

Can Uslay

## Roshni Rides: Pricing Transportation for the Underserved

According to the UN Slum Almanac, approximately one billion people around the world lived in slum conditions in 2015.<sup>1</sup> Lack of affordable and accessible transportation represented a broadly neglected issue that impacted more than 65 million forcibly displaced people who were also primarily confined to a life in the slums.<sup>2</sup> Roshni Rides aimed to create better lives for these refugees one ride at a time, by utilizing fixed payments, ride sharing, and networking (see **Exhibit 1**).

Roshni Rides' management team was relatively young yet well-trained, comprising four Pakistani-Americans led by CEO Najeeha "Gia" Farooqi, CFO Moneeb Mian, CMO Hanaa Lakhani, and COO Hasan Usmani (see **Appendix A**). Mian, Lakhani, and Usmani were all recent graduates of the supply chain management program at Rutgers Business School, and Farooqi was set to graduate from the same program in December 2017.

The Roshni Rides team had just overcome overwhelming odds to claim the prestigious Hult Prize. They prevailed throughout the local competition, the regionals, and ultimately claimed the global finals championship from among 50,000 applicants worldwide and won the \$1 million-dollar grand prize presented by Bill Clinton in the United Nations Plaza on September 16, 2017.<sup>3</sup>

Their crowdfunding campaign had also been successful, but major dilemmas remained. Winning the Hult Prize had put them under the spotlight and brought them global publicity.<sup>4</sup> However, public attention and excitement could easily fade if they did not execute soon.

Their plans called for a lean start-up mode in year 1, but projected serving 2.2 million commuters in 20 cities within the next five years (see **Exhibit 2**). The ridership price point had to be sufficiently low to attract the commuters and sustain Roshni Rides' ambitious growth plans, yet high enough to demonstrate viability and generate the capital infusion that the projections demanded. Roshni Rides' mission was to provide

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