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BRIDGE-U: Applying Research for a Healthy Liberia HEALR - Creation Prize

Overview

Liberia's health system has made important strides since its civil crisis (1989-2003) and Ebola epidemic (2014-2016), but health outcomes continue to lag behind other countries. Entrepreneurial solutions to these challenges are hampered by a weak ecosystem for innovation. A scoping assessment conducted in April 2022 revealed two primary challenges: lack of financing and lack of training.

With these challenges in mind, the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Innovation (CTLI) at the University of Liberia College of Health Sciences (ULCHS) developed the Health Entrepreneurship Advancement Leveraging Research (HEALR) program. The twin goals of the HEALR program are to:

- Build the innovation and business skills of emerging health leaders in Liberia, with an emphasis on female entrepreneurs
- Scale innovative commercial applications of health research findings

The HEALR program accomplishes these goals through three phases that combine formal training, tailored mentorship, and catalytic funding:

- Ideation Phase: A 3-month business skills course for anyone interested in health innovation
- Creation Phase: A 6-month intensive training and mentorship program for emerging innovators with a specific idea for a health-related business, culminating with a pitchfest and prizes for teams that complete the course
- Implementation Phase: A 12-month mentorship program for select entrepreneurs, who support future HEALR participants and receive a stipend to support their entrepreneurial ambitions
 - Note: Creation participants will apply for the Implementation Phase separately from the HEALR - Creation Prize application. The HEALR - Creation Prize does not fund the Implementation Phase stipend.

The Creation Prize described in this call is a process by which funds will be awarded at the conclusion of the Creation Phase.

Goals and Objectives

The Creation Prize aims to achieve the following goals:

- Incentivize teams in the HEALR program to complete the Creation Phase and develop high-impact, financially-viable health businesses
- Provide funding that teams may use to grow their businesses - a critical investment in a setting where access to capital is very limited



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Eligibility

This prize is the culmination of the HEALR program as implemented to-date. The HEALR program was launched through a Health Innovation seminar at ULCHS, with 199 individuals in attendance and more following the livestream. Additional promotion of the program was conducted on social media and through professional networks. A total of 120 individuals applied for Ideation (the first phase of HEALR), and 31 were ultimately accepted. Of those, nine individuals (comprising six teams) were invited for the Creation phase (the second phase of HEALR).

This prize is only open to the six teams of nine individuals (4 men and 5 women) that are currently enrolled in the Creation phase. To be eligible for a prize, the individual (at least one member of each team) must meet the completion criteria for the course as described in the syllabus:

- Participants must attend 80% of the lectures;
- Participants must complete at least ten interviews of their Economic Buyers;
- Participants must meet one-on-one with their mentors at least 20 hours over the performance period;
- Participants must complete 90% of their required presentations and present 80% of their presentations to the entire cohort.

By June 26, 2023, CTLI will work with Creation program participants to confirm whether each individual has met the completion criteria.

Competition Structure & Timeline

June 19: Draft call shared with Creation teams

June 26 & July 10: Peer review sessions, in which teams and instructors may give initial feedback on draft materials. Note: mentors will collaboratively develop an FAQ document, listing common questions and answers discussed with teams.

mid-July: Final call posted on the ULCHS website

July 14 (optional): Teams may share draft materials with mentors, for final round of feedback

July 17: Teams meet with mentors

July 18: Teams submit final materials and give pitches, winners announced at closing program later that day

~October: Prize funds are disbursed

Submission Process

By 11:59PM GMT on Monday, July 17, 2023, teams should submit their materials via the REDCap submission portal. This link will be provided to all teams during class meetings and the class WhatsApp group. Hard copy submissions will not be accepted.



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Components of Submission:

- General application (via REDCap digital form)
 - Basic individual and venture information
 - Venture Name
 - Primary point of contact for prize
 - For each team member
 - Name
 - Phone Number
 - Email address
 - Mailing address
 - Physical address
 - Confirmation that they have a bank account that can be used to receive prize funds
 - Pitch deck (using provided PPT template)
 - Teams will present their pitch on Tuesday, July 18 to the panel of judges. The pitch is a maximum of 15 minutes, with an additional 5 minutes following the pitch for Q&A.
- Regulatory review (Word document)

Prize Structure

1st place: \$20,000 (1 team)

2nd place: \$15,000 (1 team)

