**FINAL REPORT**
**INCLUSIVE TECH ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM (ITEP)**

**To:** New Venture Fund
**Subgrant Reference Number:** 012580
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## 1. Narrative report

*a. Goals and objectives, with results achieved*

The Inclusive Tech Entrepreneurship Program (ITEP) aimed to create a career training and placement targeting college students with disabilities and from underrepresented minorities who are interested in becoming Public Interest Technology (PIT) entrepreneurs. Focusing on challenges specifically related to the disability divide and racial equity, ITEP objectives were to provide (1) instruction, (2) mentorships, (3) externships, and (4) business coaching to nurture a new generation of entrepreneurs.

We admitted 14 students with disabilities and from underrepresented minorities who attend universities located in metro Atlanta. The students were from Georgia Tech, Georgia State University, and Clayton State University. The demographic distribution of the ITEP fellows is provided below.

*Gender distribution:* Female: 9        Male: 5
*Degree seeking distribution:* Undergraduate: 8        Graduate: 4    Associate: 1    Other: 1
*Students from underrepresented minorities*: 9
*Students with disability:* 10
*Students who have a disability and are from underrepresented minorities:* 5

While recruiting students, we also reached and recruited mentors who are leading practitioners of utilizing technology as a tool for addressing social problems. We recruited 14 mentors to enhance our students' entrepreneurial skill development and provide contextual guidance. The full list of our mentors is provided in the appendices. Demographic distribution for the ITEP mentors is provided below.

*Gender distribution:* Female: 5        Male: 9
*Mentors from underrepresented minorities*: 6
*Mentors with disability*: 3

(1) Instruction: We planned to provide training on unforeseen and adverse consequences of technology for people with disabilities and underrepresented minorities. Our aim was to facilitate discussions around long-standing challenges faced by these people. We developed the ITEP's instruction curriculum in collaboration with the instructor team and our students. We conducted a student survey inquiring about the learning gap and interest and then used this insight to design our content. Below is the list of our instruction sessions with specific presentation topics and the instructor who led the session.

Session 1: Responsible Innovation led by *Zerrin Ondin*
*Session 2:* Disability Rights Movement Through Technology Design Lenses led by *Carolyn
        Phillips*
*Session 3:* From Accessible to Usable to Inclusive: Why Policy Matters, But Really, Really
        Shouldn't led by *Nathan Moon*
*Session 4:* Inclusive Policy Considerations for Entrepreneurs led by *Salimah LaForce*
*Session 5:* Achieving Greater Accessibility in the Digital Arena led by *Johan Rempel*
*Session 6:* Inclusive Design: Common Sense Design Training led by *David Fazio*
*Session 7:* Self-Advocacy led by *Liz Persaud*
*Session 8:* Community Building: Advocating for the Community led by *Zerrin Ondin*

Our instruction sessions were scheduled to take place bi-weekly via online meeting tool BlueJeans. Everyone attended online and no in-person meeting took place to observe Covid-19 restrictions & precautions and accommodate students' ongoing academic semester schedule. The instruction component of the ITEP took place between April 2020 to July 2020.

(2) Mentorship: In a parallel fashion to the instruction timeline, the students were scheduled to meet with their mentors bi-weekly. We matched our students with their mentors based on the students' business idea and mentors' area of practice. Exact days and times and the meeting modality between the students and the mentors were left up to them to decide. The students and the mentors were provided guidance to help them to manage this relationship and understand expectations. The mentorship component of the ITEP took place between April 2020 to July 2020. Students worked toward shaping their business with the help of their mentors.

(3) Externship: We had originally planned to provide *externship* opportunities for our students during July at Atlanta-based startups. Our goal was to help our students to gain real world experience on launching and sustaining businesses. Our ongoing communications and feedback mechanisms revealed that it was not feasible for our students to have the externship as a majority of them were taking summer courses or had previously arranged internships. We therefore made the externship component *optional* leaving it up to the students to decide if they would like to participate. None of the students opted to enroll in an externship.

