

The Reinventing Greece Media Project: Young Journalists Uncovering Solutions

Greece
Aphrodite Bouikidis



Organization type:

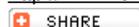
nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

Budget:

\$10,000 - \$50,000

Website:

<http://www.reinventinggreece.org/>



Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Young diaspora journalists uncovering solutions with face-to-face interviews, facilitating communication and partnership.

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

The international media has focused on the problems that burden Greece's communities; the economic crisis, growing unemployment, student riots and an ongoing exodus of educated and motivated young Greeks out of the country. These problems heighten the need to implement political reforms and encourage innovation and growth, and also offer an opportunity to discover and implement new solutions; to "re-invent" Greece. Stories on such innovations and solutions are rare in English, leaving a distance between those Greeks leading efforts to re-invent and diaspora Greeks that would like to support or join their efforts, as well as the international community invested in the future of Greece. In a national student research study conducted by the Next Generation Initiative in 2010, young Greek Americans overwhelmingly express an interest in traveling to Greece for volunteer, internship, study and work opportunities. Students and young professionals report that it is challenging to find information, in English, on community organizations and businesses that sponsor such opportunities for diaspora youth. The Reinventing Greece Media Project aims to address both of these issues.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

The Reinventing Greece Media Project was created with the unique desire to promote citizen media while sponsoring mentorship and partnership in order to help the next generation of students and professionals take the lead in communication. The Next Generation Initiative sent a team of seven students and recent graduates with experience in journalism, communications, public affairs, international relations and economics to Athens in July 2011 to serve as the launch team for the Reinventing Greece Media Project. With guidance from a head mentor the team reported on the initiatives and ideas of community leaders, entrepreneurs and young professionals all seeking to "reinvent" Greece. The team's stories and interviews are published on the project website and, along with a growing network of contributors, they will continue posting stories. This project allows students and young professionals to take the lead in reporting while allowing them to learn about and directly interact with their counterparts in Greece along with leaders in various fields. Mentors will help the team develop their technical skills and teach them to ask questions that will elicit solution-oriented responses. By seeking out and reporting the stories themselves, young journalists will have the opportunity to transition the public dialogue from one focused on problems to one focused on solutions. They will also make the personal connections necessary to facilitate communication and build future partnerships among individuals in Greece, Greek diaspora communities and within the international media.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

By using an online platform to host stories written in English, young diaspora journalists and additional contributors are increasing the access to information for diaspora Greeks, English-speaking journalist and the international community in general. An emphasis is placed on face-to-face discussions and collaboration which facilitates future communication and partnership. For this reason, maintaining a team of students and young professionals in Greece remains vastly important. There has already been a positive response to the pilot project, because of the focus on youth and solution-oriented journalism and due to the quality and exclusivity of the stories. The team has already interviewed many entrepreneurs, venture capitalists and human rights activists who do not easily agree to interviews simply because the team was physically in Greece, and was prepared to listen actively. Many of those interviewed also granted interviews they may not normally have granted simply because this was their first exchange

with a diaspora organization and they understood the importance of such a program. The interviews have already facilitated communication between Greeks in Greece, as well as diaspora Greeks and the international community, and many individuals and organizations have already reached out to the program, interested in collaboration.

Sustainability

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

Because the objective of the Reinventing Greece Media Project is to focus on students and young professionals as the main contributors, with the unique approach of combining solution-oriented citizen media, mentorship and partnership, there is not yet a competitor among diaspora print or online media outlets. The Project hopes to partner with diaspora media as well as Greek media, bloggers and journalism programs in order to grow and to continue to make information more accessible to an international audience. Because the focus remains making information as accessible as possible, any organization seeking to do the same would be seen as a partner rather than a competitor, and as an opportunity for partnership rather than a challenge.

About You

Organization:

The Reinventing Greece Media Project

About You

First Name

Aphrodite

Last Name

Bouikidis

Twitter URL

<https://twitter.com/#!/reinventgreece>

Facebook URL

About Your Organization

Organization Name

The Reinventing Greece Media Project

Organization Country

, DC, Washington

Country where this project is creating social impact

How long has your organization been operating?

Less than a year

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen..

Innovation

Select the stage that best applies to your solution

Start-Up (a pilot that has just begun operating)

How long have you been in operation?

Operating for less than a year

Social Impact

FOUNDING STORY: We want to hear about your "Aha!" moment. Share the story of where and when the founder(s) saw this solution's potential to change the world.

The participation of young journalists in this project is a direct outcome of the Next Generation Initiative's participation in the U.S. Secretary of State's Global Diaspora Forum, held in May 2011 in partnership with USAID, the Migration Policy Institute and other partners, which recognized the importance of diaspora community programs as important vehicles of people-to-people exchange and global partnerships for diplomacy and development. During the Forum, exchanges with leaders of other youth-oriented diaspora organizations revealed the need among many different diaspora communities to engage their youth in dialogue and encourage youth participation in promoting positive social and economic change in their native lands. This Media Project is an attempt to provide a model for how the Greek and other diasporas can engage and empower youth, coupling student-led journalism with widespread youth access to the Internet to strengthen youth participation and activism.

Specify both the depth and scale of your solution's social impact to date

Five organizations, including a university program, non-profit organizations and business/entrepreneur associations and two government agencies have already reached out to discuss potential partnerships or collaboration. Before the website has officially launched, there has been a great amount of traffic, mainly from Greece and from cities in the United States with large diaspora communities, eager to gather and share information. The twitter account is already followed by quite a few Greek and American journalists interested in the Project and what the Team has to say. Team members have been contacted by local and national radio stations with interview requests, thus allowing students and recent graduates to be recognized for their unique and valuable opinions and insights.