3rd place: \$7,500 (1 team)

Promising Venture Prize: \$2,500 (4th - 6th place, if all teams meet minimum score requirement of 30/75)

Judging Criteria & Judging

Criteria:

Judges will score each team on the following criteria, using a Likert scale (1-5)

- Quality of the submission (including thoroughness of customer discovery, quality of analysis, clear plan for development, etc.) - 20%
- Community impact (including health outcomes, environmental impact, job creation, gender equity and social inclusion) - 20%
- Business potential - 60%
 - Opportunity: clear problem with defined market size, favorable analysis of competitive landscape
 - Team: having qualified personnel with relevant experience to lead venture, with passion and time to execute
 - Context: understanding and navigating the regulatory environment
 - Development plans: strong roadmap for launch or scale-up



Judges

- A panel of judges will score all submissions, including:
 - Reviewing written documents
 - Listening to presentations
 - Posing questions to competitors during Q&A after the pitch
- Participating judges are knowledgeable in a variety of fields, including improving health systems, health entrepreneurship, public-private partnerships, public health, and specialized experience across a variety of fields and industries. The panel is women-led and reflects diverse perspectives.
- The panel will include the following 3 individuals:
 - Vice President for Health Sciences, University of Liberia (Dr. Bernice T. Dahn)
 - Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health Specialist, USAID/Liberia (Pamela Bernard-Sawyer)
 - CEO, TipMe; Executive Council Member, Liberia Chamber of Commerce (Laureine Guilao)

The judging process will proceed as follows:

- The judges participate in an orientation on the objectives and structure of the award.
- Judges will be asked to flag any conflict of interest. In the event of a conflict of interest, the judge may recuse themselves from scoring a particular submission.
- Judges will have two hours in advance of the presentations to review submitted materials.
- During the presentations, the judges will use the provided rubric to assign each team a score.
- The judges will ask competitors questions in the five minutes following competitor pitches.

Amount Determination:

- The judges' scores will be averaged, and submissions ranked accordingly.
- Each judge will explain their scoring methodology in comments accompanying their scores.
- Based on the discussion, the judges may adjust their scores.
- The average scores will be recalculated based on adjustments, and submissions ranked accordingly.
- The minimum score to earn a Promising Venture Prize is 30/75 points.

Confidentiality and Intellectual Property

- No additional intellectual property rights will emerge from this prize.
- Information about prize winners that is already available to the public, such as the name of the solution, a succinct overview of the problem and the principal challenge issue it addresses, and the stage of innovation, may be included in publicity materials about the event and prizes.



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- Other submission materials provided by the participant will be kept confidential and not made public or available to other participants without the participant's prior agreement.
- Participants must confirm they either retain or have permission to use any intellectual property included in their submission.

Prize Disbursement

Winners should submit bank account information within two weeks of notification of award. Prize awards will be paid in U.S. dollars to the bank account provided by the winner. USAID is not responsible for any levies or taxes that may be associated with winning a prize award.

Prizes will not be awarded to an organization from, or with a principal place of business in, a country subject to trade and economic sanctions administered by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the Department of Treasury, or to any individual or entity subject to targeted trade and economic sanctions administered by OFAC. Winners will be checked against the OFAC Sanctions List before the prize award is disbursed.

Awards do not signal an ongoing relationship with USAID and do not require any additional activities or reporting by winners after disbursement of the prize. There are no restrictions on how award funds can be spent.

Terms and conditions of participation

By submitting an entry, you accept these terms and conditions and agree to comply with them.

1. Participating in the Prize

1.1 Entries received by 11:59PM GMT on Monday, July 17 that are compliant with this prize call will be assessed against the criteria for the set out above. USAID is not responsible for lost, late, stolen, misdirected, illegible, erroneous, or incomplete applications or other documentation due to computer, network or telecommunications failure.

1.2 Employees of USAID, USAID contractors, other individuals working on the BRIDGE-U: Liberia project, and their immediate families, are not eligible to enter. Participants must bear all costs of entering and participating in the prize, including transportation costs.

1.3 Eligible entries will be assessed against the publicized judging criteria. Participation in the pitch fest and related events is a condition of participation in the prize competition.

1.4 We will use the contact details you provide in your submission to contact you about the prize. If you do not respond within seven days, you may be removed from consideration for the prize. If you are removed, or if you otherwise withdraw from the prize for any reason, we may select another entry in your place, but we are not obliged to do so.



