Winners announced of global coronavirus challenge for young entrepreneurs

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Lipreading-friendly face masks, digital medical services and contact-free ATM buttons among winning business entries to The AdamStart COVID-19 Innovation Challenge

- Over one thousand 13 to 29 year olds from around the world took part in the business competition
- The five winners are from Uganda, India, Bangladesh and Ukraine and will have access to mentoring, funding and training, and a residential trip to **Pearson Business School in London**
- Expert judging panel included **Pearson Business School** and the Office of the **United Nations** Secretary General
- Social entrepreneur from Sheffield, **Adam Bradford**, 27, launched the challenge while in lockdown in Benin, West Africa

British entrepreneur Adam Bradford today reveals the five winners of the AdamStart global entrepreneurial challenge to tackle COVID-19.
Adam Bradford, a social entrepreneur and Queens Young Leader from Sheffield, set up **AdamStart** in 2010, aged just 17, to help young entrepreneurs from around the world scale-up socially responsible and innovative ideas. To date, AdamStart has supported over 8,000 young people, in 130 countries, on their business journey. This year, the competition encouraged young people, to tackle coronavirus in their communities, anywhere in the world.
Adam Bradford, founder of AdamStart - who is himself stranded in Benin, West Africa - commented: *"We received over 1000 entries to this year's COVID-19 Innovation Challenge, spanning talent across the entire globe. The energy and creative thinking has been overwhelming, and our judges undertook a rigorous selection process to decide our five winners."*
Huge congratulations go to;

- **Juliet Namujju, 23 from Mpiji, Uganda**, who launched a sustainable fashion label that transforms the waste crisis in Africa into employment opportunities for disabled tailors. She has invented a line of biodegradable, African-print, face masks with a mouthpiece adaption to help people who rely on lipreading to communicate.
- **Patrick Ssremba, 23, Kampala from Uganda**, who runs a start-up that offers mobile medical and dental services to communities in Uganda. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he has adapted to offer digital on-demand medical and dental services to rural communities.
- **Apoorv Shankar, 29 from Bangalore, India**, who invented Hand-Key, a sliding handheld clamp device to help open doors, push buttons on ATM machines and other high-contact public surfaces without having to touch potentially contaminated surfaces.
- **Osama Bin Noor, 29 from Dhakar, Bangladesh** created a programme to connect young people and their ideas to policymakers, ensuring rural areas of Bangladesh get support during COVID-19.
- **Dmytrii Lavrinenko, 27, from Kiev, Ukraine** works in the non-profit sector in Kiev and has created an online skills-sharing platform with his friends. It helps those who are disconnected and finding it difficult to gain access to services during the virus outbreak.

Adam continues: "*As an entrepreneur who got my start at age 13 through an innovation challenge at my school, I recognise the importance of the competitions like this in fostering the next generation of inventors, entrepreneurs and philanthropists. These young people have some truly brilliant ideas and can really make a difference to the coronavirus response – and the world – with the right support to unlock funding and scale-up.*"

Will Holt, Dean of Pearson Business School, says of the judging process: "*Reading the submissions was like reading a good book. I instantly wanted to know more. I'm looking forward to working with these young innovators to find out more and support these businesses as they flourish into successful scale-ups making a real, tangible difference in the world."*

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Peter Baxendell, business consultant and a former director of major global brands in Unilever and Associated British Foods, says: "*I'm used to assessing business plans from entrepreneurs that aim to build profit and personal gain. What was so interesting about this was that it was a very different type of entrepreneurship: one for the greater good. These young people had flexed the very same entrepreneurial muscle but to do really, genuinely altruistic things. It is very inspiring.*"

In addition to Adam Bradford, Will Holt and Peter Baxendell, the judging panel also includes:

- **Ishmael Dodoo,** United Nations Diplomat
- **Frances Trought**, the author of Brilliant Employability Skills and founder of Everything D&I, a diversity and inclusion opportunities platform
- **Grace Ihejiamaizu** who founded iKapture to deliver after school education in Nigeria and OpportunityDesk.org, the largest online platform that connects youth with opportunities around the world
- **Kaffy**, dancer, choreographer and founder of the Kreative Arts Foundation For Youth in Nigeria

The prizes for each winner include:

- A fully sponsored trip to London in 2021 to take part in business training at Pearson Business School
- Access to online training programmes with a crash course in entrepreneurship module delivered by Pearson Business School
- Opportunity to travel to Los Angeles to spend time at the Dan Eldon Center for Creative Activism in partnership with Creative Visions Foundation
- Full access to top level industry mentors and coaches
- Opportunities for funding and financial backing

- ENDS –

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