

Believe Begin Become : Business Plan Competitions in Africa



Believe Begin Become is a business plan competition (BPC) developed by TechnoServe to support and grow new businesses in Africa. It is an incentivized, practical training and business development program to help entrepreneurs turn their business ideas into fundable and implementable business plans. The program is currently being run in Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania and Swaziland.

This program is designed to give enterprising men and women the training and resources they need to launch or expand businesses, while fostering a broader culture of entrepreneurship within their country. *Believe Begin Become* is based on a similar program that we established in 2002 in Latin America, where we currently run BPCs in El Salvador, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras, Chile and Ecuador.

Our BPCs catalyze the creation and expansion of profitable and competitive small- and medium-scale (SME) enterprises—a vital engine of growth,

jobs and income in the developing world. They also create a vehicle for local financial institutions to provide access to capital and build momentum for SME development, spurring governments into action.

In 2007, *Believe Begin Become* received over 6,300 applications, trained 395 entrepreneurs and awarded 64 entrepreneurs with seed money and business development services.



2007 IMPACT AT A GLANCE

Country	Total Applications	Qualified Applicants	Participants	Finalists	Winners
South Africa	180	166	80	40	20
Ghana	300	230	60	20	10
Tanzania	750	420	95	20	15
Kenya	5,000	300*	100	100	13
Swaziland	89	87	60	21	6
Total	6,319	1,203	395	201	64

* In Kenya, the 300 qualified applicants underwent an eight-day intensive residential course in ten locations countrywide, representing the eight main provinces/regions in the country.

TechnoServe World headquarters:

1800 M Street, NW, Suite 1066, South Tower, Washington, D.C. 20036, U.S.A.
 Tel: +1 202 785 4515 / Fax: +1 202 785 4544 / technoserve@tns.org

Kenya

TechnoServe and the Kenyan Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, with the support of Lenovo, the Kenya Pipeline Company and Kenya Commercial Bank, joined forces to promote entrepreneurship and private sector development in Kenya through a business plan competition entitled *Chora Bizna - Believe Begin Become*. The program is designed, managed and executed by TechnoServe on behalf of the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs.



TechnoServe's inaugural business plan competition in Kenya was launched on April 12, 2007. It reached tens of thousands of Kenyan youths by holding road shows in 23 towns across the country. As a result, over 5,100 young people applied to participate in the competition. *Chora Bizna* short-listed 300 of these applicants, who received eight days of intensive training and coaching on how to improve their business plans. Also at this stage of the competition, the participants were paired up with local business mentors.

After a second round of judging, the top 100 finalists presented their plans to a panel of judges made up of venture capitalists and successful Kenyan entrepreneurs. Thirteen winners were then selected to receive various cash awards— among them the Kenya Pipeline Company "Entrepreneur of the Year" award worth

1 Million Kenya Shillings (US \$15,555), which was awarded to Jacqueline Machaka of Nairobi.

In total, the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs, Mr. Kinuthia Murugu, awarded the finalists with seed capital and Lenovo laptops worth over \$70,000. This was in addition to the \$19,400 worth of prizes awarded at the provincial stages of the competition.

Mr. John Kithete, the Chief Business Development Officer of the Kenya Pipeline Company; Bill Stevenson, Lenovo's Director of Corporate Social Investment; Joshua Muiru, a Director of Kenya Commercial Bank and representatives from the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs were also in attendance, many serving as judges.

WINNER PROFILE

Jacqueline Machaka earned the highly coveted grand prize of TechnoServe's first Kenyan business plan competition, the Kenya Pipeline "Entrepreneur of the Year" award, as well as the award for the best existing business. Jacqueline overcame considerable odds to emerge victorious in a competition that attracted over 5,100 applicants. The proprietor of the Language Solutions and Business Communications Centre in Nairobi, an ecstatic Jacqueline was presented with a cash award of \$15,555 and a Lenovo laptop computer at a colorful ceremony held in Nairobi on December 21, 2007.

The Language Solutions and Business Communications Centre is a school focuses on teaching foreign languages, including Chinese and German. Services provided also include translation for international organizations and businesses. Having already successfully opened two training centers in Westlands and Hurlingham, Jacqueline was in need of a professional growth strategy. "I realized that my business was growing very fast and I did not know what to do," she said. "[T]hat led me to draft a business proposal to certify the position of my business so as to know where I wanted to take it." Having successfully completed the intensive *Chora Bizna* training, Jacqueline now has a clearly defined vision for her expanding business. As a result, she aspires to launch the first internationally recognized translator training program in East Africa.

