1. **Cover page**

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| Project Title  Promoting women’s family-based entrepreneurship in West Bengal |
| Organization(s)  Claflin University, South Carolina, U.S.A.  Visva Bharati University, West Bengal, India |
| Target Country  India  State: West Bengal |
| Thematic area  This project addresses business and innovation in the area of women’s family-based entrepreneurship in West Bengal. Promoting the growth of sustainable small businesses led by women will be the focus of this project. |
| Project synopsis  Claflin University, a non-profit private university in Orangeburg, SC, U.S.A. and Visva Bharati University in West Bengal, India present this proposal for a one-year project in promoting women’s family-based entrepreneurship in West Bengal. The proposed Claflin University-Visva Bharati University project will address the small business development needs of women and their family members who work with them. There are six proposed activities of this project to be conducted over twelve months. These project activities will benefit the state of West Bengal in India in increasing women’s entrepreneurship. The training programs should have tangible impacts on job creation and entrepreneurship. For the benefit of the region in the U.S, where Claflin University is located, project staff will explore the prospects of offering a similar training program for women’s family-based small businesses. The project will also expand academic research on entrepreneurship among faculty and students in both institutions. |
| Institutional Contact Information for Claflin University  **Ms. Wanda R. Nimmons**  **Sponsored Programs Administrator/Coordinator, Claflin University, 400 Magnolia Street, Orangeburg, SC 29115**  **Email** [**wanimmons@claflin.edu**](mailto:wanimmons@claflin.edu)**. Telephone: 803-535-5544**  CO-PI’s  Dr. Harpal Grewal, Professor of Economics and Finance, Email hgrewal@claflin,edu,  Telephone (803) 535-5202 (Office),(803) 479-8906 (Cell)  Dr. Mitali Wong, Chair and Professor of English, Email [wong@claflin.edu](mailto:wong@claflin.edu),  Telephone (803) 535-5221 (Office), (803) 707-4120 (Cell) |

**2. Executive Summary**

Claflin University, a non-profit, private university in Orangeburg, SC, U.S.A. and Visva Bharati University in West Bengal, India present this proposal for a one-year project in promoting women’s family-based entrepreneurship in West Bengal. The time period for this project will be from September 1, 2019 to August 31, 2020. The proposed Claflin University-Visva Bharati University project will address the small business development needs of women and their family members who work with them. This training program will be designed for families without much formal education. No income is expected from this project for the partnering universities. The proposed project has the following long-term goals:

1. The proposed project activities will benefit the state of West Bengal in India in increasing women’s entrepreneurship via free training programs.

2. The project will contribute to expand academic research on entrepreneurship among faculty and students at Claflin University, Visva Bharati University, and the University of Calcutta (consulting institution). More conferences are envisioned.

The immediate objectives of this project of one-year duration are:

1. The proposed training programs should have tangible impacts on job creation and entrepreneurship in both countries.

2. For the benefit of the region in the U.S, where Claflin University is located, project staff will explore the prospects of offering a similar training program for women’s family-based small businesses.

The following six activities are proposed:

Project activities

1. Review of research, networks, and resources for entrepreneurship development identifying best practices and benchmarks.
2. Develop two levels of entrepreneurship and innovation training programs for women (and families) and run two pilot projects for each program in the Santiniketan area.
3. Set up a website for online classes for video learning as well as certificate programs. The website will also serve as one-stop information source for resources for small and micro businesses.
4. Set up a “Consortium for Entrepreneurship Development” among women from low income families in West Bengal to plan, to arrange, and to hold a conference.
5. Hold a conference on entrepreneurship and innovation at Visva Bharati University and disseminate conference proceedings.
6. Work with Orangeburg County Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to explore the prospects of a similar training programs in this area of the state of South Carolina.

**3. Proposal Narrative**

Claflin University, a non-profit, private university in Orangeburg, SC, U.S.A. and Visva Bharati University in West Bengal, India present this proposal for a one-year project in promoting women’s family-based entrepreneurship in West Bengal. This proposed project focuses on the strategic area of business and innovation. The site of the project will be at Visva Bharati University in Santiniketan, a small city near [Bolpur](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolpur) in the [Birbhum district](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birbhum_district) of [West Bengal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/West_Bengal), [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India).