(4) Business Coaching:  We organized the business coaching sessions to help the students develop entrepreneurial confidence and skillsets. Co-PI Joy Harris led this component by providing workshops on Business Model Canvas, customer discovery, prototyping, and minimum viable product development. Dr. Harris helped the students create canvases for their business ideas and solidify those ideas to ideally find product-market-fit. Workshops took place bi-weekly via online meeting tool Zoom. Dr. Harris also provided individual meetings to students who were interested in further discussion. Everyone attended online and no in-person meeting took place to observe Covid-19 restrictions & precautions and accommodate students' ongoing academic semester schedule. The business coaching workshops took place between August 2020 to November 2020.

Pitching day: We had our pitching day at the end of the ITEP, bringing all our students and PIs together for inclusive and interactive discussions. The students prepared and presented their business ideas during this session. Rahul Saxena, the Interim Director of CREATE-X and the Associate Director of CREATE-X LAUNCH, joined us to listen and evaluate the students' business ideas. This event took place in November via online meeting tool Zoom.

Selection for Startup Launch: The students whose business plans were mature enough were given admission to the CREATE-X Startup Launch incubator and accelerator (https://create-x.gatech.edu/launch/startup-launch) to launch their companies. Six of our students were given admission to the CREATE-X Startup Launch which is scheduled for Summer 2022. The decision is left to the student if they would like to participate in CREATE-X Startup Launch during Summer 2022. The students decided to participate, will be receiving $5,000 in seed funding and

$30,000 worth of in-kind services to put them on the road to startup success. In-kind services include:

- Intense coaching from experienced entrepreneurs and business faculty
- Mentorship from industry veterans and notable Georgia Tech alumni
- Pro-bono legal incorporation services from a full-service law-firm
- Accounting services from a CPA firm, including tax planning and compliance
- 24/7 access to co-working office space
- Access to prominent investors at Demo Day

Research Component: ITEP also had a research component aiming to discuss and define Public Interest Technology (PIT) entrepreneurship, investigating views of PIT practitioners and startups whose goal is to create social impact. We wanted to provide essential research on the views of a diverse set of people regarding PIT entrepreneurship, laying out foundations, challenges, and lessons learned. We developed our data collection tool (semi-structure interview protocol) and have our research project approved by the Georgia Tech IRB. We disseminated the invitation email to our network and also, we searched PIT-UN resources to locate PIT start-ups, companies, and entrepreneurs. Unfortunately, we did not get any eligible entrepreneur interested in our study.

Website: We developed a website to introduce our program to the public and share our progress. The address for our website is https://cidi.gatech.edu/itep. It provides information about ITEP, PIs, the instructors, the mentors, and the students.

To sum up: ITEP's intended impact was to increase the number of successful PIT entrepreneurs with disabilities and from underrepresented minorities. We admitted 14 students to ITEP from 3 universities, choosing them among 50+ applicants based on disability and minority status and business idea. We recruited 14 mentors representing a diverse set of expertise in the areas of entrepreneurship, public policy, and inclusive design. We provided Instruction, facilitating discussion on topics such as inclusive design, social justice, inclusive tech policy, and equity implications of the innovations. Students worked with their mentors to get guidance on their business idea and real-life considerations. We provided Business Coaching, assisting students to develop their business canvases. Finally, we organized a final pitching day allowing our students to pitch their business ideas and gather feedback. ITEP successfully attained its goal by offering admission to six students to the CREATE-X Startup Launch incubator and accelerator.

*b. Challenges encountered/lessons learned*
Challenges we encountered and the lessons learned can be listed as (1) the extra-curricular nature of our program and (2) recruitment of research participants.

(1) The extra-curricular nature of ITEP: In order to reach out students who attend any university located in metro Atlanta, we had to design our program as an extra-curricular activity, meaning

no course credit was provided nor any formal impact/report represented on the student transcript. Unfortunately, this was challenging in terms of ensuring student participation, or motivating them to return their assignments, or follow our carefully designed timeline. While we believe it is important to provide a student flexibility with any learning opportunity, the team felt some level of formality would have made things easier on our side. We have used a project management tool (Basecamp) to keep all students updated and to facilitate our communication with them. We also recorded all virtual sessions for the students who could not join. Regardless of our efforts, some students dropped the program due to health problems or busy academic schedules. We believe that any program targeting students from various higher education institutions should find a way to have some sort of formal existence to prevent the challenges we experienced.

