

Unleashing Entrepreneurship

A highly successful component in TechnoServe's entrepreneurship development efforts is the Business Plan Competition, an incentivized practical training and business development program to help entrepreneurs turn their business ideas into fundable and implementable business plans. The approach catalyzes 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. Business Plan Competitions are a highly effective, high return approach to SME skill building. They also create a vehicle for local financial institutions to provide access to capital, and build momentum for SME development, spurring governments into action.

It is widely recognized that a thriving small and medium-sized business sector led by entrepreneurs is essential for economic growth in developing countries. In most developed economies, such as those of the US and Europe, small businesses are the engines of economic growth, driving innovation and productivity while continually generating new jobs. The absence of such small- and medium-sized enterprises, often called the 'missing middle,' continues to thwart the development of a vibrant private sector in developing countries.

Entrepreneurs all over the world share some common characteristics: they are confident, alert to new opportunities and unlikely to be stopped by a fear of failure. But entrepreneurs in developing economies face greater obstacles, especially finding adequate business training, accessing capital and dealing with confusing regulations.

The TechnoServe Business Plan Competition model was launched in 2002 as a competitive framework to identify, skill-build and nurture high-potential entrepreneurs; develop their business skills; provide them with technical assistance, seed capital, and to offer a forum for investors to find deserving projects.

By exposing hundreds of promising entrepreneurs to good business planning and financiers, the program has proven to be a powerful tool for promoting entrepreneurship and encouraging the creation and growth of small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Since 2002, TechnoServe has run 9 Business Plan Competitions in Central America under the *Idea tu Empresa* and *Emprende Tu Idea* brand names. In 2006 *Believe Begin Become* extended the model to Africa, first in Ghana and then in Swaziland.

OBJECTIVES

- **Support entrepreneurs** to create scaleable and sustainable businesses through training and mentoring
- **Catalyze networks** integrating the public, private and NGO communities to create a business environment supportive of SME development
- **Facilitate linkages** between entrepreneurs and financial service providers to stimulate business growth

KEY COMPONENTS

- Private sector support and involvement
- Skill-building through training, mentoring and technical assistance
- Local support network-building for small and medium-sized enterprises
- Brokering of access to finance and venture capital

PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

These programs, although locally branded to maximize visibility and impact, share a common reliance on local and regional business communities, with professional mentorships and corporate partnerships proving integral to the success of the Business Plan Competitions. Current Key multi-country sponsors include:



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

google.org

lenovo™

Cargill™



Standard Bank



ENTREPRENEUR PROFILE

Joseph Tackie, the overall winner of *Believe Begin Become* 2006, is the managing director of Meaty Foods Limited, a meat processing company in Accra, Ghana. Tackie already had an executive MBA when he undertook *Believe Begin Become*. He said the program challenged him and forced him to work out the crucial details of his business. This intense planning and the input of the professional trainers, consultants, and financial sector evaluators from the program have given him the input he needs to secure financing and achieve his growth objectives in the years to come. "The products I produce... will gain market share because they achieve international quality standards and because of the unique packaging, product design, and product mixing we offer," Mr. Tackie says. In 2007 his business is projected to generate 8 new jobs and \$250,000 in revenues.



TECHNOSERVE
Business Solutions to Rural Poverty

Unleashing Entrepreneurship (con't)

COMPLETED COMPETITIONS

2002	El Salvador
2003	El Salvador
2004	Nicaragua
2005	El Salvador
	Nicaragua
	Guatemala
2006	El Salvador
	Nicaragua
	Guatemala
	Ghana
	Swaziland

There are many entrepreneurs out there with good ideas...but they need encouragement to translate those ideas into concrete activities. And this program is designed to help them to do just that.

