THE TONY ELUMELU FOUNDATION

JEWEL STARFISH FOUNDATION

SATEC LIBERIA

TEF APPLICATION SESSION REPORT

ENTREPRENEURIAL READINESS & GRANT ACCESS SUPPORT INITIATIVE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This report provides a comprehensive narrative of the Entrepreneurial Readiness & Grant Access Support Initiative held on February 28, 2026. The initiative was designed to strengthen the competitiveness of 30 female-led businesses in Liberia, preparing to apply for the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme. Through structured mentorship, live technicalguidance, and breakout sessions, participants enhanced their capacity to submit high-quality,investment-ready applications.

About TEF Entrepreneurship Program

The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) Entrepreneurship Programme is a flagship initiative designed to empower African entrepreneurs with the skills, funding, and support needed to build sustainable businesses across the continent.

Launched in 2015, the programme is built on the philosophy of Africapitalism — the belief that Africa's private sector has the power to drive economic growth, create jobs, and reduce poverty.

Each year, TEF selects thousands of entrepreneurs from all 54 African countries.

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CONTEXT & PROBLEM STATEMENT

> **Many startups struggle with limited financial know-how, weak proposals, and little exposure to bigger funding opportunities.**



Access to early-stage financing remains one of the most significant barriersfacing entrepreneurs in Liberia, particularly women-led enterprises. Many startups struggle with limited financial literacy, weak proposal articulation, and inadequate exposure to competitive continental funding opportunities. While the Tony Elumelu Foundation provides transformative seed capital and mentorship, application competitiveness remains a major gap.

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PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Enhance understanding of TEF eligibility and selection criteria.
- Provide hands-on application walkthrough and technical support.
- Strengthen financial projection and proposal writing capacity.
- Create a post-session mentoring and peer-support network.

METHODOLOGY

The session followed a four-hour agenda, including registration, plenary overview, application deep dive, sector-based breakout mentoring, and interactive Q&A. Facilitators used real-time portal demonstrations, financial modeling examples, and proposal refinement exercises to support practical learning. Thirty female entrepreneurs participated, representing sectors such as agriculture, retail, food processing, creative industries, and digital services. Businesses rangedfrom early-stage startups to growth-oriented enterprises seeking scale capital.

KEY RESULTS

- 30 female entrepreners trained and coached.
- Increased clarity on TEF evaluation metrics.
- Improved financial forecasting skills.
- Strengthened collaboration and peer networking.

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PARTNERSHIP & ECOSYSTEM STRENGTHENING





The collaboration between SATEC Liberia, CEPDEV, and JSF showcased the remarkable effectiveness of ecosystem-based development. Each partner brought unique strengths to the table, focusing on entrepreneurship development, impactful communication strategies, and the empowerment of women. Together, they created a comprehensive support structure that not only benefited participants but also fostered sustainable growth and development within the community.

> **Collaboration becomes powerful when every partner brings their strength to lift a community.**

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CHALLENGES & LESSONS LEARNED

Key challenges included time constraints relative to the complexity of application components and varying levels of financial literacy among participants. Future sessions will incorporate extended review clinics and simplified financial tools.

SUSTAINABILITY & WAY FORWARD

The partnerswill establish quarterlyGrant Readiness Clinics, structured mentorship follow-ups, and tracking mechanisms to monitor application success rates. The long-term visionincludes expanding outreach beyond Monrovia and institutionalizing a Women Entrepreneurs Support Hub.

CONCLUSION

The Entrepreneurial Readiness & Grant Access Support Initiative successfully positioned 30 female-led businesses to compete for continental funding. The session reinforced the value of partnership-driven development and reaffirmed a shared commitment to strengthening Liberia's entrepreneurial ecosystem.



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RECCOMENDATIONS:

Strengthening In-Country Coordination for the Tony Elumelu Foundation Entrepreneurship Programme

The Tony Elumelu Foundation (TEF) Entrepreneurship Programme has emerged as one of Africa's most transformative private-sector development initiatives, supporting thousands of entrepreneurs across 54 African countries with seed capital, mentorship, training, and access to global networks. The programme has helped generate jobs, stimulate enterprise growth, and catalyze economic opportunities across multiple sectors.

Despite this success, the scale of the programme and the diversity of entrepreneurial ecosystems across Africa highlight the need for structured in-country coordination mechanisms. Establishing national coordination programs or partnerships would significantly improve applicant readiness, programme accountability, and long-term business survival rates.

Below are key recommendations to strengthen TEF's impact through country-level coordination systems.

1. Establish National TEF Coordination Partners

TEF should designate national coordination partners in each eligible country through partnerships with entrepreneurship development organizations, incubators, universities, or ecosystem support institutions.

These country partners would organize:

- TEF Application Bootcamps
- Business model development workshops
- Financial projection training
- Proposal review and mentorship sessions

Impact:

Improves application quality and increases the number of competitive submissions from each country.

2. Strengthen Local Mentorship and Alumni Networks

Country coordination partners should facilitate national TEF mentorship networks that connect new applicants and selected entrepreneurs with experienced TEF alumni and local business leaders.

Impact:

Localized mentorship provides contextual guidance on regulatory environments, market entry, and operational challenges, increasing startup survival and growth potential.

RECCOMENDATIONS:

3. Build National Grant Readiness Support Systems

Many entrepreneurs fail to advance in the TEF selection process due to gaps in financial planning, market analysis, and articulation of scalability.
Country coordination partners should host grant readiness clinics and proposal support hubs to help entrepreneurs prepare stronger applications before submission.
Impact:
Improves applicant preparedness and ensures stronger representation of viable businesses across countries.

4. Improve Monitoring, Accountability, and Impact Tracking

Country coordinators should support TEF by conducting periodic follow-ups with funded entrepreneurs to track:

- Seed capital utilization
- Business growth milestones
- Job creation
- Revenue development

Impact:
Strengthens accountability while providing TEF with reliable country-level data on business success and challenges.

5. Facilitate Local Investor and Market Linkages

Country coordination programs should organize national investor engagement forums that connect TEF entrepreneurs with local banks, venture capital networks, and angel investors.
Impact:
Expands access to follow-on capital and helps businesses scale beyond the initial seed funding.



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