



RE-Novate
Pilot Report
2021
2023

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Re-imagining secondary education through
entrepreneurship and innovation

Funding Partners:



Acknowledgements

We express deepest gratitude to Acumen through Acumen Angels, and the Samuel Huntington Fund through the 2021 Samuel Huntington Public Service Award, for the generous financing of RE-Novate's pilot. The results, learnings, and successes captured in this report testify to the massive long-term potential to attract outside resources and expand impact for young Liberian students. Many other individuals contributed financially to RE-Novate. The pilot succeeded because our three school partners allowed us to test a new idea as an integral part of their institutions' structure, and they provided continued support.

Additionally, other institutional partners hosted our fellows as interns, provided strategic support, and contributed in many ways. Finally, parents' support was crucial to ensuring students experience the full benefits of RE-Novate. We are grateful. Thank you!

Our team pioneered this model with strength, courage, passion, and an unwavering commitment to excellence and impact, in spite of the numerous challenges, as discussed in this report – and this progress is hugely dedicated to us.

In various parts of this report, we capture each and every one of our partners whose financial, technical, and moral contributions led to the success of the pilot.

About the Report

This re-imagining secondary education through entrepreneurship and innovation report presents learnings and results from piloting RE-Novate – an entrepreneurial academy for high school students. Through RE-Novate, TRIBE is integrating entrepreneurship and work skills into high schools' curricula to equip students with the skills, tools, and resources, and access to become adequately prepared to thrive in the real world right out of high school.

The findings from the pilot, as presented in the report, validate TRIBE's pioneering school-to-work model for high school students, and defines a clear pathway for continuity in 2023 and beyond.

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Progress in Numbers



42
Fellows

Representation



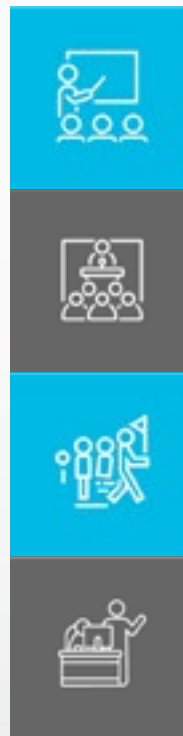
03 Partner Schools

11 Internship partners

03 Facilitators

16 Mentors

03 Co-facilitators



32 Learning workshops

04 Seminars

04 Learning excursions partners

02 Average monthly mentorship session per student



of fellows obtained paid internships



of interns obtained full-time jobs



Foreword

Growing up in Liberia, education was often sold as a promise of success in the real world. Yet, Liberia's education system still struggles to adequately prepare students to thrive beyond the classroom.

Many students are top performers but still struggle to express their thoughts clearly, provide independent analysis, and apply what is taught in the classroom to the real world.

The inadequate foundation we receive in Liberia is partly to blame. [TRIBE] discovered that Liberia's secondary education system—marked by rote memorization, test taking, and instructions—could be strengthened with alternative models focused on critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and innovation.

We designed and led an impact study for unemployed, vulnerable, and productively employed young Liberian college graduates - to understand why the gap existed between these groups who went to the same high schools.

The high-performing, productively employed young people reported benefiting from a number of enrichment programs during or immediately after high school, including study abroad, mentoring, access to professional development networks, and skills development, which the unemployed and vulnerable employed groups lacked.

These experiences were typically during or immediately after high school.

The difference between thriving and 'unsuccessful' young people is access to quality education, skills development, and opportunities – a missing piece in Liberia's secondary education. In response to this challenge, we created TRIBE, with a mission to design experiences and build alternative solutions that improve how we teach, learn, and employ.

At TRIBE, RE-Novate is our core model. Endorsed by Liberia's Ministry of Education as an "innovative and disruptive model that will create a wide-scale impact on Liberia's secondary education system," RE-Novate pioneers integrating entrepreneurial and work skills into high school curricula. We teach students relevant skills, give them access to tools and resources, and expand their social capital to thrive in the real world. Additionally, our students receive mentorship and obtain paid internships that eventually translate into full-time employment.

