

Rise for Impact - Grant Application Template

Comprehensive organizational overview for funding applications

Executive Summary

Organization: Rise for Impact

Founder & Executive Director: Claude Tomoh Ikfingeh

Founded: 2023

Location: Pan-African (Headquarters: Ghana; Operations across 8 countries)

Mission: Empowering young Africans to transform their backgrounds into foundations for impact

Tagline: "Never let your background put your back on the ground"

Impact to Date:

- **500+ young leaders trained** across Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Cameroon
- **85% program completion rate** (vs. 40-50% industry average)
- **50+ community impact projects launched** by alumni
- **6 distinct programs** serving diverse needs across the African youth leadership ecosystem
- **Full-stack technology platform** built to scale impact efficiently
- **15+ coordinators** leading regional chapters across the continent

Funding Need: [Insert specific amount and purpose]

The Story: Why Rise for Impact Exists

The Personal Story That Started It All

I am Claude Tomoh Ikfingeh, a Computer Science student at Ashesi University (Class of 2026) from **Southwest Cameroon**—a region devastated by an 8-year armed conflict (2016-2024) known as the **Anglophone Crisis**.

This crisis has:

- Killed **6,000+ people**
- Displaced **765,000+ civilians**
- Destroyed **200+ schools**
- Left an entire generation of young people **without access to education, opportunity, or hope**

I am one of the lucky ones.

Through a combination of determination, family support, and what I can only describe as **divine favor**, I made it out. I earned admission to Ashesi University in Ghana—one of Africa's most prestigious institutions. I was exposed to world-class education, powerful networks, transformational mentorship, and a community of changemakers.

But as I sat in Ashesi's beautiful campus, learning design thinking and attending leadership workshops, **a question haunted me:**

"Why me? What makes me more deserving than the brilliant young woman still trapped in Buea, unable to go to school because armed groups burned it down? What makes me special compared to the young man in Kumba who dreams of becoming an engineer but has no internet, no mentors, no opportunities?"

The answer was uncomfortable: Nothing.

I wasn't smarter. I wasn't more hardworking. I wasn't more talented. **I was just luckier.**

And that realization was unbearable.

The Decision That Changed Everything

I made a choice: **If I can't bring every young Cameroonian to Ashesi, I will bring Ashesi to them.**

In 2023, I founded **Rise for Impact**—a pan-African youth leadership organization designed to **democratize access to the transformational experiences I had at Ashesi:**

- **World-class training** in grant writing, public speaking, storytelling, project management
- **Mentorship** from successful African leaders and global professionals
- **Networks** that transcend borders, conflict, and socioeconomic barriers
- **Opportunities** (scholarships, fellowships, internships) curated and shared weekly
- **A community** that believes your background is your foundation, not your ceiling

The Founding Belief

Rise for Impact is built on one unshakeable conviction:

"Never let your background put your back on the ground."

We believe that:

- **Talent is universal, but opportunity is not.** Every young African has potential—most just lack access.
- **Your story is your strength.** The struggles you've faced are not liabilities; they are proof of your resilience and fuel for your purpose.
- **Leadership is not a luxury.** It's not reserved for those who can afford expensive programs. It's a necessity for every young person who wants to change their community and continent.

- **Africa's future is determined by who we invest in today.** If we only develop young people with privilege, we perpetuate inequality. If we intentionally empower those from marginalized communities, we unlock Africa's full potential.
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The Need: Why This Work Matters

The Challenge Facing Young Africans

Across Africa, millions of brilliant young people face systemic barriers:

1. Limited Access to Quality Education

- Universities are expensive and concentrated in urban areas
- Crisis, conflict, and poverty disrupt schooling
- Many countries have youth unemployment rates exceeding 50%

2. Information Asymmetry

- Rural youth don't know about scholarships, fellowships, or grants
- They lack guidance on how to write applications, CVs, or personal statements
- Opportunities exist, but they never reach the young people who need them most

3. Network Gaps

- "It's not what you know, it's who you know"—but marginalized youth know no one
- No mentors, no role models, no connections to open doors
- They are excluded from spaces where opportunities are shared