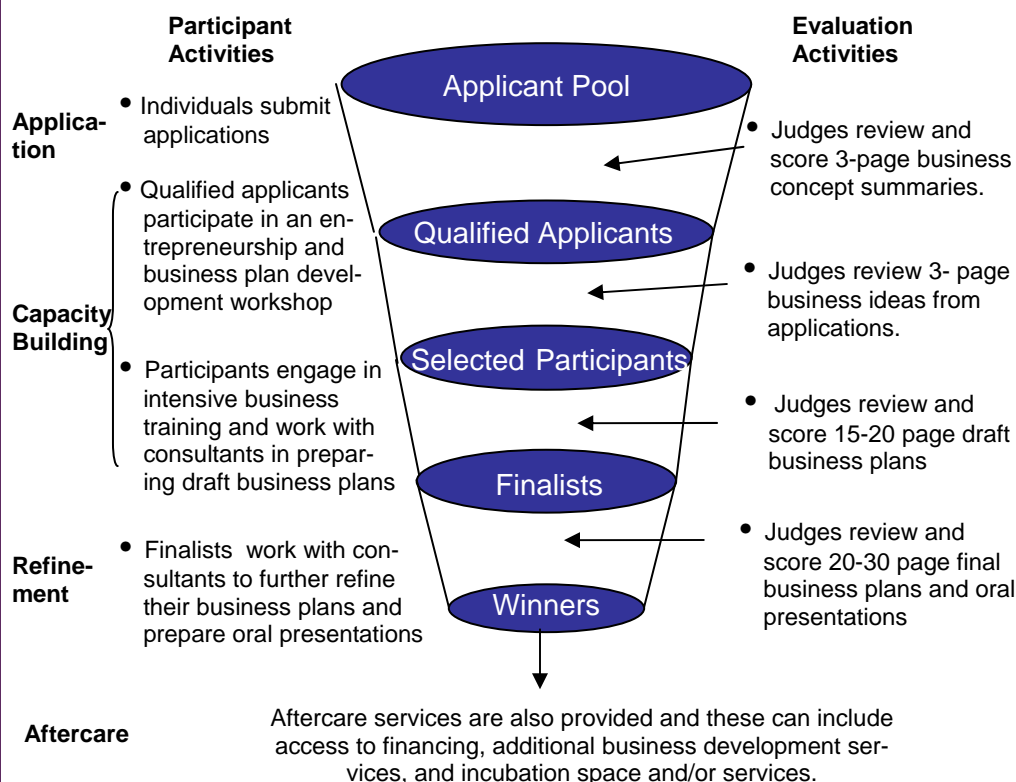
— *Ishmael Yamson of Ishmael Yamson & Associates and formerly CEO of Unilever Ghana Limited*

TECHNOSERVE BACKGROUND

TechnoServe is a U.S.-based international 501 (c) 3 non-profit development organization operating in Africa, Latin America and India. TechnoServe's mission is to help entrepreneurial men and women in poor rural areas of the developing world build businesses that create income, opportunity and economic growth for their families, communities and countries. TechnoServe applies an integrated industry/value chain support approach, focusing on the creation of profitable businesses in industries with the potential to be competitive and sustainable to benefit large numbers of rural poor. At the same time, our broad-based entrepreneurship programs identify and support entrepreneurs to turn their ideas into new businesses. Since 1968, TechnoServe has helped to create or expand more than 1500 businesses, benefiting millions of people in 30 countries.



Business Plan Competition Phases: *Application, Capacity Building, Refinement and Aftercare*



Just like Google started with a vision, the entrepreneurial men and women of Ghana have the potential to build successful businesses through their own innovation and vision... and this program helps. — *Rachel Payne, Google.org manager*

- By the end of 2006, the El Salvador programs will have returned \$9 in incremental SME revenues for every dollar spent on the competition.
- The first 3 El Salvador Business Plan Competitions have created or expanded 159 businesses generating \$14 million in incremental revenues.
- 990 total new Salvadoran jobs have been created.
- After the first Guatemala program, the Minister of Agriculture guaranteed funding for all 60 projects through the funding program "GuateInvierte."
- After the first Ghanaian program Databank, the largest Investment Bank in West Africa, launched a \$2 million venture fund called the "Triple B-Fund" to finance competition winners.

In all BPC countries winners generate business concepts across strategic industries that include:

- Agri-business and consumer goods such as hydroponic produce, dried fruits, pork products, and furniture;
- Industrial goods such as prefabricated construction materials and energy; and
- Services such as dentistry, inventory management, agro-forestry and nursery services, and eco-tourism.

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