RE-Novate's pilot enabled our fellows to develop the ability to think critically, solve problems and obtain entry-level employment while still in high school.

We are working hard to build a model that not only improves learning outcomes but reduces gaps for marginalized students and closes the poor workforce performance gap among young people.

We are building RE-Novate into Liberia's preeminent learning innovation accelerator. Our goal is to foster learning design, knowledge management, skills development, and performance evaluation for Liberian high schools and employment settings.

We invite you to join us as we continue to explore new and innovative ways to improve learning outcomes for young Liberian students.

Wainright Acquoi
CEO

Chapter I: Africa's State of Secondary Education: Liberia in Study

Our Education Challenge

Africa's growth and economic sustainability are characterized by numerous challenges, chiefly among them is equalizing secondary education access. **At its core, secondary education equips students with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in the real world, allowing them to pursue higher education, enter the workforce, or become self-sufficient and productive citizens.** However, gross ineffectiveness and limitations in accessing quality secondary education prevent young people from acquiring the kinds of education needed to thrive and succeed.

As of 2022, approximately 40% of Africa's population is 15-year-old or younger,

which is 15% percent higher than the global average of 25%¹. Tackling major issues that affect access to quality secondary education, such as low funding and outdated curriculum, will unlock pathways to addressing the high rates of unemployment and economic stagnation.

Liberia, as a low-income country, struggles to provide quality and accessible secondary education and improve learning outcomes. This huge gap in the development stages of young people affects their ability to compete and thrive in the local and global workforce, hence exacerbating the consequences of poor socio-economic development, poverty, and gender inequality.

What do we Need?

Addressing the huge education gap that exists in Liberia and other African countries requires a holistic approach from all major stakeholders in education. It is important that key players utilize unconventional approaches to yield the best results and improve learning outcomes across the education system. These strategies must cut across all major actors so as to bridge the gap between students' readiness and the modern workforce demands.



Investment in Education. Investing strategically and significantly in education will improve quality and access for many students. When schools access financial and technical support, they can improve education quality by hiring and retaining competent teachers and providing resources and materials that facilitate effective teaching and productive learning.

¹ ((2023, April 28). Population of Africa, Statista.
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1226211/population-of-africa-by-age-group/>).



Curriculum that works. Schools curricula must meet modern and global standards while maintaining cultural relevance and context relevant to students and their environment. Key education stakeholders comprising funders, policy makers, teachers, parents and employers, must participate and contribute to such designs and learning evaluations.



Technology Integration. Technological integration is essential for improving and scaling innovative approaches to improving learning outcomes due to the numerous benefits and advantages across penetration, accessibility and scalability. However, technology-enabled solutions and tools must be relevant and adaptable to local context or they undermine the essence of integration for improving learning outcomes.

Secondary Students: The Plan, The Future

Students in secondary schools who are transitioning into the workforce rely on the country's education system to prepare them to succeed in a rapidly-changing world. Liberia needs to utilize alternative solutions to harness the potential of its young population. This would stimulate socio-economic growth and improve the education system's capacity to produce competent individuals for the workforce. The future of the country is heavily dependent on the future of education because its impact cuts across all sectors of the economy.

The design of the future we want is influenced by the challenges we currently confront. The trends, strategies, and solutions, therefore, that are used, should reflect an understanding of the importance of education in driving socio-economic development and the need for innovative solutions to address age-old problems systemically. The question then becomes, "What is the plan that gets us to the future we want?"

Read more in the full report at www.weareatribe.org.

Chapter II: An Evolving Story – The End of an Amazing Beginning

As you read this report, you will be wowed by many things. First, the incredible work that our team invested in testing this model. Second, the experiential activity our students participated in. Third, the qualified foot soldiers we mobilized to support this pilot. And fourth, the depth of insights we discovered about secondary education in Liberia.

