Sawa World Youth Reporters – Skills & Income for Youth As They Reach Thousands with Local Solutions to Solve Extreme Poverty

Uganda

Daphne Nederhorst
Organization type:
nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector
Budget:
$100,000 - $250,000
Website:
http://www.sawaworld.org

- At risk youth
- Income generation
- Poverty alleviation
- Media
- Vulnerable populations
- Youth leadership
- Social enterprise

Project Summary

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Over one billion people on the planet are still living on $1 per day and close to half are youth of which 60 % is unemployed. Sawa World unlocks both of these colossal global challenges using a revolutionary approach.

We empower youth, who live extreme poverty, with skills and a living wage. The youth get trained by local media partners to become employed community reporters. The youth document local community leaders that have found own solutions, to uplift their community out of poverty, without charity of foreign aid. On a monthly basis, using new media tools, the youth share the best practices of the leaders to surrounding communities. This provides hundred of thousands of people, living in extreme poverty, with knowledge and empowers them to solve their own poverty issues.

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Sawa World aims to operate in the world’s 50 poorest countries in the world. These countries are strategically selected based on the large amount of unemployed youth and people living in extreme poverty (40% or higher). We are currently working in five countries: Haiti, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia. In the next twelve months, we will further expand our program in Uganda as it has the highest youth unemployment rate in the world, with a staggering 83 percent (World Bank, 2008). We work with two main vulnerable target populations (1) marginalized and unemployed youth and (2) community leaders that live in extreme poverty. The youth mainly come from urban slum areas and the leaders can be found in both urban and rural settings. Both groups have an average income of less than $1 per day. The selected youth, range from ages 18 to 30 and have either dropped out of school or received a very basic level of education. Most of them come from single mother households or were orphaned. All of the selected youth, are unemployed prior to being accepted into the program. The selected youth are eager to use their energy, grow their skills, get an income and become future leaders to mobilize their communities out of poverty. 50 % percent of the selected youth reporters are female. This ensures that young females that live in extreme poverty have an equal access to employment and have the ability to rise up as future leaders in their communities.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

Sawa World is the only organization in the world that tackles extreme poverty by training and employing marginalized youth from the world poorest countries as community reporters who then use their media skills to reach large amounts of people living in extreme poverty with local solutions to eradicate extreme poverty. At the core of our innovation, is putting the ideas, talent and capabilities of the world’s most marginalized youth at the centre of solving the problem of unemployment and extreme poverty. The unique design of the program creates a valuable market based solution that is scalable to other impoverished countries in creating youth employment and sparking a new paradigm shift that will have systemic change in eradication extreme poverty for millions.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

Sawa World introduces solutions for two critical global challenges, youth unemployment of millions in the world’s poorest countries and over a billion people living in extreme poverty. Sawa World empowers unemployed youth that live in extreme poverty with skills training and employment. The youth get trained by established local media partners to become community reporters. They receive an intense 4-week, 6 days per week, training in basic videography, social media and community knowledge sharing skills. The training provides practical and employable skills and
awards an official certificate to the youth. After the training, the youth become employed as Sawa World Youth Reporters, receiving a basic living wage. The main goal of the youth is to document local community leaders (Sawa Leaders), who live in extreme poverty and created their own effective solutions, without charity of foreign aid, to uplift their community out of poverty. On a monthly basis, using video and other new media tools, the youth share the best practices of the Leaders to surrounding impoverished communities. This includes video screenings and discussions and broadcasts on local radio stations. This provides hundreds of thousands of people, living on a dollar per day of less, with valuable knowledge and empowers them to replicate the solutions and solve their own poverty issues. The local media partners are supported to generate permanent income to sustain the training and employ the youth reporters. Sawa World uses a phased approach to support this new market based innovation: (1) approves local media partners that have an existing business model to provide the personnel and facility to conduct the training and ongoing program support (2) provides a two year seed fund to start the program and (3) provides businesses development support to market the program to national and international institutions that have a mandate to eradicate extreme poverty. Using this “services for fees” business model, we apply a cutting edge market-based innovation by offering the valuable skills and services of the youth reporters to national and international organizations that have a mandate to find effective solutions to eradicate extreme poverty (i.e., UNICEF, World Bank, Oxfam, Government Ministries). These organizations hire the youth to document certain proven solutions to local poverty issues.