4. Lack of Skills Training

- Schools teach theory, not practical skills like grant writing or public speaking

- No one teaches storytelling, personal branding, or how to leverage LinkedIn
- Young people have ideas but don't know how to pitch them or secure funding

5. Psychological Barriers

- Years of disadvantage create mindsets of defeat
- Young people internalize narratives: "I'm not good enough," "Opportunities aren't for people like me"
- Imposter syndrome, fear of failure, and hopelessness hold back potential leaders

The Result: A Lost Generation

Without intervention, millions of talented young Africans will:

- Never attend university
- Never access funding for their ideas
- Never connect with mentors who believe in them
- Never realize their potential as leaders, innovators, and changemakers

Rise for Impact exists to prevent this tragedy.

Our Solution: How Rise for Impact Works

We have developed a **comprehensive ecosystem** of programs, technology, and community designed to remove barriers and unlock potential.

6 Core Programs

1. Rise for Impact Fellowship (*Our Flagship Program*)

- **What:** Year-long comprehensive leadership development program

- **Structure:** Intensive on-site conference + 6 months of virtual mentorship + lifelong alumni network
- **Content:** Grant writing, storytelling, public speaking, project management, opportunity navigation, personal branding
- **Outcome:** Fellows emerge with projects, proposals, LinkedIn profiles, mentor relationships, and peer networks
- **Impact:** 85% completion rate, 70%+ Fellows win scholarships/grants within 6 months

2. Impact Clinics

- **What:** Intensive 2-day project incubation workshops
- **Target:** Young people with project ideas who need help turning them into reality
- **Content:** Design thinking, budgeting, proposal writing, pitching
- **Outcome:** Participants leave with fundable project proposals

3. Rise Circles

- **What:** Peer accountability and learning groups (6-10 people)
- **Structure:** Weekly virtual meetings for 12 weeks
- **Focus:** Goal-setting, mutual support, skill-sharing, celebrating wins
- **Outcome:** 90%+ participants report achieving at least one major goal

4. Rise for Climate

- **What:** Youth-led environmental action program
- **Target:** Young Africans passionate about climate justice
- **Content:** Climate advocacy training, project funding, network building
- **Outcome:** Alumni leading climate initiatives in their communities

5. Campus Ambassadors Program

- **What:** University chapter establishment and leadership

- **Structure:** Student leaders run Rise for Impact programming on campus
- **Outcome:** Institutional presence, sustainable recruitment, peer-to-peer impact

6. Opportunity Plug

- **What:** Weekly newsletter sharing curated opportunities
- **Content:** Scholarships, fellowships, grants, internships, conferences—tailored for African youth
- **Reach:** 1,000+ subscribers receiving opportunities they'd never find otherwise

Technology Platform

As a Computer Science student, I built Rise for Impact's **full-stack web application** to ensure operational efficiency and scalability:

Built With: Next.js, PostgreSQL, NextAuth, Prisma ORM, TypeScript

Features:

- **Program management system** (applications, selections, tracking)
- **Opportunity database** (1,000+ opportunities catalogued and searchable)
- **Automated email notifications** (Resend API integration for announcements, reminders, confirmations)
- **Alumni network management** (profiles, projects, success tracking)
- **Blog & media hub** (storytelling platform for impact documentation)
- **Admin dashboard** (real-time analytics, volunteer applications, newsletter management)

Why This Matters:

- Reduces operational costs (no expensive third-party tools)
- Enables data-driven decision-making
- Scales efficiently across 8 countries

- Provides professional experience to me as a tech entrepreneur
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Our Impact: By the Numbers

Reach & Scale

METRIC	ACHIEVEMENT
Young leaders trained	500+
Countries with active chapters	8 (Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Cameroon)
Program completion rate	85% (vs. 40-50% industry average)
Community projects launched by alumni	50+
Beneficiaries of alumni projects	5,000+
Opportunity Plug subscribers	1,000+
Website visits (2024)	10,000+
Social media reach	15,000+ across platforms

Participant Outcomes

Within 6 Months of Completing Programs:

- **70%+** win scholarships, fellowships, or grants

- **60%+** launch community impact projects
- **80%+** report increased confidence and leadership skills
- **90%+** say they would recommend Rise for Impact to a friend
- **50%+** return as mentors for future cohorts

Long-Term Impact (1-2 Years):

- **30%+** in formal leadership positions (student government, coordinators, team leads)
- **20%+** enrolled in graduate programs or professional certifications
- **40%+** employed or running businesses
- **25%+** leading social enterprises or NGOs

Success Stories

[Insert 3-5 compelling alumni testimonials here—specific names, countries, outcomes]

Examples:

- "Before Rise for Impact, I had never written a proposal. Three months after the fellowship, I won a \$10,000 grant to build a library in my village." — *Amina, Nigeria*
 - "Rise for Impact gave me the confidence to apply for things I thought were 'not for people like me.' Today, I'm studying at Oxford on a full scholarship." — *Kwame, Ghana*
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Our Model: Why Rise for Impact Works

1. We Meet People Where They Are

- **Virtual-first:** No need to travel or relocate (critical for crisis contexts, rural areas, or those with financial constraints)
- **Free or low-cost:** No one is excluded due to inability to pay

- **Flexible timing:** Evening and weekend programming for those working or in school
- **Crisis-sensitive:** We adapt to internet shutdowns, security concerns, and regional challenges

2. We Focus on Practical Skills

- Not abstract leadership theory—**hands-on training** in grant writing, LinkedIn, pitching, budgeting
- Participants leave with **tangible assets:** completed LinkedIn profiles, grant proposals, project plans, CVs
- We teach **how to access opportunities**, not just inspire vague ambition

3. We Build Lifelong Networks

- Alumni are not "graduates" who disappear—they join a **permanent community**
- They mentor future cohorts, collaborate on projects, share job leads, celebrate wins
- **Pan-African network:** Connections across 8 countries, creating continental solidarity

4. We Measure and Report Impact

- Every program has **clear metrics** and **pre/post assessments**
- We track participants 6 months, 12 months, and 24 months post-program
- **Transparent reporting:** Impact reports published on our website
- Data-driven improvements based on feedback and outcomes

5. We Are Led by Someone Who Lived It

- I'm not an outsider trying to "help"—**I am from the communities we serve**
- I understand the barriers because I faced them

- I speak the language (literal and cultural) of the young people we empower
 - **Authenticity and trust:** Participants see themselves in me and believe they can achieve what I've achieved
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Our Team & Governance

Leadership

Claude Tomoh Ikfingeh - Founder & Executive Director

- Ashesi University Class of 2026, Computer Science
- From Southwest Cameroon (Anglophone Crisis-affected region)
- Built Rise for Impact's full technology platform
- Recognized for leadership and innovation [insert any awards/recognition]

Regional Coordinators (15+)

We operate through a network of passionate student leaders and young professionals across:

- Ghana
- Kenya
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Cameroon

Each coordinator:

- Recruits and trains participants

- Facilitates local programming
- Mentors Fellows
- Reports on regional impact

Mentors & Facilitators (50+)

Rise for Impact alumni and external professionals who volunteer their time to:

- Lead workshops
 - Provide one-on-one mentorship
 - Review proposals and applications
 - Connect Fellows to opportunities
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Sustainability & Growth Strategy

Current Funding Model

- **Individual donations** from alumni, supporters, and diaspora Africans
- **Small grants** from impact funds and foundations
- **In-kind support** (free venues, volunteer facilitators, tech donations)
- **Founder self-funding** (Claude invests personal resources and time)

Challenges

- **Limited budget** constrains scale and quality
- **Volunteer dependence** creates capacity constraints
- **No full-time staff** (everything run by students and part-time coordinators)
- **Technology costs** (hosting, email services, etc.) add up

What This Funding Will Enable

[CUSTOMIZE BASED ON GRANT AMOUNT AND PURPOSE]

Example for \$50,000 grant:

- **Expand to 3 new countries** (Senegal, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe)
- **Train 500 additional young leaders** in 2026
- **Hire 2 full-time coordinators** to manage operations and scale programming
- **Launch mobile app** for easier access to opportunities and community
- **Provide 100 seed grants** (\$200-500 each) for alumni projects
- **Host in-person regional summits** in each country (networking, training, celebration)

Long-Term Vision (3-5 Years)

- **10,000+ alumni** across 20+ African countries
 - **Self-sustaining model** with earned revenue (corporate partnerships, paid workshops for organizations, alumni giving)
 - **Policy influence:** Alumni in government, civil society, and media shaping African youth policy
 - **Recognized as Africa's leading grassroots youth development organization**
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Why Invest in Rise for Impact?