- Elvis M. D. Browne, RE-Novate Pilot Lead

Chapter III: The RE-Novate Formula

Conceptualizing an alternative model

We spent hundreds of hours designing RE-Novate, in anticipation of introducing entrepreneurship education to Liberian high schools, beginning in Monrovia and Paynesville Cities. Series of processes were initiated and executed to understand the key stakeholders, barriers, and success factors of the model. We employed a design thinking approach to school engagement exercises and kept our execution lean. Although we had an idea of the vision we wanted to achieve, acquiring resources, gaining deep insights into the education landscape, and perfecting our model required much more.

The Model

To deliver an entrepreneurial education that adequately prepares students for the real world, we focused on four areas of development:



Entrepreneurial development: Cultivating students' entrepreneurial potential and providing them with the tools to drive real-world success. Fellows participated in activities and experiences that nurtured their creativity and entrepreneurial skills, and enabled them to gain the confidence and capability to develop and nurture innovative ideas.



Socio-emotional growth: Developing self-awareness and purpose to support leadership and entrepreneurial growth. Fellows participated in activities that emphasized the importance of self, self-esteem, confidence, empathy, problem-solving and co-existence.



Cognitive abilities: Improving critical thinking, problem-solving and cognitive abilities by providing fellows with the resources to learn how to analyze problems, develop creative solutions, and think critically. RE-Novate offers an alternative to rote memorization and instructions, as part of the traditional model of education, by offering experiential and project-based learning to increase understanding and application of knowledge.



Character Development: Behavior skills are important for leaders and entrepreneurs. RE-Novate offered experiences that helped fellows build strong character by learning essential skills such as self-discipline, community, integrity, resilience, communications, and collaboration, to become responsible and successful problem solvers.

Experiential learning activities



Learning workshops: Weekly workshops held at partner schools to introduce and teach students entrepreneurial and work skills using case studies and project-based learning.



Mentorship: Fellows paired with practitioners in their aspiring fields of studies to learn, gain exposure, and obtain real-life wisdom.



Internship: Fellows obtained paid internships to experience work in the real world, leading to full-time entry-level employment.



Learning excursion: Providing students exposure and visibility to real-world work environments to interact with successful entrepreneurs and leaders and become inspired.



Seminar: Monthly convening of fellows across all partner schools to interact and learn from prominent public leaders and entrepreneurs.



Student project: Fellows join teams to develop their entrepreneurial projects and pitch to an audience at the end of the program, facilitated by the program facilitators.

Chapter IV:

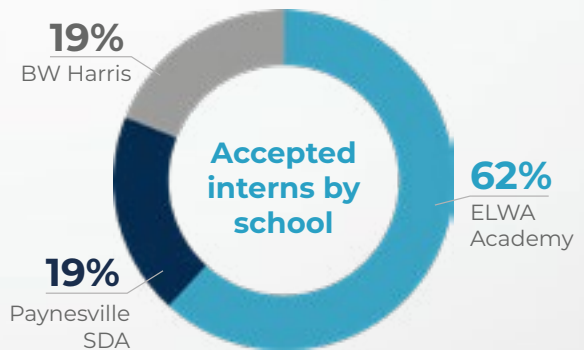
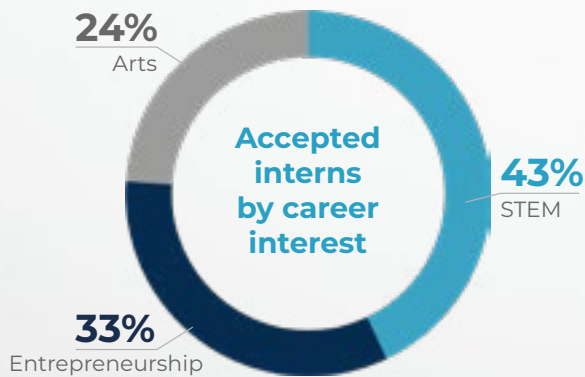
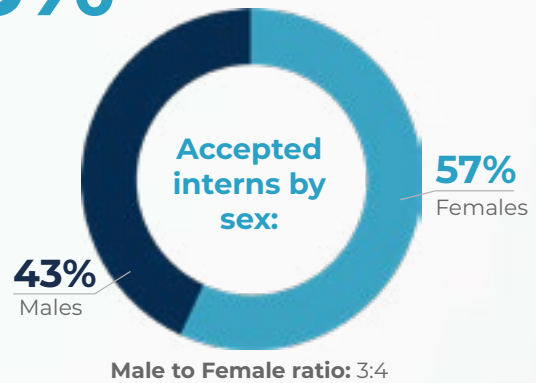
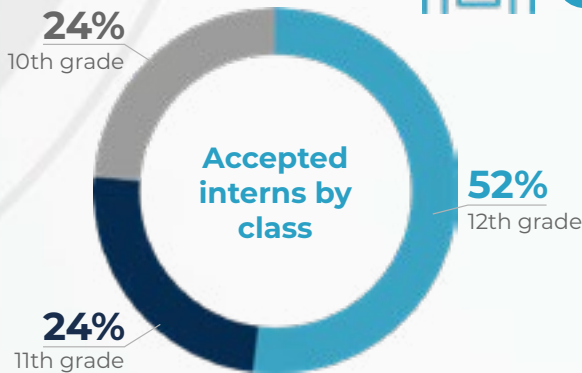
Integrating Entrepreneurship and Work Skills into High Schools

