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| **Project Title: Promoting women’s family-based entrepreneurship in West Bengal, India** |

**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.

**Project activities (Dilverables): The following six activities are proposed**

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" \o "Bolpur) in the [Birbhum district](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birbhum_district" \o "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 Chandigarh (*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.

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:

**Specific 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.

**Project Staff and Their Responsibilities:**

**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.

**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. **Consultant** **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.

**Project Duration:**

The total duration of the project to successfully complete all the listed activities will be one year (Twelve Months). The starting and ending dates for the project will be April 01, 2020 and March 31,2021, respectively. The project calendar will be determined in next four week. Please send your suggestions.

**Budget:** The budget **is** in revision process. It will be available after it approved by the funding agency.

**For any additional information or questions, please contact:**

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