

## News story:

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### **International entrepreneurship prize won by 15-year-old from Trinidad & Tobago**

Fifteen-year-old Asia Sylvester, representing CTS College and Trinidad and Tobago, has won the first-ever international Future Entrepreneur of the Year title, beating off fierce competition from five other countries and bagging a \$1,000 prize to help her realise her business dream.

The Future Entrepreneur of the Year competition was run by ABE Global, an internationally renowned qualifications awarding body which develops expertise in business and entrepreneurship. The finalists had all taken part in the ABE Endorsed KidsMBA entrepreneurship programme for secondary school children. Schools running the programme put their most promising young entrepreneurs through to the Future Entrepreneur final which was judged by an independent panel of business experts.

When the judges' scores were counted and verified - Asia's Dance Studio (ADCo) was a clear winner. Asia's proposition is to launch a dance studio with classes designed to provide social engagement for children and teens, supporting mental health and physical wellbeing. Her business model centres on dance classes designed to encourage socialisation as well as good physical health.

The judges were highly impressed by Asia's enthusiasm for her business idea combined with a realistic business plan. Judge Marc Ortman, chair of the Global Entrepreneurs Network UK, said, "Asia has a clear idea for her business and a realistic understanding of what it will take to set it up and deliver it. Her passion and belief in her start-up is inspiring." These sentiments were shared by the other judges, Philip Salter, Founder of The Entrepreneurs Network, and Emrys Green, Chair, Institute of Leadership and Management, with Lesley Li, CEO & co-founder of Berlin-based FinTech company U Impact, adding, "I'm impressed by Asia's ability to turn her passion into a viable business that could potentially improve the society she's living in."

On hearing the news of her win, Asia said, "Winning is always a good feeling but being selected to represent CTS College, Trinidad and Tobago by extension was exhilarating. When ADCo was short listed amongst ABE's Future Entrepreneur finalists on 6th July 2022 and published internationally I was mind-

blown. Here it was, my business pitch was listed amongst proposals from countries around the world like Malawi, Myanmar, Nigeria and the UK. It was a geographical awakening to some places I have never even thought about. However, on July 19th when Mr. Brown (from CTS) called with the news that I had successfully secured the Top Performer position in the ABE KidsMBA. I was overjoyed and expressed my jubilation with a dance, of course!”

Ravi Ragoonath from CTS College said, “It’s fantastic to host the KidsMBA at CTS College. We can observe how enthusiastic the students are in developing their company concepts from cohort to cohort. It allows for a high level of involvement in the classes given the structure of the program and the modules.

The students are eager to participate in the sessions and share their thoughts in each cohort. The business concepts that the students present, whether they pertain to the product or service industries, also pique the interest of the lecturers and judges. Every business concept is distinctive to the kids' preferences and areas of enthusiasm.

In accordance with Prof. Mark Watson-mission Gandy's vision for the ABE Endorsed KidsMBA Programme, CTS College is pleased to educate and empower our students.”

Rob May ABE’s chief executive added, “On behalf of all at ABE, I send our heartfelt congratulations to Asia for this fantastic and well-deserved result. I also want to pay tribute to CTS College as this is a great testament to their commitment to delivering the ABE Endorsed KidsMBA programme with the best quality teaching.”

ENDS

### **EDITORS NOTES**

- 1) The judges were:

#### **Lesley Li, Founder & CEO @u impact**

U impact is a FinTech start-up with the mission to make impact investing the new normal. U impact aims to guide young people to invest consciously and for the causes that matter the most to them. Intending to generate wealth and create positive impacts for society, u impact focuses on themes targeted on sustainable investing to allow investments based on personal values and beliefs. Lesley is also a TEDx speaker and is on the Women in FinTech Powerlist ESG.



**Marc Ortman, Chair & Executive Director of the Global Entrepreneurs Network (GEN) UK Hub and brand strategist**

The Global Entrepreneurs Network operates a platform of projects and programmes in 200 countries aimed at making it easier for anyone, anywhere to start and scale a business.

Marc has worked across the media industries as a founder, CEO, director, strategist and creative director. As an entrepreneur, he has founded several ventures including three creative agencies and two digital businesses. Marc has managed projects for global brands, teams of 50 people, and annual turnovers of £8m. In addition to his role as Chair of GEN UK, he consults on brand communications.



**Emrys Green, Chair of the Institute of Leadership and Management (TILM)**

The Institute of Leadership and Management are a professional body that helps people and businesses who are truly engaged in the learning and practice of leadership, Inspiring great leadership. Everywhere.

Emrys' expertise is leading on digital, events and arts project management. In addition to his role at TILM, he is Director of Cloud Artisans – a consultancy-led digital & engagement agency and is the Head of Business & Projects at Upstart Projects – a national charity which champions youth voice and leadership.



**Philip Salter, Founder of The Entrepreneurs Network**

The Entrepreneurs Network is a UK government think tank which aims to provide a voice for entrepreneurs and make Britain a great place to start and grow a business.

Philip was previously Business Features Editor of City A.M. where he wrote a weekly column on entrepreneurship and interviewed many of Britain's leading entrepreneurs. He also writes a column for Forbes on entrepreneurship and appears regularly elsewhere in the media.



## 2) About ABE and KidsMBA

ABE Global is an award-winning international exam board which has been running professional business qualifications since 1973. It operates in multiple countries around the world and has been at the forefront of developing skills in business and entrepreneurship for five decades.

KidsMBA was created by insolvency lawyer, Professor Mark Watson-Gandy, who saw too many enterprises come unstuck by basic business mistakes.

Following research showing a host of long-term benefits to introducing business education at the start of secondary school, ABE joined forces with KidsMBA to develop a business programme that is fun and



accessible for younger children whilst teaching them invaluable skills in entrepreneurship and enterprise.

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- 3) Future Entrepreneur entrants came from UK, Myanmar, Malawi, Nigeria, UK and Zambia as well as Trinidad and Tobago. Approximately 1000 children have done the programme to date.