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1.5 The judges' decision about eligibility, shortlisting and selection, including the methodology used to assess entries, validity of any claims and data submitted, is final. By choosing to participate in the prize, participants waive the right to challenge the outcome and agree to be bound by the determinations of the prize judges and USAID. We have no obligation to provide further information or to engage in conversation/correspondence about the prize decisions.

1.6 While we encourage you to use the prize in ways that continue to grow your venture, you are under no obligation to do so.

1.7 The prize will be paid in U.S. dollars and the winner is responsible for payment of tax and other charges in relation to the award of the prize.

1.8 We reserve the right at our sole discretion to refuse to accept any entry; to suspend or withdraw the prize at any time; to vary the form and substance of the prize including dates for deadlines, activities and events; to reduce or increase the number of entries selected for any phase, including the final prize; not to award the prize; and/or to reject or withdraw a place on the prize competition for any reason whatsoever, including if in our reasonable opinion, you are in breach of these terms and conditions, fail to participate fully, or do anything to damage the reputation of USAID or our partners.

1.9 We reserve the right to vary these terms and conditions at any time. Variations will take effect from the date the updated call document is shared with participants.

1.10 Based on the recommendations, USAID retains the authority to determine prize winners or if no competitors receive awards at all. The Government may invite prize competition participants, including prize winners, to participate in follow-on(s) to the prize competition that may result in award(s) under available Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) and/or Non-FAR Based Authorities, for a period of up to 24 months after challenge prize(s) are awarded. Prize competition participants invited to participate in, and selected for follow-on award negotiation, may result in a follow-on procurement contract, cooperative agreement, Commercial Solutions Opening (CSO), or other award or agreement type, depending upon the nature of the work proposed, the required degree of interaction between parties, and other factors, at the sole discretion of the Government. Submission requirements and evaluation criteria for follow-on award(s) will be detailed at the time of invitation to participate. The competitive selection from a general solicitation and the peer review of such a solution by scientific, technological, or other subject matter experts within the U.S. Government is considered to be a competitive procedure. The Period of Performance (PoP) for award(s) may be for a duration up to any time period authorized by the regulation used to issue the award. A formal Request for Proposal (RFP) beyond this notice will not be issued.

2. Your Promises to Us



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2.1 By submitting an entry to the prize, you confirm that: You satisfy the relevant eligibility criteria and all information submitted by you is true, accurate and complete. We reserve the right to ask for additional evidence of claims made by you, to validate claims by any means we see fit, and/or to reject claims at our sole discretion.

2.2 Your entry is your own original idea, is not copied from anyone else, and to the best of your knowledge, does not infringe any intellectual property or other third party rights. We may withdraw your entry if we receive notice that it infringes any third party rights.

2.3 You have, or will obtain, all consents and permissions necessary to submit your entry, participate in the prize and comply with these terms and conditions.

2.4 You are willing to share learning. All entrants need to be willing to share their experiences and learning to help establish a body of knowledge that can bring about a greater awareness and sustained change in locally-driven health entrepreneurship.

2.5 You will act lawfully, ethically and in good faith and comply with the rules of the prize and any relevant laws, regulations, guidelines and codes of practice. You will comply with our reasonable instructions while participating in the prize, including in relation to health & safety and security.

2.6 You and your venture and entry adhere to existing protocols for environmental protection and sustainability.

2.7 Your venture and approach does not exacerbate or cause direct or indirect harm to marginalized groups including, but not limited to, women and girls in all their diversity, LGBTQIA+ individuals, low income, ethnic minorities, and landless groups. Your venture identifies and mitigates potential unintended consequences that may cause direct or indirect harm to marginalized groups.

2.8 To the extent your venture supports direct health service delivery, you have adequate plans to handle medical waste in line with recommended WHO guidelines.

2.9 We reserve the right to remove you from the prize competition if you do not comply with these rules, if you cheat or behave in a way which is disruptive, inappropriate or potentially dangerous.

2.10 If you are entering as part of a group or team, the person completing the entry form is responsible for compliance with these terms & conditions by other team members.

3. Use Of Your Personal Information:

3.1 We are committed to protecting your privacy and have established processes and policies to adequately safeguard the personal information you give to us.