Insights

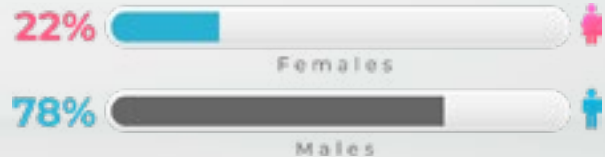


Internship acceptance rate across all fellows:

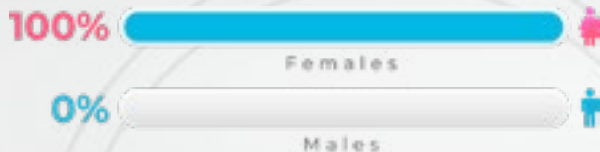
66%



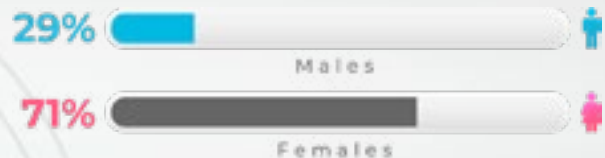
STEM Interns by sex:

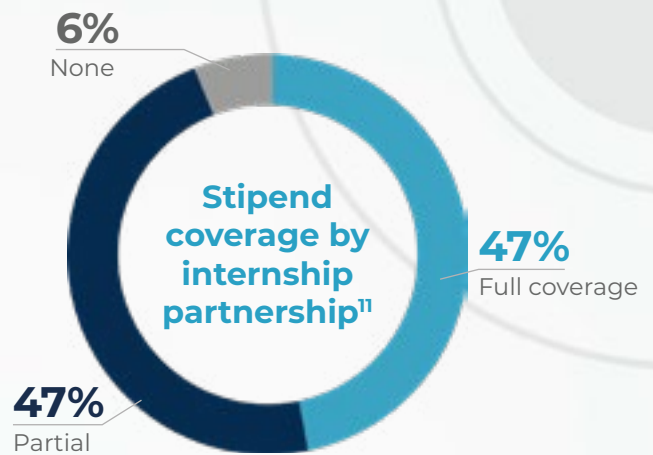
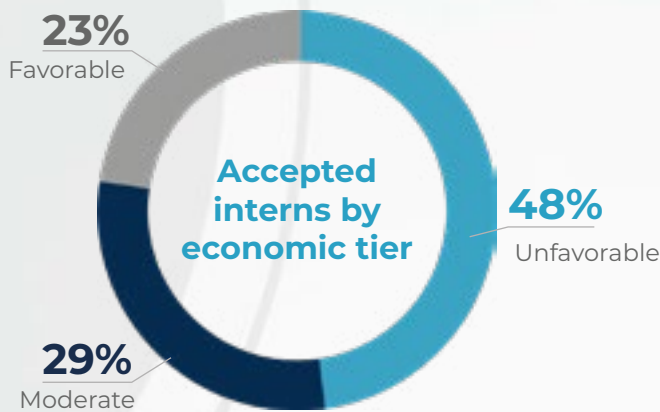


