



News Release

New F-LANE round in 2018: Europe's first accelerator for social ventures in technology to empower women

- **180 startups from 57 countries shortlisted for the Vodafone Institute's female tech accelerator – the first of its kind in Europe**
- **The jury has made its decision: five startups from Germany, USA, Pakistan, UK and Uganda have been selected**
- **Founder teams will embark on a seven-week acceleration programme in Berlin, including mentorship, training, networks, funding and major investment opportunities**

Berlin, 19 February 2018. The five most innovative and high-potential digital impact ventures focusing on female empowerment have secured a place in the next round of the Vodafone Institute-initiated, Europe-wide accelerator programme. The Vodafone Institute selected the five most impressive candidates for F-LANE, including startups and social ventures from Germany, the USA, Pakistan, the UK and Uganda. They will now be participating in a seven-week accelerator programme in Berlin that includes mentorship and training, plus access to networks and funding.

The programme mission is to foster the participation of women in technological development and to empower girls and women around the world through technology. F-LANE collaborates with the Impact Hub Berlin and the Social Entrepreneurship Akademie to source innovative technology startups around the world that focus on women, provide an enterprising solution to a social problem and have the potential to make a wide impact. The majority of the startups in the last F-LANE rounds received investments at the end of the accelerator programme - some as high as EUR 4.5 million.

The seven-week accelerator programme in Berlin begins on 16 March 2018 and culminates with a pitch by the five F-LANE finalists to investors and decision-makers in business, media and politics in early May. Alice Deissner, the Vodafone Institute's Director of Strategy and Programmes commented, "There's a lot of prejudice against women in the technology sector, and the number of disadvantaged women is alarming. We need programmes like F-LANE to put this issue on the agenda and make people aware of just how many outstanding business models and inspiring female founder teams there are out there."

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These are the 2018 F-LANE finalists:

Mama Bird (Washington D.C; USA)

Mamabird facilitates the transportation and delivery of life-saving medical supplies to remote African villages and communities; to women and children who live on the fringes of society and often need the most care, but are unable to access it. The medical supplies are delivered by drones that can carry packages of up to 10-15 kg in weight over a distance of 100 km.

www.mamabird.io

Founders: Thomas Lauzon, Florent Martell & Eugene Maseya

FinMarie (Berlin, Germany)

FinMarie is the first online investment platform in Germany created by women for women. The FinMarie business concept involves the assessment of the female investors' personal goals, individual needs and interests as the basis for a personalised financial plan. Daily portfolio monitoring by FinMarie ensures that its female investors stay on track to achieve their goals. The individual portfolios are created with the help of a mathematical algorithm that forecasts different market scenarios.

<http://finmarie.com/de/home-de>

Founder: Karolina Decker

BreastIT (Kampala, Uganda)

Breast IT developed a glove with piezoelectric crystals on the surface that produce ultrasound. When the glove is switched on and placed on the breast, ultrasound images of the inside of the breast are created and transmitted via phone for analysis. This glove makes breast cancer screening less expensive and considerably easier to access.

<http://breastit.thinkitlimited.com>

Founder: Moris Atwine

Doctory (Islamabad, Pakistan)

Doctory plans to revolutionise Pakistan's healthcare service. It's developed a search engine that uses machine learning and feedback mechanisms to provide patients

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with reliable information about healthcare, medical specialists and health service reviews. It also simplifies access to health services and specialists in Pakistan with an appointments service and local support.

<http://doctory.pk>

Founders: Maliha Khalid & Ayyaz Kayani

Free_D (London, UK)

Free_D is a social enterprise with a mission to support and up-skill girls and women who are survivors of trafficking or at high risk of being trafficked. It provides training to develop them into artisan jewellery makers. With the help of a partner factory, the women are trained to use CAD design and 3D printing technology, and they also get social and psychological support from a local NGO specialising in trafficking. The jewellery that is made using 3D printing technology will be sold around the world by ethical and social retailers.

<http://www.free-d.org.uk>

Founders: Katherine Prescott & Siavash Mahdavi

About F-LANE

Some 180 startups from 57 countries applied to join the accelerator in the current round of F-LANE. F-LANE sources innovative technological startups around the world that focus on women and provide an enterprising solution to a social problem. Their business concept should have the potential to make a wide impact and empower girls and women through technology. Participants of the F-LANE programme also have access to advice, coaching and mentoring, and to an international network of investors. Members of the F-LANE jury include Dupsy Abiola (Head of Global Innovation at the International Airlines Group, Lisa Witter (Co-Founder and CEO of a political), Hedda Pahlson-Moller (Business Angel and Venture Capitalist) and Andy Goldstein (Co-Founder of the LMU Entrepreneurship Center).

You can find further information about the programme at www.f-lane.com.

About the Vodafone Institute for Society and Communication

The Vodafone Institute is Vodafone's European think tank. We explore the potential and responsible use of digital technologies for innovation, growth and sustainable social impact. Through research and events, we provide thought leadership and offer a platform for dialogue between business academia and politics. We are committed to improving access to technology for all parts of society and thus develop and support on-the-ground projects for female empowerment and digital business. The wide ranging expertise of the Advisory Board reflects the Institute's intention to act as a cross-sectoral platform.

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