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Día Lab for Youth





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Enabling innovation to mitigate the effects of COVID-19

Unprecedented times require innovative responses. Governments, private companies and communities are coming together to find solutions to mitigate the impact of Covid-19. Through integrating innovation, creative thinking and proper resource allocation, we are bringing initiatives to life that contribute to the fight against Covid-19.

Youth are not only the future, but the present and why the contribution of every member of the community is essential. Youth constitute the majority of the Jamaican population, and is the single, most important reservoir of ideas and innovations we can identify.

“We are so proud of the transformative ideas stemming from the DIA lab since its inception in 2016, and particularly during this time, as we need everyone’s, assistance in finding innovative solutions to combat this pandemic. It simply demonstrates the power of creativity in crisis” Eva Lewis, CITI Country Officer

From designing and manufacturing artificial ventilators, to aiding the distribution of Covid-19 tests, there are multiple examples of individuals and communities coming up with initiatives and solutions to aid the heavily burdened public institutions. Especially our public health infrastructure, but also educational strategies, access to information, economic relief programs and security issues.

To contribute to the Covid-19 response, in April 100 youth participated in an all island virtual Ideation, which involved an interactive workshop, with participants developing prototypes, and pitching ideas to a panel of judges. This undertaking was part of the **DIA Youth Innovation Lab**, an initiative of **The Trust for the Americas of the OAS**, funded by the **Citi Foundation** and implemented by the **Institute of Law and Economics in Jamaica**.

The Ideathon themes included: Economic relief, Education, Access to Information, Health, and Security. Representatives from the Ministry of Education, the Health Industry, and Jamaican Diaspora, shared their perspectives on the ongoing Covid-19 crisis prior to the workshop and participants were encouraged to focus on developing innovative solutions to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

Approximately JA \$750,000 was awarded to the top innovative ideas. Six groups were awarded JA \$100,000 to further the development of their solutions; and six other initiatives under the two main topics were awarded with: 1st place: JA \$45,000; 2nd place: JA \$30,000 3rd place: JA \$15,000.

Winners of
COVID-19
ideathon

Topic A: Health and Economic Relief

1st place: Epiphany / Members: Tehilla Jeffrey, Ayibatombara Ibomoghe, and Tiffany Durham

Description: Ultraviolet germicidal irradiation technology (UVGI) implemented in public areas (supermarkets and health facilities). This product device can be placed along the walls or ceilings of the target room and emit ultraviolet radiation at a wavelength between 200-300 nanometers.

2nd place: Operation Feed / Members: Dennis Morgan, Marreisol Blake, Kymani Shaw

Award: JA \$30,000

Description: Safe delivery of fresh produce to citizens under quarantine or in isolation. It is also cold storage facility for surplus produce which can be processed later to curb the impact of a possible food shortage the country might fall into.

Topic B: Crime, Security and Education

1st place: Leading Ladies / Members: Akielia Willburgh and Aaliyah McKenzie

Description: An educational website through which non-english speaking students worldwide learn English from Jamaican teachers. The revenue will go to Jamaica Public Service (JPS), National Water Commission (NWC), Mortgage Companies and Student Loan Bureau (SLB), so as to lessen the weight of expenses on citizens who have lost their jobs and others who are currently experiencing salary cuts.

2nd place: Operation Feed / Members: Yanique Mendez, Ariane Roxburgh, Kimona Roache

Description: A free mobile and PC app that makes education and information easily accessible to persons who have disabilities such as visual, hearing and learning impairments, not just in a time when social distancing is encouraged but beyond. The app amalgamates differently-abled individuals with those who can assist by volunteering to read, sign, help with assignments or just to simply socialize through live video calls, texting or audio messaging to let these individuals know that they are not alone as well as possibly build life-long relations.

Other Innovative Ideas

PHDream / Members: Kristina Doroughty, Aleem Mahabir, Romario Anderson

Description: An innovative, multi-dimensional approach to crime management and crime control. Would involve a complete organizational transformation to an evidence-based management style, marrying a techno centric approach focused on the accumulation of crime data and statistics to most efficiently deploy resources and personnel at areas of concentrated criminal activity where they are needed most, and a human-centered approach focused on engaging in various interventions at the community to address the root social ills.