Arts Interns by sex:



Entrepreneurship Interns by sex:





Stipend provision by level¹²



Post-internship employment:



20%
Students employed full-time after completing internship



20%
Students whose employment were hindered by their return to school



15%
Students whose employment were not secured for other reasons

¹¹ In instances of partial or no coverage, TRIBE provided the interns with stipend.

¹² RE-Novate fellows earned on average 51% more than the national average. The World Bank reported Liberia's GDP per capita in 2021 as USD 675.7 - calculated at USD 54.8 monthly income.

Stories that matter

Mentors



In my experience, TRIBE is a vibrant organization with [a team that is] enthusiastic about their work and has the set of skills for it. I was more than happy to contribute my skills as a mentor in the RE-Novate program to be able to support young minds in their daily quest and challenges. With the RE-Novate program, TRIBE spotted a gap and is addressing it accurately and professionally. By adding a mentorship component this program is well rounded up. I had regular meetings with my mentees and the team at TRIBE was always available for any questions or concerns."

-Sandra Sabatela



RE-Novate is a game changer for Liberian students. I was impressed by how many activities and engagements were packed into the program to ensure students succeed. Students who benefited from this program were building superpowers that will propel them to make a real impact in their communities. My only regret is that I didn't have a program like RE-Novate as a high school student in Liberia."

-James Kaiwoin



Fellows



Leetra Gibson is a senior student at the ELWA Academy and an inaugural RE-Novate Fellow. She joined RE-Novate while she was in 11th grade and completed a one-month internship at TRIBE before her senior year.

After completing RE-Novate, she wrote an excerpt to reflect on her journey through RE-Novate and how it has impacted her growth.



"Re-Novate was really an amazing program. It was a very educational and fun experience. I learned a lot of new things during the program and I'm extremely grateful that I was able to participate.

When I learned what TRIBE was about, I was amazed because it was new for me to see people doing or even thinking about what they intended to do. The RE-Novate program was such an innovative idea. They have a strong desire to strengthen the future generation of the country by providing lessons that teach us to be problem solvers. They conducted seminars for us to meet and interact with successful entrepreneurs who can inspire us and expand our network. Overall, I was awestruck by TRIBE.

I applied to RE-Novate because I was curious to understand what it was about, and how it could help me expand my knowledge, develop skills, and stimulate my personal growth.

RE-Novate was really amazing. The lessons we were provided taught us to be solution-oriented and innovative. I met inspirational people and went to places I wouldn't have had the opportunity

to go outside of RE-Novate. The people I met and the teams I worked with were all part of the remarkable experiences that I am grateful I had as a fellow of this incredible program.

I learned many major lessons as a RE-Novate fellow. One of these lessons was: as an aspiring entrepreneur, failure will be a major part of my journey because I won't always ace everything that I do. I should understand that I may fail at times, but rather than being content with failure, I should persevere until I achieve my goals. I also learned that honesty is the best policy because if you're an honest person, it'll enable others to trust you, it'll make your opinion more valuable, and enable you to be more confident in yourself. Another major lesson I learned is that I should be an innovative thinker. I should be able to develop new ideas that differ from the traditional way of thinking and solving problems.

RE-Novate has helped me to grow my sense of self-confidence that I lacked before joining the program. It has also enabled me to step out of my comfort zone, thereby improving my adaptability skills."

Parents



Parent Name: Magretta Krayee
Child's Name: Ranita Ann Wisseh

When Ranita first told me about the program, I told her to seize the opportunity and apply. After she applied and got accepted, transportation became a major concern but Ranita assured me that TRIBE could assist with transportation. During Ranita's involvement in the program, I observed a remarkable transformation in her mindset, academic performance, and RE-Novate activities. She kept me informed about every aspect of the program from learning workshops to students project which I attended and was impressed with Ranita's confidence and pitching abilities. My pride grew further when she secured her first internship with TRIBE."

