Building Capacity to Combat COVID-19 in Africa:

Ideas and Innovations from Young Entrepreneurs

Call for Proposals

May 7, 2020 - The Zicklin Center for Business Ethics Research at the Wharton School and its many partners are issuing a call for proposals for a new initiative: Building Capacity to Combat CAVID-19 in Africa: Ideas and Innovations from Young Entrepreneurs

Background

The Zicklin Center is launching this Initiative under its pillar: BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & INNOVATION and in collaboration with Wharton's Global Social Impact students club and several other partners. The Initiative is supported by many partnerships, including global and local networks created within the Ideas for Action (I4A) Initiative (https://ideas4action.org/).

The initiative is open to students and young professionals (ages 18 to 35 years old) from around the world interested in offering innovative ideas for an effective private and public sector response to the COVID-19 pandemic in countries throughout Africa.

The objective of this initiative is to encourage capacity building ideas and innovations from young entrepreneurs, within diverse teams, supported by senior decision-makers and experts in international development, academia, and the private sector. All proposals will be reviewed and offered feedback. The teams will also receive support from a dedicated startup accelerator at the Wharton School, and benefit from unique networking opportunities with other young business leaders.

Policy Making and Community Based Projects

We encourage proposals that address four broad issues:

Policy Making: Proposals should offer innovations in improving government and other policy making entities responses to the COVID-19. Fragility, weak institutions, and underdeveloped public health systems undermine the effective response to COVID-19. How can we build capacity for good governance, compliance, transparency, accountability, and responsibility in COVID -19 responses? How should we support entrepreneurship in government and health care

institutions so that "locally nurtured" ideas get support from the leading authorities? How should we support idea generation from the middle ranks and front lines of organizations? Given today's rapid pace of change in health care systems, public-private partnerships are of critical importance. How should we encourage public-private partnerships to generate successful health care innovations?

Start-up: How should we expand the activities of existing start-ups or new ones to address COVID-19 challenges in Africa.

Technology and Big Data: How should we best utilize technology, AI, blockchain, and big data in the search for innovative responses to the COVID-19?

Community-Based Projects: Substantial experience and capacity already addresses critical health care issues in poor communities, not only in Philadelphia but also other large metropolitan areas in the United States. How should we incorporate these lessons in addressing the challenges raised by COVID-19 in Africa.

Why Should You Participate?

Networking: Diverse Teams

By utilizing our networks, including nearly 20,000 alumni participants in the I4A Initiative, we are well positioned to facilitate the creation of diverse teams, in terms of location, expertise, and cultural background. If you need, we can also help you bring new team members. Let us know if you would like to share your initial ideas through our networks, so that we can facilitate access to potential new team members, including local or global entrepreneurs.

Beyond Single Project: Leadership in Shaping the Local Ecosystem - Strengthening and Creating Markets

This is your unique leadership moment - an opportunity to demonstrate leadership not only through proposing specific, innovative projects but to get actively involved in managing the initiative locally. Send us ideas on how to best utilize your local presence to shape the external ecosystem and strengthen and create markets, thus making them more supportive to scaling up and implementing the projects. What are the best ways to improve governance, compliance, transparency, accountability, and responsibility in the local ecosystem?

Capturing Best Practices and Knowledge Exchange

Although the Initiative is focused on Africa, we would like to invite you to share your local knowledge, particularly community based best practices, which may be beneficial for the implementation of proposals in Africa. Of course, we are mindful of the limitations of North to South knowledge exchanges; some of the best practices from countries in Africa could be equally relevant elsewhere, including underdeveloped communities in developed countries.

Capacity Development and Access to Knowledge

Based on our longstanding experience with the I4A Initiative, we will utilize different modalities to support capacity development and access to knowledge, both in person and online. This will include resources available at the University of Pennsylvania and other partners, ranging from access to knowledge, including Knowledge@Wharton and guest lectures, to locally supported Ideation workshops.

Mentors/Advisers

To support your idea, we will connect teams with those who work within the field and have years of business, policymaking, and development experience. This will include access to a mentor or advisor, either at University of Pennsylvania, or at other institutions across the world, who can serve as a constant sounding board and also provide referrals for other individuals that each team may reach out to.

Promoting your Work

In addition to providing substantive feedback from our accelerator and experts, opportunities to get new team members, and access to knowledge, we will feature your work at the Zicklin Center and the I4A's websites, thus providing additional opportunities to attract strategic partners and investors.

Deadline:

September 15, 2020. The proposals will be reviewed and offered feedback on a first come, first serve base, **starting from the moment we will receive the proposal**. If you need our support in identifying new team members and finalizing your ideas, please contact us and send the summary of your idea (petkoski@wharton.upenn.edu) by June 20.

For more information, including the format of the proposal or the summary of the proposal, please see the Zicklin Center and the I4A's websites.

Submission Portal

When you and your team are ready to submit your idea, please access the submission portal through the link on the Ideas for Action website at https://ideas4action.org