Honey and Wheat / Members: Jenelle Samuels, Shadaia Frances

Description: A service dedicated to create therapy, spanning music, writing and art therapy. The online services will accommodate professionals, interactive activities, access to wider services and opportunities within these fields, volunteers from both the creative and mental health field to assist in this effort.

SB Engineering/ Members: Brandeice Barrett, Shanroy Dennis

Description: A portable UV Sanitizer wand, a disinfecting tool that safely eliminates allergens, viruses, fungus, mold spores and bacteria from cellphones, keyboards, door handles, chairs

Dia Lab for Youth

Seeking to create a new generation of young disruptive entrepreneurs in Jamaica, to act as change agents in their communities, since 2016 Citi Foundation has supported The Trust for the Americas, a non-profit affiliated to the Organization of American States (OAS), in the implementation of an Urban Lab for Youth Innovation (DIA Lab) located in Kingston. The Urban Lab offers young innovators (16 to 30 years old) training in the use of state-of-the-art technology and encourages innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship while enhancing their leadership skills to boost their creativity and transform their communities.

Since inception, the Lab has been managed by the Institute of Law and Economics (ILE) under the DIA - Democratizing Innovation in the Americas- program, a regional initiative to foster innovation through access to cutting-edge technology, collaboration spaces, specialized training, and financial resources to encourage creative processes and to inspire a new generation of innovators. The project has also extended itself to reach the most vulnerable youth in society, particularly those who have been in conflict with the law who were also a part of A New Path Program (ANP) which seeks to reintegrate these youths into society as productive and stable individuals. Through the Lab's entrepreneurial training and courses designed to strengthen their agency, many of these youngsters have been empowered to effectively change their outlook which will in turn change their circumstances.

All these young innovators who come from varying backgrounds have been promoting social and economic development in their communities, creating equitable prosperity for vulnerable populations across the Americas.

Coordinated by Dwayne Gutzmer CEO of the Institute of Law & Economics; Shanae Owen, Project Coordinator; and Bryanna Chang, Technical Liaison Officer; the DIA Lab in Jamaica has been able to create a space for collaboration through creative methods of project implementation, facilitation style, partnerships and promotion of community-building through youth innovation and disruptive entrepreneurship. The DIA Lab has been providing young innovators and entrepreneurs with a customized innovation-centered curriculum, access to state-of-the-art technologies. The Lab offers, guidance from job intermediators and mentorship opportunities from business individuals, a collaborative atmosphere, as well as access to seed-funds for the most promising and innovative, youth-led projects. Currently in its 4th round of implementation, over 90 young innovators/entrepreneurs have strengthened their innovation skill sets and gain the skills to materialize and commercialize their ideas. 200 young innovators/entrepreneurs have developed low-cost, high-impact, high-quality innovative solutions, such as a disruptive business plan, product or service, that creates affordable access and livelihood opportunities for their communities.

120 of these young innovators/entrepreneurs have successfully secure start-up funds and launch their innovations. Additionally, 1,300 community members have expanded their basic technology skills by accessing the Urban Lab resources and services during extracurricular hours. To equip DIA Lab beneficiaries with the knowledge and courage to innovate, the lab team takes these individuals through a range of courses from Introduction to Innovation and Entrepreneurship, Business Model Canvasing, Financial Literacy, Prototyping, Mobile App Development to Developing a Winning Pitch, Developing Your Personal Brand and Leadership, among others. More recently the DIA Lab is fostering a mentorship component with the support of the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ) to connect innovators and disruptive entrepreneurs through access to guidance & mentorship opportunities, peer-to-peer collaboration, sharing of best-practices and lessons learned and to provide an opportunity for virtual exchanges between our participants and other youth across the region. Also, the DIA Lab has collaborated with the Caribbean School of Data to increase employability and economic opportunities for at-risk youth through digital literacy and data science skills training, with the first cohort to start in May 2020.

Major innovation events of the **DIA Lab**:

Ideathons - 1-2 day workshops where participants find solutions to specific urban and societal challenges and brainstorm ideas. This serve as a platform for youth to start their long-term projects in community building or disruptive Entrepreneurship.