-Magretta Krayee



Parent Name: Nyemady Favor Clinton
Child's Name: Joyce N. Clinton

Through Joyce's participation in the program, she became more inquisitive about exploring her career path and entrepreneurial ambitions. She acquired new skills and perspectives on problem-solving and innovation. Since completing the program, Joyce's growth has been huge. She is curious about forwarding her education, acquiring her undergraduate degree, and starting her own business because of the entrepreneurial mindset that has been cultivated during her time in RE-Novate."

-Nyemady Favor Clinton

Facilitators



RE-Novate is more than just a program that high school students pass through to prepare themselves for the future of work. It is an experience that leaves them with profound and long-lasting memories. It is exactly the kind of experience I would have dreamt of having when I was in high school. However, I am grateful that I was able to be a core part of shaping the experience for so many brilliant young minds. RE-Novate distinguishes itself by ensuring that young people have the relevant tools, access to resources, courage, and the network that gives them the opportunity to forge their own paths and not have to navigate predetermined routes created by others."

-Joshua L. Alston



RE-Novate was an eye opener for students in Liberia and in our overall entrepreneurial ecosystem. Equipping high school students with the skills needed to thrive in the workforce is something entirely new in Liberia. My overall journey as a facilitator helped me learn a great deal from TRIBE's team and from other facilitators. I saw the need to improve my skills and sought to utilize available resources to enhance my skills and competencies. When I see most fellows excelling today, I am assured of a brighter future for the youths of Liberia. If the RE-Novate model can be integrated into the current secondary school curriculum, we can look forward to a competitive society and one that accommodates young people with vast potential. RE-Novate is one of a kind. I look forward to continuing the journey with TRIBE."

-Samuel J. Kpartor

School Partners



“Our school is willing to continue to collaborate with TRIBE because we want to continue to be partners. Once we have accepted you, we have to work along with you and we will be ready. Furthermore, RE-Novate is adding value to our school because the students benefiting from this program are reflecting a positive image of our school in society. They serve as a motivation for other parents and kids to want to come to our school and take advantage of a program like RE-Novate.”

-Mr. Stanley Bono, Vice-Principal for Senior High Division, ELWA Academy



“TRIBE did extremely well in educating and providing training to our students through RE-Novate. This helped in developing our students, improving their intelligence, and making them become better leaders. As they went through an entrepreneurship program like RE-Novate, they could learn the skills needed to be better managers of their own businesses and of other activities that they are involved in.”

-Ms. Fiorella Hardy, Vice-Principal for Student Affairs, Paynesville SDA

Challenges

Throughout the pilot, we endeavored to resolve issues confronting the program design, students, and partners as effectively and efficiently as possible. Our strategy was centered on being as flexible to the needs of the program while addressing challenges and obstacles as they emerged.

Some of the challenges compelled us to readjust our processes to ensure efficiency, while others were challenges that impacted the overall program execution.

RE-Novate, unlike traditional school models, placed emphasis on using otherwise unconventional methods to deliver a unique and impactful experience. It was unsurprising that fellows needed time to adapt to such a new learning environment at varying paces. Secondly, digital literacy was a key component of the program that required fellows to learn how to effectively use digital tools to interact with their facilitators, lessons, and fulfill assessment requirements. Many fellows faced difficulties using these digital tools effectively because of a lack of knowledge and unavailability of resources such as smartphones, computers, the internet, and electricity.

We learned a lot, and at a rapid pace during execution. These learnings varied across understanding how to increase student engagement, developing centralized data collection systems, improving knowledge management, effectively managing financial processes, coordinating with partners, and designing lean standardized evaluation tools for constant assessment and iteration of the model.

We discuss the general and specific challenges from the pilot in the full report at www.weareatribe.org.