(2) Recruitment of research participants: We found it very challenging to recruit participants who fit the definition of a PIT entrepreneur. The people who fit the definition did not show interest, and the people who showed interest, did not fit the definition. We ended up with recruiting no one which made us think about ways we should have designed our research. One explanation we have is maybe the statement "Public Interest Technology Entrepreneur" was not clear to people and that we need to revise it slightly. Currently, we are contemplating to change our focus from Public Interest Technology Entrepreneurship to more commonly used statements such as Social Entrepreneurship or Responsible Innovation.

*c. Copies of any publications or media generated as a result of the project*
ITEP has not created any publication or media. We have developed a website that can be accessed at: https://cidi.gatech.edu/itep

*d. Certification (as stated in Section VII(B) of the Agreement)*

All Georgia Tech Research Corporation activities were and are consistent with charitable purposes under Sections 501(c)(3) and 509(a)(1), (2) or (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and Georgia Tech Research Corporation complied with all provisions and restrictions contained in this Agreement, including, for example and without limitation, those provisions related to lobbying and political activity.

**2. Financial report**
The financial report will be provided by the Georgia Tech Grants & Contracts Accounting office.

**3. List of all intellectual property and assets purchased or created with the Grant**
ITEP did not create any intellectual property. We did not purchase or create any assets.

**APPENDICES**

## Appendix A. ITEP Mentors

**Name:** Axel Leblois
**Occupation:** President and Executive Director of G3ICT
**Work area:** Accessible ICT, International Policy, Government

**Name:** Mike Galifianakis
**Occupation:** Retired, Statewide ADA Coordinator
**Work area:** Civil rights law, Government

**Name:** David Fazio
**Occupation:** Founder and President of Helix Opportunity
**Work area:** Entrepreneur, Inclusive Design, EdTech

**Name:** Thomas Logan
**Occupation:** Founder and CEO of Equal Entry
**Work area:** Entrepreneur, Inclusive Design, Accessibility

**Name:** Karl Groves
**Occupation:** Founder and President at Tenon.io
**Work area:** Entrepreneur, Inclusive Design, Accessibility

**Name:** Nakia Melecio
**Occupation:** Startup Catalyst at Georgia Tech's Advanced Technology Development Center
**Work area:** Entrepreneurship, Technology Development

**Name:** Rahul Saxena
**Occupation:** Associate Director of CREATE-X Launch Programs at Georgia Tech
**Work area:** Entrepreneurship, Student development

**Name:** Dr. Todd Sulchek
**Occupation:** Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Georgia Tech
**Work area:** Innovation in Engineering, Entrepreneurship

**Name:** Dr. Keena Byrd
**Occupation:** User Experience Expert at Facebook
**Work area:** Responsible social media, UX research

**Name:** Dr. Rhea Perkins
**Occupation:** Entrepreneur and founder of startup: Attire
**Work area:** Entrepreneur, Business development

**Name:** Sonya Rush
**Occupation:** Business Consultant and Entrepreneurship Educator at Spelman College

**Work area:** Entrepreneurship educator, coach, consultant

**Name:** Sunish Gupta
**Occupation:** Principal Product Manager of Accessibility at Amazon; Co-founder of Easy Alliance
**Work area:** Entrepreneur, Inclusive Design, and Accessibility

**Name:** Dr. Erika Tate
**Occupation:** Founder and Chief Learning Designer of Bluknowledge LLC
**Work area:** STEM/STEAM learning experiences for underrepresented communities

**Name:** Dr. Joy Harris
**Occupation:** Associate Director, CREATE-X LEARN programs at Georgia Tech
**Work area:** Entrepreneurship, Student development, Social innovation

## Appendix B. ITEP Instructors

*Carolyn P. Phillips, M.Ed., CPACC*
Director of Services & Education
Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation
College of Design
Georgia Institute of Technology

*Liz Persaud*
Program and Outreach Manager
Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation
College of Design
Georgia Institute of Technology

*John Rempel, UXC, CPACC*
UX/ICT Quality Assurance Manager
Center for Inclusive Design and Innovation
College of Design
Georgia Institute of Technology

*Salimah Laforce, MS*
Senior Policy Analyst
Center for Advanced Communications Policy
School of Public Policy
Georgia Institute of Technology

***David Fazio***
Founder and President of Helix Opportunity

***Nathan Moon, PhD***
Principal Research Scientist & Director of Research
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***Zerrin Ondin, PhD***
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