History

Claflin University, the oldest historically black university in the state of South Carolina is located in the small city of Orangeburg in South Carolina. Founded in 1869 to prepare recently freed slaves to take their rightful places as fully trained and productive members of society, Claflin University is an independent, co-educational, career-oriented liberal arts university affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Claflin University is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and approved by the University Senate of the United Methodist Church. Claflin University’s Business School is accredited by the American Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP), U.S.A. The graduate and undergraduate programs offered are the MBA and the BS in Business Administration (concentrations in Accounting/Finance/other non-Business minor such as Leadership Studies), Management, Marketing, Organizational Management. For the last 150 years, Claflin University has fulfilled its mission of providing higher education, economic opportunities, and empowerment for minorities and women. Currently, more than half of Claflin University’s student body is comprised of women.

Visva Bharati University was founded in 1921 by the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore. In 1951, Visva Bharati University became a central university operated by the Indian central government based in New Delhi, India. An act of the Indian Parliament declared this university to be "An Institution of National Importance". Currently, at Visva Bharati University there are more women students than male students. Both the partnering institutions are located in small cities located in the middle of rural areas.

Rationale

The rationale for this project comes from the findings of the Women’s Entrepreneurship Development in West Bengal partnered by the University of Calcutta and Claflin University under the US- India 21st century Knowledge Initiative project for three years that has just ended. This UGC-Fulbright sponsored project addressed the needs of women’s small eco-friendly businesses in West Bengal. Training sites were developed for women artists and artisans. The project staff discovered that in most cases, women’s home-based small businesses needed the daily assistance of family members such as sisters, daughters, and husbands. Based on these findings the proposed Claflin University- Visva Bharati University project will address the small business development needs of women and their family members who work with them. Two key personnel from the US- India 21st century Knowledge Initiative project will work with both Claflin University and Visva-Bharati University to draw upon the learning experiences of this three-year project ended in the spring of 2019.

According to [www.startupindia.gov.in](http://www.startupindia.gov.in/content/sih/en/women_entrepreneurship.html) women constitute only 13.76% of the total number of entrepreneurs in India, hence there is great need to train and support women’s entrepreneurship and innovation. The choice of the state of West Bengal is justifiable because the state government of West Bengal is currently promoting entrepreneurship with Startup Bengal. This state remained behind in entrepreneurship development for over thirty years. Recently, an entrepreneurship readiness assessment showed West Bengal as lagging behind the states of Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Punjab and Chattisgarh (*Times of India*, March 16, 2017). A recent article “The rise of female entrepreneurship?” by Santosh Desai in *Times of India*, September 20, 2019 suggests that women’s family-based small businesses can thrive in a climate of positive family relationships because in India’s male-dominated society women’s family-based small businesses are not viewed as threatening.

This project proposes the following activities.

Project activities

1. Review of research, networks and resources for entrepreneurship development identifying best practices and benchmarks.
2. Develop two levels of entrepreneurship and innovation training programs for women and family members and run two pilot projects for each program in the Santiniketan area.
3. Set up a website for online classes for video learning as well as certificate programs. The Website will also serve as a one-stop information source for resources for small and micro businesses. Free online classes in Bangla and English languages leading to an entrepreneurship certificate for women and families with formal education.
4. Set up a Consortium for Entrepreneurship Development among women from low income families. This consortium of universities, (private and public), the local business community and non-profit organizations (NGOs) will promote and mobilize resources for research and formal education and training on entrepreneurship development in West Bengal.
5. Plan, arrange, and hold a Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Visva Bharati University.
6. Work with the Orangeburg County Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to explore the prospects of similar training programs in this area.

These project activities will benefit the state of West Bengal in India in increasing women’s entrepreneurship. The training programs should have tangible impacts on job creation and entrepreneurship. For the benefit of the region in the U.S. where Claflin University is located, project staff will explore the prospects of offering a similar training program for women’s family-based small businesses. The project will also contribute to expand academic research on entrepreneurship among faculty and students in both institutions. No income is expected from this project for the partnering universities.

The two partnering universities have made the following plan for sustaining the project:

Deliverables

1. Visva Bharati University will sustain the project with the help of the consortium and NGOs.
2. Claflin University will work with Indian partnerships to expand the areas of delivery of the online certificate program for entrepreneurship development.
3. Claflin University will work with the Orangeburg SBDC on developing a similar training program in South Carolina, U.S.A. in the region where Claflin University is located

The success of the project will be measured by collecting data on

a) the number of women and families trained in the certificate program,

b) the number of small businesses set up or expanded,

c) research and dissemination of knowledge on entrepreneurship and innovation, and

d) the establishment and operation of a small business development program for women from low income families in the greater Orangeburg area of South Carolina.

