InnovateIDP BY EDUPOWER YOUTH FOUNDATION — JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN

PROJECT LEADER: KUIR MAKUOL AKECH

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

InnovateIDP by Edupower Youth Foundation aimed at providing internally displaced youths in South Sudan with practical entrepreneurial and leadership skills. The program fostered innovation, leadership, and community development through workshops, mentorship, and collaborative activities. Participants learned to identify local challenges, developed business solutions, and will receive a month-long intensive mentorship to implement their projects, which is intended to promote self-reliance in the communities they come from. This initiative addressed the urgent need for youth empowerment and peacebuilding among displaced populations in South Sudan.

ABOUT EDUPOWER

Founded in 2021, Edupower Youth Foundation is a youth-led nonprofit in South Sudan dedicated to empowering underprivileged youth. Edupower provides equitable access to education, mentorship, and opportunities, nurturing the next generation of leaders, innovators, and changemakers, and fostering inclusive, sustainable communities across South Sudan. Edupower specialises in establishing modern learning hubs and community-based libraries that integrate books, digital access, and skills training. Edupower pairs this with entrepreneurial leadership programs that empower young people to become problem solvers and changemakers in their communities.

OUTCOME

InnovateIDP, by Edupower Youth Foundation, brought together 30 Internally Displaced Youths from different ethnic backgrounds and communities for a 3-day intensive entrepreneurial leadership training, where we explored the concept of "Let's BUILD." We received an overwhelming number of applications, over 150 applicants for just 30 spots. We therefore selected participants from different IDP camps and states. Some of the participants came from POCs in Bor Town, Jonglei State, and POCs in Juba. Others came from Nimule Town, Eastern Equatoria State, but the majority were from Juba, the capital city of South Sudan. Below is what participants learned during the three days.

1. **Leadership & Self-Awareness**: They developed a better understanding of their personal values, strengths, and leadership styles, expressed through life maps, purpose statements, and leadership commitment cards.
2. **Entrepreneurship & Innovation Mindset**: Participants learned to analyse challenges in their communities deeply, connected them to the SDGs, and designed creative solutions using structured innovation tools such as SCAMPER and the Business Model Canvas.
3. **Communication & Collaboration Skills**: Through empathy-based activities, peer feedback, and storytelling practice, the participants strengthened their teamwork, listening, and public speaking abilities.

4. **Delivery & Real-World Action**: Participants crafted and delivered compelling solution pitches, created prototypes, and developed personal action plans for implementation beyond the program.

Over the next month, participants will go through a rigorous online mentorship where they will receive guidance from local entrepreneurs and leaders. By the end of this mentorship program, participants will then go into their communities to execute their projects.

CHALLENGES

Due to the growing inflation in South Sudan, the funds could not be used for the program to reach 50 participants, so we reduced the number to only 30 participants. Additionally, Edupower worked with local partners to cover the cost difference caused by inflation. Additionally, the issue of insecurity was another challenge; we could not host the training in the Mangala IDP camp because there were a lot of incidents, and also speculations around the possible attacks along the road to the Bor-Juba Highway, where the camp is situated. Therefore, we conducted the training in Juba, the capital, where there was at least better security

LESSON LEARNED

As the Project Leader, I learned that for leadership to be effective, it is essential to create spaces that allow others to understand their full potential and succeed. I learned that structure empowers creativity, that listening and feedback make programs stronger, and that striking a balance between vision and careful execution ensures impact. Most importantly, I saw that when youth are trusted with responsibility, they embrace it with energy and innovation. It is a reminder that the future of South Sudan lies in equipping young people to lead at an early stage. Personally, it

gave me joy seeing fellow South Sudanese, especially my generation sit at the same table to talk about the current challenges facing their communities and how they should work together for the betterment of the communities they come from, irrespective of which tribes they represent.

SPENDING BREAKDOWN

DESCRIPTION	SOUTH SUDANESE POUNDS	UNITED STATES DOLLAR
Training Materials & Venue Setup	4,979,030	$1,055.01
Meals and Drinks	2,066,900	$445.40
Participants' Transportation Cost	2,238,222	$483.00
Showcase Prize	1,000,000	$215.75
TOTAL	10,284,152	$2,199.16