

Library For All

Application to Boldline, The P3 Accelerator

ORGANIZATION

Education & Technology, Not-for-profit

Existing program going to scale

TEAM

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HISTORY

Library For All (LFA) won a grant in 2016 from USAID to pilot a writer workshop model in Haiti. This grant was part of the Enabling Writer's Workshop series. Through the grant, LFA created 260 original Haitian Creole leveled and decodable readers. The original content will be digitally distributed through LFA's digital library for readers in Haiti, and we are now exploring the sale of this content into US libraries.

Problem Statement (250 words max):

Research shows that high quality, engaging, mother tongue books are essential for children achieving literacy and building self-confidence by seeing themselves reflected in the stories they read. Yet today, libraries across the United States struggle to source content, especially children's books, that reflect the diversity of cultures and languages present in the communities they serve.

Diaspora and diverse populations are only continuing to grow. For example, there are 830,000 documented Haitians living in the US (US Census 2009). The Florida Department of Education reports that 58% of enrollments are from minority groups (2015). School districts in Florida have a high need for Haitian Creole books that are simply not available in the US. Libraries in Minnesota, California, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, where the Cambodian population are the highest in America, desperately need but lack content in Khmer to serve their communities. The Queens Library, which serves one of the most multicultural, diverse areas in the world, struggles to spend an allocated budget for multilingual and minority language books because they cannot find titles.

At LFA, we believe an inclusive and equitable community has a right to access books in its native language from the local library. We are uniquely positioned to address this challenge having already curated a rich library of mother tongue content for readers in many developing countries. As we continue to serve readers internationally, we recognize the opportunity to distribute this same content to libraries in the US, with the goal to serve the reading needs of their diverse communities.

Idea (250 words max): *What is the core concept for the partnership? How will working in a partnership obtain the outcome that is required? How does this align to U.S. interests?*

The core concept for this partnership is for Library For All to work with Ingram Content Group, the world's largest content distributors, to create a distribution channel for content from local publishers in developing countries into the US marketplace, filling the gaps in diverse children's books available at local US libraries.

LFA will play the role of aggregator, brokering and facilitating the relationship between these local publishers and Ingram. LFA will work with local publishers to edit and redesign the content to get it market ready, and provide a single interface to Ingram, who has agreed to waive set up fees for LFA as the aggregator. Content will be distributed to libraries digitally through LFA's app, or with print-on-demand, a service provided through Ingram's platform. In this model, licensing revenue will be divided between Ingram (5-~ 10%), LFA (20-~30%), local publisher (20-~30%) and the author (50%). This serves as a new, sustainable revenue stream both for LFA and for local publishers and authors in economically developing countries.

This work aligns with the interests of the U.S as it not only ensures all American children have the books they need to learn, to celebrate their diverse backgrounds, and to gain self-confidence, but it also positions the U.S to support and bolster the nascent publishing industries of emerging markets. As publishing industries grow stronger globally, a reading culture will develop in countries where it does

not currently exist, and there will be an opportunity for US publishers and authors to expand their readership into new markets.

Resource Requirements (250 words max): *Describe what is needed to implement your idea (resources, stakeholder buy-in, legal requirements, etc.). Address the feasibility of your idea.*

LFA and Ingram have already integrated our systems, such that content from local publishers can be fed into Ingram's system and distributed to Ingram's customers in the US (libraries, schools, retailers).

For high-quality content-production, LFA will need to work with designers and illustrators to create templates for book layout and design. Currently, the majority of local publishers in Haiti and Rwanda, for example, are producing low-interest content with poor layout. The result is that children are less interested in reading the content. To ensure high engagement with content, we will create book layouts for high-interest books that are engaging for children. We will share these templates with local publishers, and conduct workshops with the authors and publishers to ensure that the content they produce is high-quality and US-market ready. We will also need to establish an Advisory Board who can conduct editorial reviews of all content prior to distribution, to ensure only the highest quality of content is distributed.

On the content-distribution side, we will have to develop a US rights distribution framework, allowing Ingram and LFA to distribute content on behalf of the publisher for a share of the revenue. We will also need to build relationships with the local libraries and networks of libraries for whom the content will be most valuable. We will need to invest resources in marketing, to ensure libraries across the US know about our new, unique and diverse content offering.

Best Potential Partners (250 words max): *Describe ideal partners (from 2-10) or types of partners that would make for a successful partnership.*

The partners critical to the success of Library For All and Ingram's partnership are (1) local publishers in developing countries and (2) libraries across the US, particularly in Florida, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and California, where there are high populations of Haitian Creole, Khmer and Kinyarwanda speakers (languages in which we already have access to a host of books). Local publishers are critical for the production of content. The ideal local publisher partner is open to a pilot of content distribution and has content that is high-quality and market-ready. The ideal US Library partner is one that serves a diverse population and is in need of diverse content.

We also see opportunity to partner with Embassies in DC to distribute relevant, quality, mother tongue language content to the individuals, programs and communities each Embassy serves. In particular, we will target the Embassies of Cambodia, Haiti and Rwanda.

Other ideal partners in this collaboration are individual and corporate investors who can support the production of more content from local publishers in emerging markets. Investments would kick-start the supply chain and return would be provided upon sale of the content.

Ideal End State (150 words max): *Describe what success will look like with the implementation of your idea. Address the impact of your idea and its innovation potential.*

Success means that the nascent publishing industries in developing countries see a significant increase in their revenue thanks to distribution in the US, digitally on LFA's platform and in print through Ingram's print on demand.

Success means that children from diverse backgrounds in the US will have the chance to see themselves reflected in the stories they are reading and feel pride in their heritage. We will see engagement with books increase and confidence of children rise.

Together, Library For All and Ingram can disrupt the traditional publishing space and open up the book marketplace to original, diverse, inclusive content that reflects the complex fabric of America. We will create channels for book distribution from emerging markets to the US, which have never before existed. Finally, we will generate sustainable revenue for LFA that will allow us to continue growing our digital library and delivering books to the most underserved readers in underserved communities.