One of the recent graduates that participated in this project founded an innovative online start-up company. Inspired by her experience with the project this summer, and utilizing the network she built in Athens, she is considering ways to include young professionals in Greece in her efforts.

What is your projected impact within the next 1-5 years? Is your idea replicable? If so, how?

From September 2011 to May 2012 the Project will train this year's Team to serve as mentors to two teams of six students and young professionals being sent to Greece in the summer of 2012. The Project will also recruit contributors and encourage the participation of those in the Initiative's pre-existing network (currently over 10,000 students and professors) in addition to members of Greek American student associations at over 50 universities.

In the next two to five years, the Project plans to serve as a model and potential training partner for diaspora groups from countries other than Greece who want to engage the youth in their own communities, and increase their active participation in volunteer and service programs.

Winning entries present a strong plan for how they will achieve and mark growth. Identify your six-month milestone for growing your impact

Establish a network of 15 contributors in addition to the launch team. Establish a plan for 3 partnerships with local orgs.

Six-Month Tasks

Task 1

Recruit contributors to the website and continue reporting on events in Greece, with increasing content.

Task 2

Complete initial discussions and finalize agreements with five potential partner organizations.

Task 3

Create and implement a plan for training this years team to mentor others in 2012 and beyond.

Now think bigger! Identify your 12-month impact milestone

Fund two fully trained teams traveling to Greece in 2012.

12-Month Tasks

Task 1

Raise 40,000 USD through fundraising in the U.S. and at least one fundraiser in Greece.

Task 2

Finalize a plan of partnership with three new organizations and strengthen existing partnerships.

Task 3

Identify one partner in Greece to co-sponsor the two teams traveling to Greece in 2012.

How many people have been impacted by your project?

1,001 - 10,000

How many people could be impacted by your project in the next three years?

More than 10,000

Sustainability

Explain how your company, program, service or product is structured

Non-profit

What barriers have hindered the success of your project to date? How do you plan to overcome these and other challenges as you grow your solution?

The Project was restricted in our operation this year, due to limited funding. However, the Project was more successful than anticipated based on the number of organizations in Greece that requested future collaboration, and the number of initiatives and interviewees that were suggested to the group. There were so many, in fact, that there was not enough time to meet everyone. It is our hope that these challenges will be overcome through strategic efforts to fundraise and build partnerships, both in the U.S. and Greece. The Project will seek to raise enough funds to travel to cities or areas outside of Athens as well as within the capital, in order to highlight lesser known initiatives having a positive effects in Greek communities.

How do you see the information-technology and media sectors shifting over the next decade? How will your solution adapt to and/or drive that changing environment?

New technologies will always be introduced and while this Project is based on the idea that face-to-face communication is crucial for creating sustainable partnerships and collaboration, personal interactions can be shared internationally on the web through social media sites, YouTube, etc. Work on multiple continents will be facilitated by mobile and cloud technologies such as those Google already offers. As there is a greater access to technology and the world becomes smaller, this Project aims to facilitate a greater sharing of authentic information.

Failure is not always an option. If your solution fails to gain traction in the next two years, what other applications of the idea could you explore?

This Project is still at a very early stage of development. We have begun, and will continue, to gather and review feedback and responses when considering any new features or approaches to using resources most efficiently and best utilizing potential partnerships. While this Project is focused on the Greek diaspora, it is applicable in any country with a diaspora population. Therefore the Project's framework and statistical information would be replicable and highly useful to multiple organizations and/or governments.

Expand on your selections, explaining how you will sustain funding

Continuing support is being solicited from individual donors who funded the launch of the Media Project. In addition, the Project is aiding efforts by students to establish relationships with organizations as well as individuals from within the Greek diaspora community, with the aim of raising funds from organizations, individuals and charitable foundations whose goals and aims mesh with the Project.

Tell us about your partnerships

The Reinventing Greece plans to continue partnering with the American-Hellenic Chamber of Commerce, the Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), the College Year in Athens study abroad program, and Kathimerini newspaper. The Project will also work to create and build new partnerships.

The Next Generation Initiative has partnered with over 30 Hellenic-American organizations to implement its programs since 2006. Partner organizations have included cultural, youth, policy, business and professional associations.

What type of team (staff, volunteers, etc.) will ensure that you achieve the growth milestones identified in the Social Impact section?

The Project currently has a Team of six journalists as well as numerous Mentors, coordinators and contributors all of whom are volunteers. The students and recent graduates involved with the Program will be designated as Interns.

Ideally, the Project will have one staff member assigned to support the Project by developing program strategy, managing partnerships, recruiting mentors and technical trainers as well as handling basic administrative duties.

Changemakers is a collaborative and supportive space. Please specify any community resources you would need to grow and sustain your initiative. Select all that apply

Investment, Human resources or talent, Collaboration or networking, Mentorship.

Specify any resources you might offer to support other initiatives. Select all that apply

Research or information, Collaboration or networking, Innovation or ideas, Mentorship.

Please elaborate on any needs or offers you have mentioned above and/or suggest categories of support that aren't specified within the list

The Media Project team are actively interested in working with other organizations that help young people and students get more involved in the social, political and economic issues that affect their communities. One of our main goals is to serve as a model and as a partner and a resource for other young people and organizations wishing to affect such change.

Summary

Define your company, program, service or product in 1-2 short sentences

The Reinventing Greece Media Project reports on the ideas and individuals on the leading edge of efforts to re-invent Greece.

Source URL: <https://www.changemakers.com/citizenmedia/entries/young-diaspora-journalists-highlight-efforts-reinvent-g#comment-0>