



## **ResilientAfrica Network Supports Technovation Challenge**

On October 2, 2013, ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) leadership met in Silicon Valley with the Global Ambassador of Technovation Challenge, Anar Simpson to discuss the program. The Technovation Challenge program is a unique massive open online course (MOOC) whose curriculum and competition teaches young women how to build mobile applications to solve community challenges where they live. Teams of 4 to 6 girls are mentored by professional women and together they go through the online curriculum over a period of three months. The program, which has no direct costs to the participants, equips the girls with technical and entrepreneurial skills, with a goal of creating a mobile phone app that they can take to market. The teams first their app to a panel of regional judges and winners of regional challenges are invited to World Pitch Night in Silicon Valley. The winning team receives \$10,000 USD to productize their app.

In this meeting, the Resilience Innovation Lab (RILab) Directors representing four of the geographic RAN regions of sub-Saharan Africa (Eastern West, Southern and the Horn of Africa) presented their vision for resilience innovations in their region and discussed the role of the Technovation Challenge to achieve their goals. The RILabs will encourage identification of faculty champions and provide space to students to meet with their private sector mentors during the program at Jimma University in Ethiopia, University of Health and Allied Sciences in Ghana, University of Pretoria in South Africa and Makerere University in Uganda. For example, for the 2014 competition cycle, RAN will support Dr. Dorothy Okello, Senior Lecturer, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, Makerere University, Uganda, leading the Technovation Challenge. She is also the Founder of Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) whose mission is to promote and support the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) by women and women organizations in Uganda. RAN will also support the spread of the Technovation Challenge program throughout its participating universities in sub-Saharan Africa in Zimbabwe, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Somalia, Kenya, Mali and Senegal.

RAN and the Technovation Challenge program share a similar philosophy of strengthening community resilience, which sets the stage to promote the Technovation Challenge across the RAN universities. For example, mobile apps developed by teams in prior challenges have addressed community issues such as school attendance (Arrive, 2013 winner), community participation in local nonprofits (Solidárias) and simplifying complex public transportation schedules (Guide Me Around: LA). Visit <http://iridescentlearning.org/programs/technovation-challenge/app-quilt/> for a detailed description of each app.

The Technovation Challenge program, which emerged from Silicon Valley, is expanding globally. While originally targeting high school girls' age, the program has expanded to universities such as Oregon State, University of Calgary among others. The program has reached over 1,300 young girls in 19 countries, including sub-Saharan African countries Ghana and Nigeria, as well as Jordan, Yemen, Indonesia, China, Nigeria, United Kingdom, Ukraine, Brazil, Canada, India and the United States. The Technovation Challenge team from Nigeria won the Regional Competition and made it to the World Pitch event at Twitter headquarters in San Francisco earlier this year. This achievement was lauded by the United Nations International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Secretary General <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=op9VIUfYUtI&feature=youtu.be&t=45s>. The Technovation Challenge program is excited to see more sub-Saharan African countries participate.



**“Need for collaboration”:** Some members of the RAN team pose for a picture after the discussions. L–R, Dr. Norman Ishmael (Director West Africa RILab), Prof. William Bazeyo (RAN Chief of Party), Anar Simpson (Global Ambassador of the Technovation Challenge),

**Dr. Roy William Mayega (RAN Deputy Chief of Party/ Director Eastern Africa RILab) and Prof. Kifle Woldemichael (Director the Horn of Africa RILab)**



**The RAN and Technovation Challenge team pose for a picture after the discussions**



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