Key Insights

RE-Novate uses an integrated approach to deliver entrepreneurial education that prepares students for the future of work. This approach exposes fellows to competencies that are relevant for them to succeed in their careers. We have learned and gathered important insights that will inform and improve the program model moving forward.



RE-Novate is a School-to-Employment Pathway. RE-Novate's four areas of development are necessary for fellows' growth and workforce preparation: **entrepreneurial development, socio-emotional growth, cognitive skills, and character / behavioral development.** The positive feedback received from intern partners during the internship evaluation period suggest that the model holds long-term potential. Over 50% of fellows successfully secured paid internships and about 20% of these interns received permanent offers following the completion of their internships. Additionally, all intern partners expressed interest in future collaboration, validating RE-Novate as a potential pipeline for students to develop the necessary skills and competencies for entry-level employment.



RE-Novate requires huge Capital Investment. Large multi-year investments are essential to ensuring the sustainability of RE-Novate. This proposed investment is necessary because securing payments from fellows is basically unrealistic given the cost of the program. The pilot of RE-Novate costs on average about \$350 per fellow at a significantly minimized version of the model. The model was scaled down and the team worked through limitations in resources and capacity to deliver the program outcomes – leading to routine peaks of unproductivity from high stress and burnouts. At full potential, the unit cost per fellow per annum is \$3,000. Huge capital investment is needed to guarantee RE-Novate's success and impact on students to achieve long-term quality outcomes.

Other Learnings

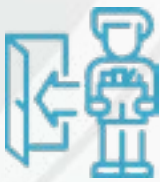
We have compiled insights gathered across all segments of RE-Novate to shed light on the lessons learned and data gathered during the program:

Learning Workshops



The average attendance rate of RE-Novate Fellows was

58.29%

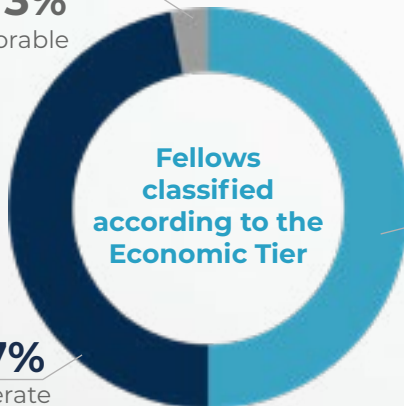


About **7%**

of Fellows withdrew from RE-Novate due to varying personal reasons

3%

Favorable



50%

Unfavorable

47%

Moderate



STEM

Fellows in STEM generally had higher performance scores in RE-Novate



Higher average attendance rates suggest a higher average performance in cognitive abilities, socio-emotional skills, and character development

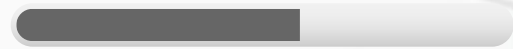


The average score RE-Novate fellows received in cognitive skills was

81.52

Female fellows made up more than 60% of all RE-Novate Fellows

60%



Females



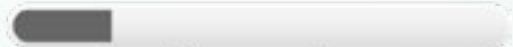
Over 42% of RE-Novate Fellows were classified in STEM, while Entrepreneurship and Arts both accounted for 28% of Fellows each

42%



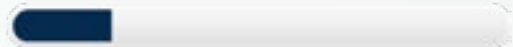
STEM

28%



Entrepreneurship

28%



Arts

Female fellows performed higher in socio-emotional skills (64.44) than male fellows (62.89)

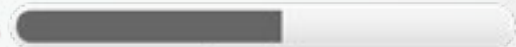
62.89%



Males



64.44%



Females



Female fellows generally had better performance evaluation results in RE-Novate



10th

Fellows in 10th grade displayed higher growth levels overall in RE-Novate.

