

JACK MA FOUNDATION'S AFRICA NETPRENEUR PRIZE INITIATIVE (ANPI) JOINS FORCES WITH ECOSYSTEM OF PARTNERS FOR THE 2020 "AFRICA'S BUSINESS HEROES" COMPETITION

- ANPI has teamed up with local partners from across Africa to identify and engage with talented African entrepreneurs for the 2020 Africa's Business Heroes (ABH) prize competition
- 2020 Anchor Partners [African Leadership Group](#), [Ashesi](#), [Dalberg](#), [Janngo](#), and [RiseUp](#) have been key to equipping entrepreneurs with training, skills and resources
- To date, ABH has received 18,000 applications from candidates representing all 54 countries in Africa



Addis Ababa, 3rd June 2020 – The Jack Ma Foundation's Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative (ANPI) has joined forces with local partners from across Africa to identify and mobilise innovative, resilient, and mission-driven African entrepreneurs, as well as support them throughout the application and selection process of the second edition of the Africa's Business Heroes prize competition (ABH).

ANPI's Anchor Partners for 2020 are [African Leadership Group](#), [Ashesi](#), [Dalberg](#), [Janngo](#), and [RiseUp](#). Since the [official launch of applications on April 6](#), local partners have been instrumental in promoting the ABH prize competition in their respective regions, helping to identify and engage with potential applicants. Partners have also worked closely with aspiring candidates to build up their management and leadership capabilities - sharing knowledge, best practices and insights from across their networks, as well as delivering training and education programs. Programs include the '[Africa's Business Webinar Series](#)' – which to date, have drawn more than 7,000 entrepreneurs to participate.

The [Africa's Business Heroes](#) prize competition - which is open for applications in both English and French - aims to provide entrepreneurs from across Africa a platform to showcase and develop their talent and business ideas. The prize is open to all entrepreneurs regardless of country, industry, age or gender. ABH will culminate in a grand finale later this year where the top 10 finalists will pitch global business legends for a chance to win their share of a US\$1.5 million prize pool.

ANPI has also been working with [a diverse ecosystem of partners](#), including business incubators (**Ethiopia Entrepreneurship Development Center**, **StartUp Factory Ethiopia**, **CTIC**, **Impact Hub Dakar**, **WikiStart Up**, **InnovaLab**), venture capital firms (**Outlierz Ventures**), entrepreneurship communities (**i4policy**), communications platforms (**Sasai**), mobile network operators (**Safaricom**) and media

outlets (**Pulse.Africa** and **Startimes**) to further amplify grassroots outreach to entrepreneurs and to make educational and training resources more widely accessible.

“We are honored to be able to work closely with these exceptional local partners to bring the Africa’s Business Heroes prize competition to all corners of Africa and spotlight talented entrepreneurs from across the continent. Our extraordinary partners share our mission and commitment to enabling entrepreneurship and together, we hope to support entrepreneur heroes who will create jobs and opportunities for their local communities as well as catalyze a movement of entrepreneurship across Africa,” said **Jason Pau, Senior Advisor for International Programs for the Jack Ma Foundation**.

The 2020 edition of the ABH prize competition has received a tremendous level of interest and responses. To date, ABH has received 18,000 applications from candidates representing all 54 countries in Africa. Last year’s inaugural edition of the competition drew nearly 10,000 applications from 50 African countries. This year, in recognition of the extraordinary circumstances facing entrepreneurs and SMEs around the world and in Africa, the deadline for applications will be extended from June 9 to June 22. To apply and for the latest updates on the Prize, please visit: africabusinessheroes.org and follow [@africa_heroes](https://twitter.com/africa_heroes) on Twitter. To see a documentary into the journeys of 2019 finalists, please visit [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...).