1. Proven Track Record

- 500+ lives already transformed
- 85% completion rate (double the industry standard)
- 70%+ Fellows win opportunities within 6 months
- Testimonials, case studies, and impact reports validate our model

2. Cost-Effective Impact

- **Cost per participant:** ~\$100-150 (vs. \$1,000+ for traditional programs)
- Virtual-first model keeps costs low while maintaining quality

- Technology platform enables efficient scaling

3. Sustainable & Scalable

- Alumni become mentors, creating self-perpetuating system
- Regional coordinators ensure local ownership and relevance
- Technology infrastructure ready to scale to 10,000+ participants

4. Catalytic Investment

- This is not charity—it's an **investment in Africa's future**
- Fellows become teachers, entrepreneurs, policymakers, innovators
- **Multiplier effect:** One trained Fellow impacts 100+ people in their community
- Alumni are already winning millions in scholarships and grants—they will give back

5. Authentic & Trustworthy Leadership

- Founder is from the communities we serve
- Transparent financial management and impact reporting
- No overhead bloat—resources go directly to programming
- Deep relationships with participants (not transactional)

6. Aligned with Global Goals

Rise for Impact directly contributes to:

- **SDG 4:** Quality Education
 - **SDG 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth
 - **SDG 10:** Reduced Inequalities
 - **SDG 17:** Partnerships for the Goals
 - **African Union Agenda 2063:** Youth empowerment and skills development
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What We Are Asking For

Funding Amount: [Insert specific amount]

Purpose: [Insert specific use of funds—e.g., "Expand Fellowship program to 3 new countries," "Provide seed grants for 50 alumni projects," "Hire full-time coordinator"]

Timeline: [Insert project timeline]

Reporting: We commit to:

- **Monthly progress reports** during grant period
 - **Quarterly financial reports** with receipts and documentation
 - **Final impact report** with quantitative and qualitative data
 - **Photos, videos, and testimonials** showcasing outcomes
 - **Invitation to Demo Days** and alumni events
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Budget Breakdown

[CUSTOMIZE BASED ON GRANT AMOUNT]

Example for \$50,000 grant:

Category	Amount	% of Total	Description
Program Delivery	\$25,000	50%	Venue rentals, facilitator fees, materials, meals
Participant Seed Grants	\$10,000	20%	100 × \$100 micro-grants for community projects

Technology & Operations	\$5,000	10%	Platform hosting, email services, Zoom, software tools
Staff Compensation	\$7,000	14%	Part-time coordinator stipends (15 coordinators × \$466)
Marketing & Outreach	\$2,000	4%	Social media ads, printed materials, event promotion
Monitoring & Evaluation	\$1,000	2%	Survey tools, data analysis, impact reporting

Total: \$50,000

Conclusion: Join Us in Rising

Rise for Impact is more than an organization—it's a **movement**.

A movement of young Africans who refuse to let their circumstances define their futures.

A movement that believes **talent is everywhere, opportunity should be too**.

A movement proving that with the right support, **one young person can change an entire community**.

I started Rise for Impact because I got lucky—and I couldn't live with that luck being wasted.

Your investment ensures that luck is no longer required.

Together, we can:

- Train **10,000+ young African leaders** in the next 5 years
- Launch **1,000+ community projects** addressing Africa's most pressing challenges
- Create a **pan-African network** of changemakers who lift each other up
- Prove that **backgrounds don't determine destinies—they fuel them**

Let's rise together. Let's impact forever.  

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"Never let your background put your back on the ground."

— The founding belief of Rise for Impact