2027 YOUTH INNOVATION COMPETITION

Overview

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) Youth Ambassadors invite you to innovate a unique, feasible, and sustainable solution to an issue faced locally by a community in need.

Teams of high school students will research real-world issues being faced by local communities and develop a practical, sustainable, and innovative solution. The goal of this creative problem-solving competition is not only to empower students to apply their knowledge and skills for the betterment of their communities but to also raise awareness of pressing issues within our local surroundings. By facilitating a sense of global citizenship, the Innovative Solutions Challenge competition strives for students to expand their horizons to view both problems and solutions in the context of a global community.

Theme

Entries should relate to this year's theme:

The World Through Our Eyes

Prizes

First Place: $500

Second Place: $300

People's Choice: $200

Innovation Competition Winners



Art Mentorship Program

Amreen Chunara and Aaliya Lalani tied for 1st place for the Art Mentorship Program which gives students the opportunity to express their artistic abilities. Ambreen and Aaliya proposed partnering with Title 1 Schools (schools in low-income areas) to raise awareness and make artistic opportunities available for all students. This project is providing students with art resources, mentorship from youth ambassadors, and connections to art programs throughout the DFW metroplex.

Optimized Hydroxyapatite for Enhanced Bio-Integration

Sahad Valiani and Yugarya Goyal won 1st place for their innovative solution aiming to provide a higher quality of life for patients by reducing pain, inflammation, and the need for frequent replacements. Their project focuses on developing next-generation orthopedic implants using a material called hydroxyapatite. With the $500 prize award from the Youth Ambassador Innovations competition, Sahad purchased a 3D printer to further his research by testing his CAD models of his orthopedic implants before printing them in hydroxyapatite.





The Waste Transformer

Neha Bachu and Kaavya Sampath from Greenhill School won 3rd place at the 2022 Youth Festival for their innovative product prototype that stored animal waste into a unique structure that served 2 functions: 1) the storage process released methane byproducts which could be used as electricity for the farmer and 2) the released digestate could be used for the farm's horticulture products. This would help in agriculture and food security for small farmers.

Rules and Guidelines

1. This competition is open to all current US high school students.

2. Participants must be part of a team consisting of 2 or more members.

3. Each team must designate a team captain to serve as point of contact.

4. Teams must select real-world issues faced by a community in need (see section below for list of examples)

5. Teams must submit all of the following components in order to be eligible for judging:

Online:

a. Complete the online submission form

b. Use the outline template below for sections of your presentation

c. Submit a video (5-7 min) and a slide presentation (deadline 3/1/2027)

Youth Festival (on-site presentation to judges):

d. Tri-Fold poster or slide presentation to the judges on site

e. Prototype of solution where applicable

Judging Criteria

Judging criteria are based on innovative ideas that have the potential to impact the lives of communities in need and the feasibility of being implemented. At the Youth Festival, projects will be assessed in five areas:

1. Originality
2. Potential impact
3. Implementation feasibility
4. Sustainability
5. Overall presentation

Innovation Competition Judging Rubric 1-5 (5- highest score)

	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Originality of Idea						
Impact on Community						
Implementation Feasibility						
Sustainability						
Presentation						
Total						

General Information

The Innovations committee strives to provide ample guidance to participating teams in order to optimize their competitiveness. This guidance will often take the form of specific revisions to the project and/or advice from the committee on the direction of the solution.

While the committee will aim to provide feedback to all submitted draft outlines, teams are more than welcome to contact the committee for supplemental questions, concerns, and critiques. Please contact us at youth.ambassadors@akf-usa.org

Next Steps

Here are the next steps you can take to organize your project:

1. Brainstorm - What problem are you passionate about? What is being done now to solve it and what can you innovate to solve it better?
2. Teamwork - Work with a group of people that have similar ideas with you. Bounce ideas off of each other and work as a team to finalize your goals.
3. Preliminary Planning - What does your solution look like and how can you model it? What materials and financial resources would be needed?
4. Prototyping - Create a model of what your solution is! Examples include 3D CAD, visualized drawing, video, and more!
5. Presentation - How can you best portray your innovation? It is up to you to present your innovative solution in both an engaging and informative manner. Use the presentation template provided below.
6. Feedback - Show your friends and classmates - what can you model or

present better? Take these suggestions and revisit your planning steps on how you can incorporate these changes.

7. Final preparation for the AKF Youth Festival - The hard work is done! Now, it is time to show off your hard work at the annual AKF Youth Festival.

Examples of Issues

Here are some examples of issues teams can use to get ideas for innovations. This year's theme is Inspiring Hope, Changing Lives.

Climate Change: Severe snow storms, blazing heat, and dangerous storms all pose extremely dangerous settings for the homeless.

Renewable Energy: Ways to encourage people to switch to renewable energy sources for the environment by reducing carbon emissions and resource pollution

Broadband Accessibility: Rural and low-income areas often do not have access to broadband internet. Create solutions to solve some factors of what constitutes the digital divide.

Educational Resources: Solutions to address the lack of educational resources for low socioeconomic status

Recycling: Improving technology for sorting and minimizing contamination of recycling materials.

Youth Employment: Creating job opportunities for the youth as they enter the workforce.

Health: Improving mental health status or advances in health science.

Presentation Template

Your presentation should address the following:

I. Selected issue
   a. Include a brief synopsis of the issue, indicating that you have conducted adequate supplemental research. Statistics are also encouraged.
   b. Why did you select this issue? Does this issue hold any personal significance for you?
   c. What is the target community? Demographics?
   d. What, if anything, is currently being done to address this issue? Who is taking action (e.g. local volunteer groups, city officials, etc.)? What is/has been their strategy?

II. Your team's innovative solutions
   a. Include a brief overview of your project, including any relevant research.
   b. Describe how your solution meets the following criteria:
      i. Originality of idea
      ii. Impact on community
      iii. Implementation feasibility
      iv. Sustainability
   c. Do there currently exist projects that are similar to your solutions? If so, then how are your solutions different or an improvement of existing ones?
   d. What resources (monetary, labor, etc.) would you require to construct and implement your solution? Where would you plan to obtain these resources? Please try to be as detailed and practical as possible.
   e. Could your solution be replicated and implemented elsewhere, either locally or abroad? In other words, does your solution possess a global applicability piece?

III. Next steps
   a. If you were to win part of the $1,000 prize purse, how would you spend the money toward implementing your innovative solution?

b. What are your proposed next steps toward implementation?

Thank you for your interest in the Innovation Competition.
We look forward to receiving your application.

Deadline for slide presentation and video March 1, 2027

For additional information or assistance, please contact us at youth.ambassadors@akf-usa.org