The former principal investigator of the US- India 21st century Knowledge Initiative project will serve as the external evaluator for the current project so that this project can yield long term results for promoting small business development for women and families in West Bengal, India.

**4. Budget**

**The budget spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel is a separate document submitted as an attachment.**

**5. Budget Narrative**

This budget narrative provides explanations and justifications for line items on the budget spreadsheet. The total amount requested from Partnership 2020 is $74,484.65. The cost share agreement from Visva Bharati University is for $9,408.00. There is a letter of agreement in the Appendix from the Registrar (Acting) at Visva Bharati University on the detailed budget and cost share.

**Claflin Personnel**:

Co-PI **Dr. Harpal S. Grewal** will work 3hrs/week for 52 weeks including 2hrs/wk of volunteer work.

Co-PI **Dr. Mitali Wong** will work 4hrs/week for 52 weeks including 2.5 hrs. /wk of volunteer work.

Project Specialist **Dr. Peggy Ratliff** will work total of 112.5 hrs. in 52 weeks including 75 hrs. of volunteer work.

Project Specialist **Dr. Abdullah Khan** will work 136 hrs. in 52 weeks including 90.5 hrs. of volunteer work.

Total salaries for Claflin Personnel total $10,000.00 with Fringe benefits (@7.65%) totaling $765.00. Total salaries and Fringe benefits for Claflin personnel are calculated at $10,765.00.

**Personnel in India**:

External Evaluator **Dr. Ishita Mukhopadhyay** will provide 225 hrs. of services in 52 weeks. Research Specialist **Dr. Sharmistha Banerjee** will provide 225 hrs. of services in 52 weeks. Programs Manager **Dr. Amit Hazra** will work 8 hrs/week for 52 weeks.

Programs Coordinator **Ms. Sudeshna Mitra** will work 20hrs/week for 52 weeks.

**Mrs. Perminder Jeet Kaur** will provide 322 hrs. of services in 52 weeks for networking.

**Two graduate Students (Visva Bharati Univ.)** will work 20 hrs. /week for 52 weeks.

Total Salaries/Stipends for India Personnel are calculated at $13,693.00.

Project Total salaries/Stipends and Fringes for personnel in India are calculated at $24,458.00.

**Operating Costs**:

International travel expenses for eight trips @$2,900/trips totaling $23,200,

office supplies/printing paper $500,

partnerships in research, teaching and student exchange costs such as lunch/refreshments for Claflin Univ. faculty Skype meetings to network with V-B Univ. faculty $500.

Consortium for Entrepreneurship Development $5,000 will be used for 15 lunch meetings each attended by 30 persons.

Costs also include Entrepreneurship Training Modules with $1,500 for equipment rental,

$4,000 for video program,

$3,000 certificate courses,

$1,000 website, and

$1,000 cost share for venue.

**Programs Costs**: Conference on Entrepreneurship/innovation two meals for 70 @35/person, hotel for $30, 2 nights @$70/person,

three speakers, $600,

others, $1,850,

study abroad, research and teaching partnerships (lunch/refreshments for V-B Univ.

faculty Skype meetings to network with Claflin faculty @$50 for 10 persons for 5 meetings). Office supplies/printing for Visva Bharati University, paper and other office supplies $750,

cost share for printing and photocopies $500,

travel expenses for all programs in India, travel expenses for V-B Univ. team members for field trips and other travel @$0.24/mile for 5,210 miles ($1250.4)

**Total project cost** is calculated as $74,484.65 requested from Partnership 2020.

**6. Monitoring and Evaluation Narrative**

Monitoring

1. The designing and timely completion of each phase of the activities of this project will be monitored in the USA by Dr. Grewal and Dr. Wong, the co-principal investigators at Claflin University. The Claflin University project personnel will hold Skype meetings with their team members at the University of Calcutta and with their partners at Visva Bharati University.
2. The designing and timely completion of each phase of the activities of this project will be monitored in West Bengal, India by Dr. Amit Hazra, program manager, working with his team at Visva Bharati University. The Claflin University project personnel will hold Skype meetings with their team members at Visva Bharati University.
3. Travel for both teams has been planned to facilitate project activities, to develop programs, and to collect data. Travel will be monitored by Dr. Grewal from Claflin University and Dr. Hazra from Visva Bharati University.
4. Dr. Wong and Dr. Khan at Claflin University are native speakers of the Bangla language and they will work with the Visva Bharati team to monitor the instructional materials composed in Bangla/Bengali for the training programs.