Anchor Partners commented on their ongoing collaboration with ANPI, noting:

- “Now more than ever, we need an abundance of entrepreneurs to unleash the innovation and job creation necessary to unlock Africa’s full potential. The African Leadership Group is excited to continue our partnership with the Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative to catalyse the continent’s next generation of bold, courageous and imaginative problem-solving entrepreneurs,” said **Fred Swaniker, Founder and CEO of the African Leadership Group**.
- “The Africa’s Business Heroes programme brings new emphasis and resources to the continent’s potential to become a hub for problem-solving and is set to become one of the most catalytic platforms for young entrepreneurs. Ashesi is excited to join in the work to achieve this vision of African entrepreneurship together with the Jack Ma Foundation’s Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative.” commented **Ebenezer Buckman, Director of External Relations & Special Assistant to the President, Ashesi**.
- “Dalberg is proud to partner with the Jack Ma Foundation’s Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative (ANPI). We share the conviction that entrepreneurship is a vehicle for social and economic transformation on the continent, and that Africa’s entrepreneurs can achieve the dual objectives of profit and purpose” said **Robin Miller, Partner & Global Digital and Data Practice Lead of Dalberg**. “As an Africa-focused enterprise ourselves, we have also been on that same journey to build a platform that now supports Africa’s transformation from 13 offices across the continent. We are therefore proud that our Anchor Partnership involves working with the Jack Ma Foundation to build entrepreneurial resilience across the continent.”
- “We are very proud to partner with the Jack Ma Foundation, as we share the same entrepreneurial DNA, the same innovation spirit, the same passion for Africa and the same conviction that technology can leapfrog the development of our beloved continent. It’s time for action: entrepreneurs are Africa’s true business heroes as they strive to create everyday life-changing solutions for all Africans and massive job opportunities for the youth. As a pan-African female-led VC investor, Janngo is also very proud to back female entrepreneurs and

encourage them to apply massively to the Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative 2020,” said **Fatoumata Ba, Founder and Executive Chair of Janngo.**

- “RiseUp is thrilled to be partnering with the Jack Ma Foundation's Africa Netpreneur Initiative Prize (ANPI) for the second year in a row as we search together for Africa's 2020 Business Heroes! Amid today's global challenges, RiseUp and the Jack Ma Foundation are brought together by a shared belief in the power of courage, creativity, and innovation to solve the world's most pressing problems. We're searching for Africa's next generation of business heroes and the Jack Ma Foundation's far-reaching impact across the African continent makes them the perfect partner for this endeavour!” said **Abdelhameed Sharara CEO & Co-founder of RiseUp.**

About ANPI

The ANPI is the flagship philanthropic initiative spearheaded by the Jack Ma Foundation aimed at supporting and inspiring the next generation of African entrepreneurs across all sectors, who are building a more sustainable and inclusive economy for the future of the continent. Over a ten-year period, ANPI will recognize 100 African entrepreneurs and commit to allocating US\$100 million in grant funding, training programs, and support for the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. The ANPI organizes the “Africa's Business Heroes” prize competition and show, in which ten finalists have the opportunity to pitch their business to win a share of \$1.5 million in grant money. Jack Ma, Founder of Alibaba Group and the Jack Ma Foundation, first created the prize after he made his first trip to Africa in July 2017 and was inspired by the energy and entrepreneurial potential of the young people he met with.

About Jack Ma Foundation

Established by Jack Ma, the founder of Alibaba Group, the Jack Ma Foundation was founded on 15 December 2014 and has been focusing on education, entrepreneurship, women's leadership, and the environment. The Foundation aspires to be a reliable, participative, and sustainable philanthropic organisation. The Jack Ma Foundation has so far supported projects worldwide including the Jack Ma Rural Education Program, the Africa Netpreneur Prize Initiative, the Ma & Morley Scholarship Program, and Jordan's Queen Rania Foundation. Additionally, the Foundation has also funded a number of projects in its priority areas. The Jack Ma Foundation is committed to empowering rural educators, entrepreneurs, rural children, young start-ups, and women to equip them for the future and to help build a happier, healthier, more sustainable and more inclusive society.

Press Contacts

Holly Zhao
(+1)5054693316
holly.zhao@alibaba-inc.com

Miriam Forte
(+44)7534247780
m.forte@alibaba-inc.com