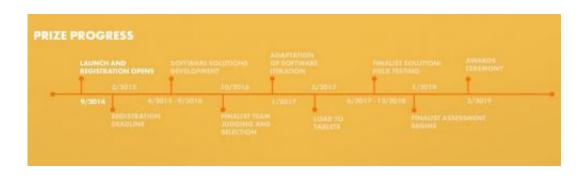# XPRIZE announces Global Learning XPRIZE—$15 million competition to disrupt education

September 23 2014, by Bob Yirka

(Phys.org) —XPRIZE chairman Peter Diamandis has announced the launch of a new competition—this time to disrupt education so that children living everywhere, including impoverished countries, can use technology to teach themselves basic reading, writing and mathematics skills. Those interested in competing will have a six month registration period, followed by an 18 month development phase. Five of the top entries will receive $1 million to further develop and test their idea (in cooperation with children in 100 African villages), with the eventual winner receiving $10 million.

Officially called Global Learning XPRIZE—Empowering Young Minds Everywhere, the new competition follows others run by the organization

which have not only made news, but have contributed to the advancement of science and technology (private spacecraft development, renewable energy, Star Trek tricorder, etc.) and sometimes the betterment of our planet (cleaning up the oceans). Funding comes from donations and its Board of Trustees is made up of movers and shakers from all walks of life.

The new competition is meant to attract the attention of educators, technologists or anyone with a good idea, to hopefully come up with a new way to help kids that can't get a basic education the traditional way, i.e. by sitting in classrooms. Competitors are challenged to come up with a way to employ self-teaching techniques on smartphones and tablet computers—the team at XPRIZE, Diamandis told reporters, believes that trying to get kids living in remote villages or other impoverished places to attend classes is not realistic—the problem is too big. That's why a new approach is needed, one where the kids (and their family) are able to take charge of their own basic education. All they'll need is a tablet computer and access to the Internet (the educational system will be open access). The software should be able to take it from there, offering children a system that is easy to use without the need for any prior training. Children should be able to teach themselves how the alphabet works, and then how to read, and they should be able to do the same with basic math principles. That's the whole idea. Beyond that, presumably contestants are free to add other features, such as a way to share learning with friends or family, if they deem it helpful.

Diamandis also said that he and those at XPRIZE would like to see the technology work on every phone and tablet in the world, revolutionizing the way people are educated in the future and making it more democratic in the process.

More information: learning.xprize.org/press-rele … 250-million-

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