ENTREPRENEURS WITHOUT BORDERS
SPREADING WEALTH AROUND THE WORLD

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ACADEMIC ABSTRACT

Wealth takes many forms. It is most evident in monetary forms – but there is also wealth that brings social, community-building value that comes out of research and hard work done with a caring heart…

Entrepreneurs without Borders (EWOB) is a Non-Government Organization dedicated to expanding entrepreneurial ventures (both business as well as social ventures) to developing areas of the world. We define developing areas to include not only developing countries, but also developing inner city and rural areas in Illinois and the United States. This workshop will engage participants in the formation of Entrepreneurs without Borders as a unique organization that will connect students with entrepreneurial opportunities throughout the world. Since EWOB is a newly formed organization, we will solicit input on how this can be transformed into one of the world’s most influential student organizations. Participants should come to this session with an open mind and a willingness to share ideas on developing this dynamic organization.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Entrepreneurs without Borders (EWOB) is a non-governmental humanitarian organization dedicated to advancing entrepreneurial and business competencies to a wide variety of peoples in both local and global communities. Our goal is to help communities that are deprived economically and to equip these communities with the tools and resources required to explore and exploit opportunities. This organization spans disciplines and transcends typical silos that partition universities, business, and nonprofits. In order to unleash the potential for value creation, and to help prepare a generation for careers in the field, we seek to position array of faculty, student, and community member resources together. Inspired in part by C.K. Prahalad’s book The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid, EWOB recognizes the poor as strong, resilient, and creative entrepreneurs as well as value-conscious consumers. To attempt to break the cycle of poverty, disadvantaged people need more ways to become a part of the process that makes and delivers products and services to their fellow consumers.

The workshop will explore opportunities for establishing EWOB chapters on college campuses nationwide. The University of Illinois, as the founding chapter of EWOB, will coordinate a network of chapters joined together for the advancement of entrepreneurial ventures in communities across the globe. The overarching mission, guiding all that we do, is to ensure that all participants put their diverse and valuable resources together to alleviate poverty, contributing to the U.N. Millennium Goals, through sustainable social, economic, and intellectual value
creation in communities of need through entrepreneurial practices. We recognize the gigantic potential we have been given and want to use it to gather momentum and move forward with seeing progress and global change. The national headquarters, at UIUC, is committed to offering quality services and transparency to all partners. We are confident that the establishment of many valuable relationships through the vision and mission of EWOB will advance a strong network of people and resources that encourage several generations of professionals to understand their responsibilities to global society. This workshop will explore how such a national network could operate. In the early stages of developing EWOB, input from interested colleges and universities is necessary to form an organization with global impact. Participants will actively engage in the development of EWOB through thoughtful discussion and input. Central to the formation of chapters of EWOB will include discussion on the potential of university chapters including the following draft of expectations:

The Nine Expectations of Every University Student Chapter (Initial considerations)

1. Have a strong commitment and dedication to innovation, creativity, and mission/vision of EWOB;
2. Recruit participation from all university departments on campus to attract students and faculty with diverse specialized knowledge and experience;
3. Take responsibility for recording and providing student leadership structure and committees for the chapter;
4. Create committees of students (ranging in size) to be responsible for specific aspects of the chapter including: a) securing project funding and travel expenses, b) planning trips, c) training on entrepreneurial skills and pertinent issues in development work, d) recruiting and retaining members and advisors, and e) being a ready resource for members on trips to contact in case of emergencies;
5. Recruit a faculty advisor(s), within four (4) months or one (1) academic semester of setting up a steering committee, who will assume responsibility for the student chapter and its projects;
6. Continually communicate with faculty advisor(s) and the national headquarters for guidance and assistance;
7. Have clear goals, in writing, that focus on results and measure progress with regard to how your project is moving forward and serving the needs of disadvantaged communities (this will also need to be shared with the national headquarters for recording, accountability, and assistance.);
8. Involve diverse stakeholders and expertise in planning, developing, and evaluating projects from the beginning;
9. Provide and mandate attendance at meetings for members to vest create a unified chapter and understanding of entrepreneurial principles and skills, as well as the social, political, economic, cultural and environmental dimensions of target areas;
CONCLUSION

A desired outcome of this session is a fully articulated set of opportunities, requirements and service goals for EWOB. Participants can also begin the formation of EWOB chapters on their campuses as a result of participating in this workshop. Existing international organizations, such as Doctors without Borders and Engineers without Borders will be reviewed to determine if similar structure and implementation can be considered. This is an opportunity to be part of a social entrepreneurship international organization that will engage thousands of students in meaningful entrepreneurial projects. This is not an information dissemination workshop, but rather an interactive exploration of entrepreneurial possibility.