Social Innovation Academy (SINA): social entrepreneurship beyond education!

Mpigi Town, Uganda

Etienne Salborn

Year Founded: 2014
Organization type: hybrid
Project Stage: Start-Up
Budget: $100,000 - $250,000
Website: http://www.socialinnovationacademy.org
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/socialinnovationacademy

- Social enterprise
- Education
- Youth development
- Sustainability

Project Summary

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

The Social Innovation Academy (SINA) turns around individual life stories of suffering into positive catalysts of social change. Instead of getting certificates, marginalized Ugandan youth create social enterprises and leave SINA with their own employment established.

WHAT IF - Inspiration: Write one sentence that describes a way that your project dares to ask, "WHAT IF?"

marginalized youth create social enterprises and job opportunities for their peers, using their wounded past as a competitive advantage for social impact?

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Uganda is facing the social challenge of an extremely high youth unemployment rate combined with one of the world's highest population growth rates. Only 5% of Ugandans have permanent employment and 83% of youth are unemployed. The future of Uganda lies in the creative minds of the youth but the school system is a colonial relic focusing on the memorization of facts where only one single answer is correct and regurgitated.

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

The Social Innovation Academy (SINA) empowers marginalized youth to become job creators by nurturing innovative project ideas into social enterprises with positive impact on society and the environment. In its self-organized innovator and change-maker space, marginalized youth become social entrepreneurs. Within 18 months of existence, SINA has for example empowered former child soldiers to create rural solar startup or AIDS-orphans to design a sex-education app. Students create their own curriculum through a "freesponsible" approach to unleash individual potentials. SINA transcends Uganda’s current educational model that perpetuates a colonialist rigidity and provides ideal conditions for youth to turn dreams into realities.
Awards
HI/VOS Social Innovation Award Finalist 2014, Lighthouse Project 2014 of the German Network for Civil Engagement

Impact: How does it Work

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

Young adults, who otherwise would have never been able to start an enterprise, become social entrepreneurs through coaching, mentoring, taking responsibility and unlearning limiting beliefs in a self-organized empowerment environment. It is unleashing the full potentials of youth through intrinsic motivation rather than punishments and rewards. Scholar ideas are incubated promoting social and environmental value instead of mere monetary profit. If a project idea is based upon solving a social or environmental challenge, its monetary profit is doubled for project incubation. If it creates value for both, the society and the environment, the created monetary profit is tripled to accelerate project growth to become a social enterprise.

Impact: What is the impact of the work to date? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.

15 — Social enterprises nurtured out of innovative ideas within the first 18 months of operations 28 — Number of jobs created thus far 87 — Number of people's lives turned around from suffering to empowerment 950 — Number of lives improved through established social enterprises

Spread Strategies: Moving forward, what are the main strategies for scaling impact?

Social Innovation Hub Goes International Kampala, 09/11/2020 The Social Innovation Academy (SINA) is to create another centre in Kenya, expanding their change-maker-network now inter-nationally. Their open learning spaces and systemic social labs have impacted over 10,000 people in Uganda over the last 5 years. 1000 social entrepreneurs emerged and started some of Uganda's leading social enterprises. Continuous support from SINA helped start-up student innovations to blossom into social businesses, like the famous company producing upcycling floorings out of plastic bags and egg shells.

Sustainability

Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution’s plan to ensure financial sustainability?

SINA is a non-profit transitioning into a social business itself. It has income generating projects contributing towards expenses. Scholars pay a small one-time contribution. Because SINA is built on trust and ideas have been created and incubated together in SINA, graduating scholars are willing to pass on the opportunity they received to other youth in need of support through giving shares to SINA of their social enterprises.

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

In Uganda, vocational, technical and entrepreneurship schools exist. They do not go beyond producing job seekers and focus purely on monetary profit instead of social and environmental value. Training tailors and bricklayers is important, but does not reveal the potential of the Ugandan people. Youth unable to explore their creative capacities are held back from turning ideas into social innovations. SINA is a holistic entrepreneurial ecosystem empowering the youth through personal, methodical and professional skills on their ways to create their own social enterprises and jobs.

Team

Founding Story

In Etienne Salborn volunteered at the Kankobe Children’s Home in Uganda. He saw that after primary school, children were left to fend for themselves. He started the NGO Jangu, which to date has supported over 100 youth in their education. The first generation completed high school in 2013, but despite this achievement they did not find jobs. Etienne's vision was to create a sustainable cycle in which sponsored youth one day become sponsors themselves, eventually rendering foreign aid obsolete. Together with the first generations of sponsored youth SINA was started in 2014 and the sponsored youth was able to turn around their wounded past for competitive advantage in leveraging social change.

The team is composed of 15 trained Ugandan facilitators, the funder and international volunteers. The organizational structure of SINA mirrors its core values and is designed non-hierarchical for individual empowerment. SINA is a self-organized system, meaning that there is no boss to make decisions for other people but everyone is included in the decision making process. The scholars run the academy by themselves and take care of finances, operations, hiring new staff, connecting to the outside world etc. This is done in task-teams called the “Learning Groups”. The system is built upon “freesponsibility”, giving scholars a lot of freedom and responsibilities. The groups run SINA while giving the scholars a lot of responsibilities and learn from mistakes. Facilitators are also part of the groups to guarantee the basic functionality and that important tasks get done.

File attachments:
- sina_community.jpg
- bottle_house_inside_at_sina.jpg

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