

Learning Report

The Hult Prize Foundation is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to launching the world's next wave of social entrepreneurs. It encourages the world's brightest business minds to compete in teams to solve the planet's biggest challenges with innovative ideas for sustainable start-up enterprises. Annual Hult Prize winners can make their ideas reality with the help of USD1 million in seed funding. This year their challenge was to generate 10,000 meaningful jobs for the youth in the next decade.

Our team first entered the challenge at the campus round at HKU in January where we won with our pitch and then went to Vietnam for the South East Asia Regional Finals in April. We won this pitch as well and entered the final accelerator stage where we had to live with world leading startup coaches at the Ashridge castle in London.

We competed with 47 other teams from all over the world and place 8th overall with our proposal, EmployMe. EmployMe is a platform that uses an SMS chatbot to help workers find meaningful jobs and helps companies find a reliable workforce. We have a system of review and verification to allow both sides to rate and confirm their work history. We're part of 120 people selected from over 200,000 applications all over the world.

We came up with the idea after extensive research of the Hult Prize problem statement and self-study into the challenges and limitations of the current system. Based on our observations we started to iteratively develop our idea.

The first version of our idea was conceptualized in January at the Campus round of the Hult Prize at HKU. The product has gone through several revisions but the idea of using the SMS chatbot was consistent by the time we entered the regionals in Vietnam.

We've currently on-boarded 4800 users. This may not seem like a lot, but getting them onboard was more to validate our solution rather than scale it up. We wanted to ensure that our solution was feasible before we rolled it out to more users. However, once we've established that our prototype is good enough to handle a large user base we will actively work on scaling it. Given the nature of the product, we expect that it can reach a large number of workers quite quickly.

We are aiming to democratize job access for millions of workers in the informal economy. We want to build trust in the system and empower people working such low-income, daily wage, informal economy jobs.

Growing up in India, we have seen how both workers and companies face immense challenges with the current job access system. My (Sidhant's) parents own a manufacturing company and this is an issue that both they and their workers face every month.

If this project is successful, we would've successfully provided over 100000 people will an opportunity to access meaningful work for the first time in their lives. We will help them build a digital identity and gain opportunities to help them grow as individuals. The event was an unprecedented learning experience for the whole team and we hope to make the most experience in London through the rest of our life.