3.2 If you submit an entry we will ask you for personal information such as your name, email address, and other contact details such as a contact phone number. The personal information we collect will be used as outlined in detail below; generally to process your entry, to contact you about the Prize, and to award the Prize.

3.3 Please make sure that any personal details you provide are accurate and up to date, and let us know about any changes.

3.4 Please do not include any personally identifiable information concerning other individuals in your submissions.

3.5 Your information will be shared within USAID and with USAID's implementing partners as is necessary to process and fully assess your entry, award the Prize, and celebrate competitors. USAID will follow applicable law, regulation, and policy concerning the collection, maintenance, and use of your data. For more information about the USAID privacy policy, including safeguards and controls around PII, please see <https://www.usaid.gov/privacy-policy>.

3.6 We may keep your information for up to six years to conduct statistical analysis of the data, so we can review, develop and improve our business activities, consistent with applicable law, rule, and regulation.

3.7 By submitting an application, you also consent to the collection, retention, usage and distribution of your personal information for the purposes outlined in this section 4 and 5 below.

4. Publicity

4.1 We will not publish full details of your entry. However, by submitting an entry, you give us permission to use and publicly publish your name, a summary of your entry and photographs/recordings of your participation in the prize in any media and online.

4.2 While competitors and winners of the prize are under no obligation to engage in further correspondence with USAID after the award of funds, USAID hopes they will continue to respond to requests for updates on the venture's evolution, success, or learning.

5. Limitation of Liability

5.1 We are not liable for any direct or indirect loss or liability, costs, claims, taxes, charges or expenses resulting from your participation in the prize or your reliance on statements made or advice given by us, our partners or contractors.



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Annex 1: Template for Slides

Solvers must complete and submit the [Creation Prize Presentation Template](#). The template is 14 slides, including a title slide. Solvers may optionally include up to 5 appendix slides if needed.

Annex 2: Template for Regulatory Review

Please complete the following table with all regulations relevant to your business idea. You may add additional rows as needed.

Regulatory Body	Applicable Regulations	What steps have you taken to comply with this regulation?

Annex 3: Judging Rubric

A. Quality of Submission.				
<p><i>This category aims to assess the extent to which the team followed processes prescribed in the Creation course, or in other words, if they did their homework. Did they take time to conduct meaningful customer discovery? Is their economic analysis thorough and reasonable? Did they prepare for their submission materials and presentation?</i></p>				
1. Does the presentation reflect learning from customer interviews?				
1	2	3	4	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <10 customer interviews, • only conducted at one stage of development • no contradictory insights gleaned 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >10 customer interviews • conducted at 1-2 stages of development, • limited contradictory insights gleaned • limited adaptation based on learnings 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • >20 interviews with customers • conducted at 3+ stages of development • confirmatory and contradictory insights were gleaned • clear adaptation based on learnings
Notes:				
2. Is the analysis of costs, revenue, cash flow and capital needs complete and reasonable?				
1	2	3	4	5
<p>Input figures (costs, price, sales/revenue) are based on estimations</p> <p>Business economics unsound (costs>revenue)</p> <p>Analysis seems incomplete</p>		<p>Input figures (costs, price, sales/revenue) are based on market research</p> <p>Business economics unconvincing (costs vs revenue unclear or unrealistic)</p>		<p>Input figures (costs, price, sales/revenue) are based on actuals</p> <p>Business economics are sound</p> <p>Analysis seems complete and of excellent quality</p>

and/or of low quality		Analysis seems mostly complete and of good quality		
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Notes:

3. Quality of oral and visual presentation

1	2	3	4	5
Presenter(s) appear unprepared, slides are not visually appealing and/or are unclear		Presenters are reasonably prepared; slides are visually appealing but may lack clarity or concision		Presenter(s) demonstrate a high level of preparedness, slides are visually appealing, content is concisely and clearly communicated

Notes:

B. Social Impact Potential
This category evaluates teams based on the potential for their solution to significantly impact the health and wellbeing of Liberians.

1. Does the solution address a priority health need?

1	2	3	4	5
Solution does not address a health need		Solution is related to health, but does not directly address a priority health need		Solution addresses a widely-recognized health priority

Notes:

2. To what degree does the solution improve upon the current standard for end users (patients, community members, etc.)?

1	2	3	4	5
Solution does not improve access, quality or cost for end users		Solution somewhat improves access, quality or cost for end users		Solution significantly improves access, quality or cost for end users

Notes:

3. Does the solution advance other development priorities, such as gender equity and social inclusion (including how solutions advance the participation of women, girls, and historically marginalized groups), environmental protection, and/or job creation?