The *Chora Bizna* judges were impressed with the originality of Jacqueline's idea, the dynamic drive she had used to start the business and the opportunity for growth demonstrated by her business plan. "It was a humbling experience to see a different face of the youth of Kenya," said Judge John Kithete of the Kenya Pipeline Company, "one that is full of innovation and a spirit of entrepreneurship."



Chora Bizna Grand Prize Winner Jacqueline Machaka could not hold back her tears of joy.

South Africa

TechnoServe launched its first national *Believe Begin Become* business plan competition in South Africa on July 12, 2007. The program is sponsored by Standard Bank, designed and executed by TechnoServe and supported by key partners Lenovo, the Small Enterprise Development Agency and the National Business Initiative.

The launch of *Believe Begin Become* South Africa received considerable attention in the press. Over 100 delegates representing a broad spectrum of public and private organizations attended the program launch, as well as correspondents from six leading print and electronic media houses, including CNBC Africa, SABC, City Press, Sunday World, 2nd Business and Big News.



A few of the Top 80, who participated in an intensive ten-week business training program

Multiple television and radio interviews were conducted to raise public awareness of the program and its sponsors, including Lenovo. Newspaper editorials and advertisements in various print media, which burnished Lenovo and other sponsors' logos, provided the strongest call-to-action for entrepreneurs. Nearly 200 applications were received and 166 aspiring and established business

owners were selected to participate in a one-day entrepreneurship seminar designed to help them refine their four-page business concepts. These business concepts served as the basis for the first phase of judging, which selected 80 semi-finalists to participate in an intensive ten-week business training program.

Semi-finalists also worked with consultants to prepare their 15-20 page draft business plans. All semi-finalists were honored in the *Believe Begin Become* graduation ceremony, where 40 finalists were also announced.

In the final phase of the competition, the finalists worked with consultants to further refine their business plans and prepare oral presentations. The final phase of judging will take place on March 8, to be followed by the awards ceremony on March 13. Each of the top twenty winners will receive business development vouchers valued at 35,000 South Africa Rand (\$4,578.80). In addition to the business vouchers, the top ten winners will also receive seed capital of 75,000 Rand (\$9,811.84).



COMPETITION STATS

- Applications received: 180
- Qualified applicants: 166
- Participants: 80
- Final Judging: March 8, 2008
- Awards Ceremony: March 13, 2008



Tanzania

TechnoServe's first nationwide Tanzanian business plan competition, *Believe Begin Become*, was launched by the President of Tanzania on June 12, 2007. The competition is seen as highly compatible with presidential initiatives to stimulate private sector development, as well as the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction, locally known as MKUKUTA. The competition's primary sponsor was Google.Org, with additional support provided by Lenovo, Barclays Bank and the Tanzania Investment Centre, among others.

TechnoServe's first nationwide Tanzanian business plan competition, *Believe Begin Become*, was launched by the President of Tanzania on June 12, 2007. The competition is seen as highly compatible with presidential initiatives to stimulate private sector development, as well as the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction, locally known as MKUKUTA. The competition's primary sponsor was Google.Org, with additional support provided by Lenovo, Barclays Bank and the Tanzania Investment Centre, among others.

The call for applicants was well received by Tanzania's young aspiring and established entrepreneurs, with nearly 750 applications submitted. Of these, 420 applicants qualified for a one-day entrepreneurship seminar. Ninety-five of these candidates went on to qualify for phase II of the competition, where they completed an extensive seven-week training program. As a result, each candidate submitted a 20-page business plan.

At the graduation ceremony held on October 31, 2007, judges announced their selection of twenty finalists, each of whom received business development vouchers valued at \$10,000. In phase III of the competition, the

finalists refined their business plans and made presentations to a high profile panel of judges drawn from the public and private sectors. On



Believe Begin Become Tanzania's panel of judges

December 13, 2007, TechnoServe hosted an awards ceremony, where fifteen winners were awarded seed capital ranging from \$5,000-\$20,000 each.

TechnoServe expects that the *Believe Begin Become* business plan competition program will continue to flourish in Tanzania in 2008, as Basil Mramba, the Minister of Trade, Industry and Marketing, has formed a special task force to advise the Ministry on how best to assist *Believe Begin Become* graduates to access capital.



(From left) Dr. Larry Brilliant, Executive Director of Google.org; Jakayo Kikwete, President of Tanzania and Bruce McNamer, President & CEO of TechnoServe at a June 7, 2007 Press Conference Announcing the Launch of Believe Begin Become Tanzania



COMPETITION STATS

- Applications received: 750
- Qualified applicants: 420
- Participants: 95
- Finalists: 20
- Winners: 15
- Prizes: \$200,000 in business development vouchers, seed capital ranging from \$5,000-\$20,000 for each of 15 winners



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Ghana

Lenovo supported TechnoServe's *Believe Begin Become* business plan competition in Ghana with a \$100,000 contribution in 2007. The program was launched on February 8, 2007. Other primary supporters included Barclays, Ecobank, Databank, TYPE and Spa on the River.

