders and the public to allow the teams to pitch their business ideas. The ideas will be presented as innovative and sustainable business models taught through the mentorship institute and the innovation lab.

There will be twenty-five (25) winners of the competition based on several factors including their innovations, feasibility, growth potential, impact, sustainability and WOW factors: National Winner, 1<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> Runner-ups. The winners will be awarded cash prize, sash, and certificates. In addition, the National Winner will have the opportunity to travel to the United States at the University of Delaware to participate in the Global Semi-finals of the Horne Entrepreneurship competition for a share of US\$100,000. Certificates of Recognition and Appreciation will be awarded to our sponsors, partners, mentors, volunteers and everyone or institution that will support us in whatever way. All student participants will be awarded certificates of participation.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The project team will develop a monitoring strategy to examine the progress of the interventions and also to document lessons learned. The team will prepare monthly and final reports to inform the beneficiaries, partners and stakeholders on the status of the project and its activities. Additionally, the team will organize review meetings and feedback sessions with partners and beneficiaries to promote inclusive participation, assess the level of progress, challenges and to recommend next steps for the project. Moreover, the team will facilitate the engagement of the project sponsors with the beneficiaries and project locations to monitor and evaluate the impact of the project. The evaluation will be done during the midterm of the project and at the end of the project period. The final evaluation will be carried out by an external resource person. The indicators will be used to measure the project results and the impact, lessons learned, success stories, gender disaggregated data will be reported against in the final report.

**Target School:**

The 2019/2020 edition of the project targets schools in four cities in Montserrado, Margibi, Grand Bassa and Bong Counties and will bring together 110 Teams, comprising of three students (male and female) each from 55 high schools including:

- **Paynesville City** – Weltona Christian School, F-Sham Faith of Girls Academy, Paynesville Seventh Day Adventist High School, John Lewis Morris United Methodist High and Nathan E. Gibson Memorial Academy;
- **Kakata** – G. W. Gibson High School, and Spiritan Demonstration Academy
- **Buchanan City** – Lott Carey Mission and St. Mary Catholic High School; and
- **Gbarnga City** – Liberia Duja High School

**Indicators of Outcomes**

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- 110 scientifically proven business ideas/solutions developed and live pitch to panel of judges
- 25-best business venture/ideas selected and received cash prizes/awards for business start-up support to register, launch or expand their ventures.
- All student participants will be awarded certificates of participation.
- Certificates of Recognition and Appreciation awarded to our sponsors, partners, mentors, volunteers, etc.
- National winner travels to the USA at the University of Delaware and participates the global high school entrepreneurship Competition for a share of US\$100,000.
- Create a video documentary to share with sponsors, partners, the government of Liberia and for later airing/filming around Liberia
- Participants inducted into our growing entrepreneurs’ network,

**Project Management Team**

The project will be principally managed by YONER Liberia and Tamma Corps Media Partner, NVTI, Event Host Partner and Youthconnekt Liberia, M&E and Implementation Partner technical support from USAID Liberia. The project team consists of staff of all of the partnering organizations.