The 1st Ideathon - Held in May 2017 introduced 5 main themes under which future Ideathons based on: Crime & Violence, Civic Engagement, Youth Unemployment, Gender Based Violence and Climate Change and the Environment.

Hackathons - A 24-hour hackathon invites young innovators with knowledge of Information Technology to participate in creating solutions to solve major issues affecting different industries primarily using Open Data as a main source of readily available information. At the end of the end, participants will use programming language, operating systems and applications to create solid and advanced solutions that are pragmatic and applicable to the respective industries. In 2018, the DIA Lab in Kingston was part of the Developing the Caribbean regional initiative.

Pitchtank Competitions - One-day pitch competition where DIA beneficiaries who have created and developed innovation projects pitch to win grant funding to continue the development of their projects. To date, the DIA Lab has awarded over USD \$80,000 in grant funding to pitch tank winners

Miguel Francis



Miguel is a 26-year-old pioneer in the wood-work business. Miguel currently works as a Customer Care Representative at an established banking institution, however his true passion has always been in making beautiful and innovative creations out of wood. With no formal training, Miguel's artistry is self-taught and his abilities include cabinet making, furniture making, joinery, carpentry and engraving all from his home in Portmore, St. Catherine. Before being exposed to the DIA Lab in 2018, Miguel created most of his products by hand. Since becoming a lab beneficiary, Miguel has been a frequent user of his favorite equipment, the laser cutter. In realizing the possibility of turning his talent into a viable

business, Miguel immersed himself into the Innovation and Entrepreneurship training sessions taught at the DIA Lab which eventually led to him participating in a Pitch Tank Competition with the business idea "I Want To Make JA". Through guidance from the DIA Jamaica Team and his own charm, aptitude and determination, Miguel was successful in his bid to become one of the newest DIA Jamaica Pitch Tank Winners. Like an eager champion, Miguel was on the first persons to fully take advantage of his grant funding as he purchased several heavy duty machineries, tools and equipment to increase production of his customized items, some of which you can find on his business page on Instagram: [iwanttomakeja](#). Miguel has attributed much of his success to his 5-year-old daughter who is his source of encouragement.

The additional income earned through his business has expanded his ability to earn and adequately meet the needs and wants of his household which means that his daughter will now have access to a host of new opportunities and resources.

Anita Clarke



Anita is an aspiring Attorney-at-Law who holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Hospitality Management. Her natural artistic abilities, creativity and love for people; as well as her heightened interest in the fashion and the Beauty Industry has led her on an Entrepreneurial path. Anita brands herself as an Image consultant and in 2016 she officially started her business 'Ann Clarke' which creates apparel primarily made of African prints and coconut shells. Anita first realized that she could use the coconut shells after seeing persons in her community litter their surroundings with them and as a means of preventing the occurrence of this she decided to put the coconut shells to good use in her designs. Her plan is to further

develop her brand in order to facilitate the introduction of handbags and turbans to the market. Anita was introduced to the innovation and entrepreneurial training of the DIA Lab by a friend who encouraged her to use the training to create a business model canvas which would provide her with a step by step guide on how to effectively run her innovation business. With her new found empowerment, she made the decision to apply for the Pitch Tank where she not only won seed capital to continue the development of her business but she also wears the title of the top performing pitch tank winner for 2018.

*With her startup capital, Anita has successfully registered 'Ann Clarke', expanded the products and services the business offers and also launched the business Instagram page called **annclarkem.u.a.***

Kemar Robinson



Kemmar is a self-taught programmer who is determined to make Jamaica the 'Silicon Valley' of the Caribbean. He first heard about the DIA Lab from a Pitchtank winner and through countless phone conversations with the DIA Jamaica Lab team, Kemmar was finally able to make his first visit to the lab during the 2018 Urban Challenge Ideathon. Kemmar has proven to a determined youngster who is very passionate about his innovation project called 'Cy-Reader'. Cy-Reader is a mobile application that converts text to audio by taking a picture of the text. This allows the user to turn any text into an audiobook allowing the user to listen to documents instead of reading, enabling them to study while doing other tasks. This application is