Scores indicate that 10th graders had the highest level of character development overall in RE-Novate (75.63) while 12th graders marginally had the lowest character development scores (74.54)

75.63%



10th

74.54%



12th

Mentorship



RE-Novate had a mentor to mentee ratio of

2:5

Female mentors made up 44% of RE-Novate mentors with males making up 56%



Mentor-mentee meetings lasted on average 1 hour - especially in-person meetings



There was a higher level of consistency and frequency in TRIBE-scheduled mentor- mentee meetings



The average number of mentor-mentee meetings per month was 2



Seminars

- ◇ There was an even distribution of male and female panelists across RE-Novate seminars
- ◇ SDA Seminar had the lowest attendance rate primarily due to conflict with other partner schools academic calendars
- ◇ BW Harris seminar was generally cited as the best seminar by fellows
- ◇ Fellows respond to seminars that are more engaging and require more responsibility.

Embracing a New Challenge

Building learning management systems and processes. We aspire to become a thought leader in secondary education across Africa. We intend to document our experiences and communicate efficiently with stakeholders across every segment of the program. The learning management system will be a repository for evaluation and digital content for fellows, facilitators, and partner schools and stakeholders. Such a platform will also enable the wide-spread sharing of learnings with a wider audience and promote collaboration among team members. We hope to gather regular feedback for continuous improvement to the RE-Novate model.

Redefining RE-Novate curriculum. Case studies, combined with other experiential learning activities, give students a holistic learning experience. Based on feedback from facilitators and team observations, we will redefine RE-Novate's curriculum to reflect current realities:



More Afrocentric case studies. Most of the case studies discussed during the learning workshops were Western-focused. All of our facilitators said they found it quite challenging to explain some concepts and scenarios to the fellows. We wrote a case study on J-Palm Liberia, but that was one out of the 24 stories they had to read. While case studies on international companies and culture are a good way to enlighten fellows' approach to learning, we believe that a balance with local stories would draw in on the challenges and opportunities they relate to.



Structured modules for the learning sessions. We recognize that the topics covered in the learning sessions were quite broad, with some areas of overlap and other important topics such as financial literacy missing depth. To ensure that all the necessary topics are covered, we plan to create a comprehensive syllabus outlining the core concepts to be explored during the learning sessions and develop supplementary learning materials to further explain and clarify any misunderstood concepts.

Review the comprehensive new curriculum framework in the full report at www.weareatribe.org.

The RE-Novate we envision



We aspire to build a replicable and scalable school-to-work model for high school students in Liberia and beyond.



We are launching advocacy and stakeholder engagements to integrate entrepreneurial and work skills into the national curriculum.



We are developing 300 purpose-driven problem solvers over three years to establish a blueprint for building young entrepreneurs and prepared entry-level employees.

Over the next three years, we require USD 1.5 Million to facilitate the RE-Novate we imagine and increase students' chances to succeed and avoid the trap of extreme poverty.

Strategic support

1. **Join our mentorship program.** Provide academic guidance and professional development tips to our fellows.
2. **Provide professional support to our team.** Serve as a mentor and facilitator to our young, growing team. Provide one-on-one mentoring to any of our team members and facilitators. Help us build our knowledge management system and further define our impact thesis.
3. **Write a case study about our model.** Or write us a case study about a company in Africa or a business scenario. Contribute to our learning workshop content development by writing business case studies for our students to learn and serving as a guest lecturer.
4. **Introduce us to your rich network.** And help us unlock money that will transform the lives of young students by preparing them to obtain jobs.

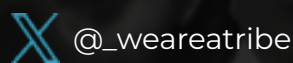
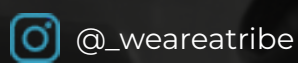
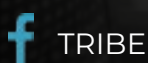
About TRIBE

Our long-term vision for RE-Novate is to build an ecosystem that develops young people and facilitates their continuous growth and personal development, by combining human-centered design and technology to accelerate learning, and to close the poor workforce performance gap among Liberia's young people.

We are:

- Building and validating the framework for an annual entrepreneurial academy for students and designing a workforce development institute model for educators and employers.
- Designing a model that facilitates the integration of entrepreneurial and work skills into Liberia's high school curriculum.
- Building synergy among educators, policy-makers, employers, and development stakeholders to form partnerships to achieve the above objectives.

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RENOVATE
Academy for Entrepreneurial Development

Tribe
improving Learning Outcomes

RE-Novate
Pilot Report
2021
2023