



Riseup, 14 days left to apply for “Africa’s Business Heroes” 2021 edition of US\$1.5m prize

The initiative gives African entrepreneurs a unique platform to showcase their startups, and top 10 finalists win a share of the US\$1.5 million grant to grow their business

Cairo, Egypt,

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The [“Africa’s Business Heroes” \(ABH\) prize competition](#), the Jack Ma Foundation’s flagship philanthropic program spotlighting and celebrating Africa’s entrepreneurial talent, has opened applications for its third annual edition. As ABH’s Anchor Partner for 2021 in North Africa and for the third year in a row, Riseup is on the lookout for the next Africa’s Business Heroes.

Entrepreneurs from all 54 African countries, across every sector, age group, and gender are encouraged to submit their applications, in either French or English, for a chance to compete for a spot among the Top 10 finalists of ABH.

Riseup is reaching out to innovative, bold and impactful entrepreneurs keen to leave a positive impact in their communities. The team is sharing knowledge and insights to help potential candidates navigate the application process, as well as providing coaching and 1-1 support to get them to the finish line.

Africa’s Business Heroes will recognize 100 African entrepreneurs and allocate - over a ten-year period - grant funds, alongside training, mentoring and learning programs, as well as access to a community of like-minded African business leaders.

At the grand finale later this year, ten finalists will take the stage to present their businesses and share their visions to an esteemed panel of judges, to win a share of the US\$1.5 million grant. The journey to the finale will include several rounds of rigorous evaluation panels, as well as access to a community of international leaders and innovators, industry experts, investors and accelerators, through a number of multi-disciplinary boot camps and training sessions.

In 2020, [the ten outstanding finalists](#) – half of whom were female – were selected from over 22,000 applicants across all 54 African nations. They represented eight African countries - Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, Uganda, and Zimbabwe - and various industries including agriculture, fashion, education, healthcare, renewable energy, and financial services. Among the Top 20 in 2020, there were also a number of entrepreneurs from North Africa: Myriam Kacimi @Sungy (Algeria), Ahmed Adel @Mogassam (Egypt), and Amr Shawqy @Expandcart (Egypt).

“As we open our third annual pitch competition, we want to acknowledge the huge inspiration coming from Africa’s extraordinary entrepreneurs, whose business ventures not only are successful and profitable but can generate a positive impact on their local communities. Despite the incredibly difficult conditions faced by entrepreneurs and small businesses around the world over the past year, Africa’s entrepreneurship has been experiencing an incredible upward trajectory, showing the magnitude of its potential and the opportunities yet to be seized. Therefore, Africa’s Business Heroes is excited to join forces with Riseup to identify, spotlight and support even more passionate, innovative, and determined entrepreneurs across Africa.” said **Jason Pau, Executive Director of International, Jack Ma Foundation.**



About Riseup

RiseUp was founded in 2013 in Egypt and quickly became a grassroots movement that spread across the MENA region and beyond. It catalyzed ecosystems and connected regional startups with global resources, beginning with RiseUp Summit (an annual entrepreneurship event) and growing into a range of products and activities supporting startups, and developing ecosystems throughout the year.

About Africa's Business Heroes

The Africa's Business Heroes prize competition 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, ABH will recognize 100 African entrepreneurs and commit to allocating grant funding, training programs, and support for the development of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Each year, the ABH prize competition and show will feature ten finalists as they 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, created the prize after he made his first trip to Africa in 2017 and was inspired by the energy and entrepreneurial potential of the young people he met with.

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