also beneficial to members of the visually impaired community as it gives them access to more information, increases their capacity for learning and opens the door to more opportunities to develop their community which will in turn improve their position in society. Cy-Reader also has a premium language function that enable person to read between languages by taking a picture of the text, this will allow the user to navigate the signs of the host country and to even read books, novels and contracts. Cy-Reader was in the advance prototype stage around the same time when the 2018 DIA Pitchtank was scheduled to take place. Although he was initially very anxious, Kemmar was able to successfully pitch his innovation project and was one of the fifteen (15) winners who secured grant funding. With this funding, Cy-Reader is currently on the Google App Store and is receiving sound reviews from customers.

Kemmar is proud to announce that Cy-Reader Version 2 is currently being developed.

Kadian Lewis



Kadian is both a beneficiary of the A New Path (ANP) program and the DIA innovation Lab in Kingston, Jamaica. Kadian came to us as a young and dependent mother to a baby boy who appeared eager to start her own car wash business but was also negatively affected by her past experiences of her home life and the juvenile system. A very reserved young lady, Kadian would make every effort to attend as many DIA workshops she could to learn about entrepreneurship, how to apply innovation to businesses and developing her personal brand, even if it meant bringing her baby with her. After months of training, moments of difficulties and doubt, Kadian decided to enter the DIA pitch tank. Though the process

of pitch preparation was sometimes an uphill battle for her, she received help from the Lab team where necessary and ended up winning grant funding and placing highest in her category. Initially based in St. Thomas, Kadian moved to an area in Old Harbour, St. Catherine where she sought the perfect location to start her business. With the guidance of the DIA Jamaica team, she was handheld through the process of registering her new business, acquiring equipment and acquisition of complementary workers to ensure satisfactory day-to-day operations of the business. At 22, an empowered Kadian now has the ability to manage her business by herself and develop work plans and create strategic goals for the future of the business which includes expanding to other communities in the parish of St. Catherine.

These opportunities have liberated Kadian and this new independence allows her to continue developing her competency as a business professional and her ability to provide job opportunities for others and a stable livelihood and future.

Jamaica in the Region

In May 2019, the DIA Jamaica team travelled to San Jose, Costa Rica as international guests to participate in the DIA Innovation Summit 2019 organized by the Trust for the Americas, the Public Administration Innovation Lab (InnovaAP) of the University of Cost Rica and the Centre for Research and Training in Public Administration (CICAP). Here, the lab team delivered giving a brief overview of DIA Jamaica, summarizing the training methodology, innovations developed, learning outcomes and future opportunities to expand DIA's reach in Jamaica. The team also benefited greatly from a number of presentations and interactive sessions held throughout the conference as well as the opportunity to have face to face conversations with other DIA Labs and international experts. It has been confirmed that for 2020, this regional Summit will be held in Jamaica. This will see representatives from innovation centered universities, colleges and organizations across the region coming to participate in and cultural exchange of innovation projects, ideas and lessons learnt in their processes of ideation and implementation.

Support and Networks

The National Youth Service (NYS), the HEART Trust NTA, University of the Commonwealth Caribbean (UCC), University of Technology, Jamaica and the University of the West Indies (UWI) have aided the project in providing support and guidance for successful participants assisting the team in providing suitable persons to participate in our specialized trainings through various outreach and academic programmes. Additionally, over the past 4 years DIA team has been able to consistently rely on the counsel of The Trust for the Americas in successfully reaching and at most times overshooting targets and objectives.

The team would also like to highlight the following person who have patronized, supported and endorsed DIA events: the Honorable Pearnel Charles Jr., Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security; Hon. Floyd Green, Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth and Information; Julian Robinson, Opposition Secretary of People's National Party; Linda Eddleman, Executive Director of the Trust for the Americas, Eva Lewis, Citi Bank Country Head, and Ruth Malcolm, Citi Bank Public Affairs Officer; Michael Lee Chin, Portland Holdings; Galina Sotirova, Former World Bank Representative to Jamaica; Lascelles Chin, Chairman of Lasco Ltd; and Simone Forbes CEO for Project Gold.

Interested in receive training and being part of the DIA community? Contact us!

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