



Ideathon!

Economic Opportunities & Youth-led Solutions
to Local Governance Challenges

What is the Ideathon?

“ The Ideathon changed my mindset and I learned a lot that I have applied to my life. I plan to start a business with what I learned from the Ideathon.” – Humberto, age 18

Key Components:

- Project-based competition model helps young people realize their innate capacity to serve as agents of positive change.
- Soft skills and project management training helps youth design an innovative and feasible project to tackle a local community challenge.
- Partnership with local government and civil society generates sustainable programming.



Why the Ideathon?

WHY AN IDEATHON?

- ✓ **Creates** a platform to share new ideas created by youth for their communities;
- ✓ **Provides** an opportunity for those most affected by social issues to be a part of the solution;
- ✓ **Presents** a competitive model to boost creative thinking and uncover innovative solutions;
- ✓ **Offers** a fun and exciting way for youth to get involved in their communities; and
- ✓ **Links** governance into workforce development programming.



Paola's Story

- **Paola's project** - Paola's project Empro, provides young people in her community with the critical soft skills, and professional knowledge to help them choose a career and maximize their talents.
- **Paola's Impact** – Paola has conducted 18 workshops that benefitted 300 people in her community. These workshops were held in churches, schools and other places in the Buena Vista community in Colon Province.



Paola's Story

"Ever since I was a kid I wanted to help others and be part of the solution of the problems, be an example, share my personal growth story and provide life opportunities for other youth with limitations and the Ideathon has helped me achieve that one step at a time.

I have changed how I think and act; I now have a new focus, ideas, projects, friends and a new family of people with the same objective of empowering the youth so they think big and become great."



Why Governance Matters



At-risk youth interviewed by IRI reported feeling disconnected from their governments – perpetuating a **lack of trust** and **limited citizen participation**, even at the local level.

This lack of trust and engagement makes local governance challenges - like citizen security – worse, and **diminishes the quality of democracy** for citizens.



The Ideathon a tool for local governments to engage with youth in a positive way, by inviting youth to **contribute** solutions to governance challenges and to **connect** directly with local government stakeholders.

IRI has demonstrated that a focus on local government buy-in to the Ideathon model can yield a variety of positive results promoting **sustainability** and **replicability** of a new citizen participation tool that also creates new development opportunities for at-risk youth.

IRI's Learning

- **Holistic Programming!** Consider governance gaps or workforce development opportunities depending on the organization's core focus.
- **Donor Incentives!** Donors can also help provide greater incentives to foster multi-sector approaches to youth empowerment programming.
- **Convening Power!** A number of organizations doing workforce development programming are already engaging with the private sector as their "supply-side" approach; but this approach will always be constrained in environments with weak institutions and insufficient youth political participation.

Convene all stakeholder, particularly local government if you want to create sustainable programming!

Q&A





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