1	2	3	4	5
No other development priorities are addressed		Solution somewhat advances other development priorities		Solution significantly advances other development priorities

Notes:

C. Business Potential

This category - worth the most points - appraises the venture's likelihood of success.

1. Is the problem well-defined?

1	2	3	4	5
The problem is not clearly defined, or not linked to customer discovery (solution-driven)		Problem definition is clear but would benefit from additional specificity, is somewhat linked to customer discovery		Problem definition is specific and linked to customer discovery

Notes:

2. Does the team present a viable solution to the problem?

1	2	3	4	5
Solution does not address the defined problem, solution is worse-performing or higher-priced than competition		Solution may address the defined problem, but questions remain about its performance or price point		Solution provably addresses the defined problem, solution is convincingly better-performing or lower-priced than competition
Notes:				
3. Is there a clear economic buyer (someone willing to pay for the solution)?				
1	2	3	4	5
The venture does not define the economic buyer, or the economic buyer is not plausible		The economic buyer is defined, but not fully linked to customer discovery, unclear whether the buyer has incentive and resources to buy proposed solution		The economic buyer is defined, based on customer discovery, and has incentive and resources to buy proposed solution
Notes:				
4. Does the team have a competitive advantage?				
1	2	3	4	5
The venture has no unique capabilities, and a competitor is likely to quickly replicate their idea		The venture currently has some unique capabilities that offer competitive advantage, but competitors may catch up with time		Venture has unique capabilities that prevent the competition from replicating their idea (e.g. intellectual property, cost advantage due to scale or geography, brand reputation, legal or regulatory barriers to entry)

Notes:

5. Is the team capable of leading the venture to success?

1	2	3	4	5
Team members do not have relevant qualifications (and have not brought on needed expertise), principals do not have availability to work on their venture		Team members have some appropriate qualifications, principals have some availability to work on their venture but not full-time		Team members have appropriate qualifications for their venture (or have brought on needed expertise), principals work on their venture full-time (or have brought on qualified experts to devote full-time effort)

Notes:

6. Does the team have a realistic production or service delivery plan?

1	2	3	4	5
There has not been any production or service delivery, and there is no clear plan to begin soon		At least one product has been produced / service has been delivered, and there is a clear plan for scaling up		Production or delivery of services is underway, with clear processes for inbound logistics, production and outbound logistics

Notes:

7. Has the team demonstrated understanding of the regulatory environment and taken meaningful steps to comply with all regulations?

1	2	3	4	5
Not demonstrated an		Demonstrated some		Demonstrated thorough

understanding and/or taken no steps towards compliance		understanding and some steps towards compliance		understanding and compliance
Notes:				
8. Does the team have a strong plan for marketing and distribution?				
1	2	3	4	5
There is no effective distribution/sales channel		There is a clear distribution/sales channel, but with some areas of concern		There is an effective distribution/sales channel
Notes:				
9. Is there a clear plan for next steps in growing the venture, including utilizing funding or investment?				
1	2	3	4	5
There is no long-term plan, and it is not clear how funding will be used to catalyze growth		The team presents a plan for long-term profitability and scalability, though there may be questions about the feasibility		The team presents a believable plan for long-term profitability and scalability, with clear ideas for how funding will be used to catalyze growth
Notes:				

CLEARANCE PAGE

Drafter: DDI/ITR//EPIC: KSullivan
Approver: DDI/ITR: MAbdel-Kader

Clear

7/14/2023

Bureau-Level Clearances

DDI/ITR/R: EDelva
DDI/ITR/I: CLott
DDI/ITR//EPIC: JThurow
DDI/ITR/I (gender): Slhenachor
DDI/BEO: CZurawski

Clearance Status

Clear
CLott
Clear, JThurow
Clear
Clear,contingent upon resolution of the
Deferral (DDI-22-213) for 22 CFR 216
compliance (under development)
Clear w/minor edits/comments
Clear

Date

6/14/2023
6/21/2023
6/20/2023
6/27/2023

07/12/2023
07/13/2023
07/13/2023

GC/DDI/ITR: CVernetti
DDI/EEI/CRM: KMacClune