TechnoServe's second national Ghanaian business plan competition generated significant public interest. Over 230 applications were received and 232 applicants qualified to attend a one-day entrepreneurship seminar, where they developed business concept summaries.



Sheila Ocansey, the Believe Begin Become 2007 Overall Winner, is Awarded a Lenovo Laptop by Olumide Oladoyin, Lenovo's West Africa Representative

The top 60 of these participants advanced to the next phase of the competition, where they completed an intensive three-month training program. Each of the 60 graduates presented their business plans to a panel of high profile judges, who selected 20 finalists to advance to the final phase of the competition.

The grand finale of Ghana's *Believe Begin Become* 2007 business plan competition was the awards ceremony held by TechnoServe on September 27, 2007. The panel of high profile judges included Yofi Grant, Executive Director of Databank; Stephen Antwi-Asimeng, Managing Director of Fidelity Capital Partners; Adelaide Atrwireng, Managing Director of Fio Enterprise Ltd.; Herbert Aidoo, Team Leader, SECO IFC Leasing for the IFC; Hariette Amissah-Arthur, Director of KITE and Herman Chinery-Hesse, Chairman of SOFTtribe.

It was a joyous occasion for the many supporters, friends, family and members of the business community who gathered to celebrate the accomplishments of the 20 finalists, who each received \$10,000 in aftercare services. In addition, ten winners received \$10,000 in seed capital, as well as access to a low interest loan of up to \$10,000. Sheila Ocansey, the overall winner, was also awarded a Lenovo laptop computer.



COMPETITION STATS

- Applications received: 320
- Qualified applicants: 230
- Participants: 60
- Finalists: 20
- Winners: 10
- Prizes: \$200,000 in aftercare services, \$100,000 in seed capital and access to loans worth up to \$100,000

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Swaziland

TechnoServe first launched *Believe Begin Become* in Swaziland in 2006. In preparation for the FIFA World Cup to be held in neighboring South Africa in 2010, our third competition in Swaziland, which launched on February 20 of this year, will focus on a specific industry – tourism. Existing tourism operators will be encouraged to enter in order to grow their businesses and take advantage of the upcoming FIFA opportunity.

In partnership with the International Finance Corporation and the Swaziland Tourism Authority, *Believe Begin Become* aims to develop a cadre of high impact, successful tourism entrepreneurs who will help Swaziland realize its tremendous potential in tourism development.

This intensified focus on tourism was spurred by a study that TechnoServe conducted with the help of industry experts, both locally and in neighbouring South Africa. The key objective of the study was to explore the potential growth of the tourism sector as a key export industry in order to drive economic growth and generate employment. The study revealed that Swaziland possesses the natural endowments to create a popular tourist destination. It estimated the annual value of the Swazi tourism industry to be between \$78 and \$220M, making it one of the largest export markets in Swaziland.

Furthermore, the study showed that there is significant opportunity to increase both the quantity and purchasing power of tourists visiting Swaziland, in addition to expanding the geographical spread of tourism products within the country.



2007 *Believe Begin Become* Overall Winner Mduzuzi Dladu pictured with (from left) TechnoServe Swaziland Country Director Leslie Johnston, US Ambassador to Swaziland Maurice Parker and Deputy Prime Minister Constance Simelane.

At the launch of *Believe Begin Become* 2008, keynote speaker Mahandra Naidoo of MATCH, FIFA's key service provider, stressed the significance of the 2010 World Cup to the Swazi tourism sector. "The World Cup provides an unprecedented opportunity to market the region to a global audience," he said. TechnoServe's business plan competition will empower Swazi tourism operators to make the most of this exciting opportunity.



- Applications received: 89
- Qualified applicants: 87
- Participants: 60
- Finalists: 21
- Winners: 6
- Prizes: Over \$75,000 in after-care services and over \$65,000 in seed capital.



LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE

The upcoming competition is already attracting positive attention from local media. The *Times of Swaziland* has applauded the competition's intensified focus on tourism:

"The need for the private sector and non-governmental organizations' involvement in giving an 'injection' to the Tourism Industry cannot be over-emphasized. We... view the skills transfer by experts to local operators as a vital tool that will help them diversify their products and services. The seed capital that is at stake for the eventual winners is just a bargain, to say the least. Here is to TechnoServe!"

-Times of Swaziland, February 15, 2008.

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