Evaluation

1. The training program materials, the certificate curriculum, the project website, and the conference will be evaluated by Dr. Ishita Mukhopadhyay who served as the PI of the

US- India 21st century Knowledge Initiative project for three years that has just ended. Dr. Mukhopadhyay works at the University of Calcutta and can travel to Visva Bharati University in a few hours.

1. For collecting data for evaluation, interviews with trainees will be conducted. Visva Bharati personnel will administer surveys to participants in the certificate program. This data will be submitted to the external evaluator.
2. The external evaluator will submit two reports: one at the midpoint of the project and one at closeout.
3. Dr. Grewal and Dr. Wong will submit one project report after six months of project activities, and the final report in the last month of project activities.

**7.Key Personnel**

Claflin University Personnel:

Dr. Harpal S. Grewal, Professor of Economics and Finance, will serve CO-PI. He is experienced in guiding small business development and has provided leadership to the Claflin team for the collaborative project with Calcutta University that has provided the background and experience to develop the current proposed project.

Dr. Mitali Wong, Chair and Professor of English, will serve as CO-PI. She has provided leadership to the Claflin team for the collaborative project with Calcutta University. She is fluent in Bangla and has publications on women in India and in West Bengal.

Dr. Abdullah Khan, Associate Professor of Economics, will serve Project Specialist for monitoring curriculum. He worked with the previous collaborative project with Calcutta University and is proficient in Bangla.

Dr. Peggy Ratliff, Professor of English, will serve as Project Specialist with developing a training program in Orangeburg, SC. She has publications in women’s studies, has been a woman owner of a small family-based business, and has previously visited universities in India while working with a grant-funded project.

India-based Personnel:

Dr. Amit Hazra, Professor and Head, Department of Lifelong Learning, Visva Bharati University, is an expert on rural development. He will serve as Program Manager.

Ms. Sudeshna Mitra from Visva Bharati University has experience in rural development and will serve as Field Specialist.

Dr. Sharmistha Banerjee, Professor of Business Management, University of Calcutta, will provide consultation on training program development as Research and Training Specialist. She is very experienced in this area having served as CO-PI of the collaborative US-India 21st century Knowledge Initiative project.

Dr. Ishita Mukhopadhyay, Professor of Economics, University of Calcutta, will serve as the External Evaluator for this project. She is very experienced in this area of training women entrepreneurs having served as PI of the US-India 21st century Knowledge Initiative project.

Mrs. Perminder Jeet Kaur will assist with Consortium Development. She currently serves as Director of the Eastern region of The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry in India.

**8.Timeline**

May 15, 2020 — May 14, 2020

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| Phase I: May, June, July, 2020   1. Review of research, networks and resources for entrepreneurship development identifying best practices and benchmarks. 2. Develop two levels of entrepreneurship and innovation training programs for women and family members and run two pilot projects for each program in the Santiniketan area. |
| Phase II: August, September, October, 2020   1. Develop two levels of entrepreneurship and innovation training programs for women and family members and run two pilot projects for each program in the Santiniketan area. 2. Set up a website for online classes for video learning as well as certificate programs. The website will also serve as a one-stop information source for resources for small and micro businesses. Free online classes in Bangla and English languages will be offered leading to an entrepreneurship certificate for women and families with formal education. 3. Make plans to hold a national/international Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Visva Bharati University. 4. Submit first report on evaluation of project activities for six months. |
| Phase III: November, December, 2020 – January 2021   1. Set up a Consortium for Entrepreneurship Development among women from low income families. This consortium of universities, (private and public), business community and non-profit organizations (NGOs) will promote and mobilize resources for research and formal education and training on entrepreneurship development in West Bengal. 2. Plan, arrange, and hold a Conference on Entrepreneurship and Innovation at Visva Bharati University. |
| Phase IV: February, March, April 2021   1. Collect, edit, and disseminate conference proceedings. 2. Work with Orangeburg County Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to explore the prospects of a similar training program in this area of the state of South Carolina. 3. Submit final report and evaluation of the project. |

**Appendix:** Five Letters of Agreement in PDF attached as a separate document

1. Acting Registrar, Visva Bharati University
2. Dr. Amit Hazra, Visva Bharati University
3. Dr. Ishita Mukhopadhyay, University of Calcutta
4. Dr. Sharmistha Banerjee, University of Calcutta
5. Ms. Perminder Kaur, ASSOCHAM