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen.

Innovation

What stage is your project in?
Operating for 1-5 years

Share the story of the founder and what inspired the founder to start this project

Daphne Nederhorst was born into a Dutch family but grew up in Tanzania. Her parents, both working in the international aid sector, challenged the long term sustainability of foreign models to solve poverty in countries such as Tanzania.

Since infancy, Daphne had the chance to live among communities across Africa that lacked the basic necessities and endured extreme poverty. While she was deeply touched by the problems in these areas, she was mesmerized by the local people’s strength and inspiration to find solutions to their own local challenges. She felt a strong sense of responsibility to help these communities. Daphne wanted to give a voice to these extraordinary unsung heroes and bring their valuable lessons to the world. At the age of 7, Daphne made a conscious decision to make this my life’s mission.

Since then, Daphne’s passion remains strong. She lived and travelled to over 48 countries, received 3 academic degrees, is a part-time teacher at the University of British Columbia in the area of international development. She has worked with and advised governments and international aid agencies such as the United Nations and collaborated with renowned global leaders including Richard Branson and Muhammad Yunus. She resigned from her corporate job in 2007 to spearhead Sawa World and has since received the Ashoka Fellowship, YMCA International Peace Award and was selected as a finalist for the 2010 Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award.
Please describe how your project has been successful and how that success is measured

In the last three years of operations, Sawa World has trained 215 youth reporters in six of the world’s poorest countries. Through this process the youth reporters have shared the success models of a wide range of community leaders with a combined impact of reaching 100,000 people living in extreme poverty and secured over $450,000 of in-kind support to scale up the projects of the Sawa Leaders.

To track our impact and challenges, we apply a range of monitoring tools such as surveys, emails and site visits to gain valuable information from the youth reporters, media partners and community leaders. Our two most valuable learning lessons in the first two years were (1) we needed move away from having the youth reporters act as volunteers and develop a sustainable business model to employ them on a permanent basis and (2) it was essential to create reliable partnerships with local media organizations that could train and employ the youth on an ongoing basis.

In year three, we changed our program model to reflect these learning’s and established new media partnerships in Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Haiti. To test our new approach, five youth were trained in Uganda at the Uganda Film and Television Institute with a guaranteed income for the next 24 months. During the first month of their training, the youth reporters reached 125,000 Uganda people in extreme poverty with the solutions of three community leaders.

How many people have been impacted by your project?
More than 10,000

How many people could be impacted by your project in the next three years?
More than 10,000

How will your project evolve over the next three years?

Based on the results in Uganda over the next 12 months, we aim to expand the program in four countries (Zambia, Rwanda, Tanzania and Haiti) in the next 2 years. We will train and employ 100 new youth reporters and guaranteed them an income over the 24 month period. The youth in return, will find and document 100 community leaders and share their effective solutions to 1 million people living in extreme poverty across the five countries.

During the next three years, a substantial growth in corporate and private sponsorship will have supported continue efforts to scale up operations and field programming. However, our goal in the next five years is to replace all charity funding with earned income from services provided by the local media partners and Sawa World Youth Reporters.

Sustainability

What barriers might hinder the success of your project and how do you plan to overcome them?

Sawa World has grown rapidly in the last three years mainly as a result of transparency and openness to the learning’s from field experiences and changing approaches and models accordingly (see earlier section). This internal leadership philosophy will be used to overcome any future barriers to success.

One apparent challenge we may encounter is the resistance from the trillion dollar international aid industry. Our innovative approach bypasses the traditional and mostly ineffective approach of these institutions and aims to strive free of charity and foreign aid to solve extreme poverty. At the core, Sawa World is putting unemployed youth and the people living extreme poverty in charge of solving their own poverty issues with their own leadership. To overcome this challenge, we have built strong alliances with international aid organizations, engaged them in our work and informed them how we can assist them in applying similar approaches. For example, Sawa World’s Founder was recently asked to advise UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon and 300 Heads of State and Governments on using more effective ways to solve global poverty aims or also referred to as the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Tell us about your partnerships

Sawa World has an impressive list of global partner organization. Some of these include:

- Our local media partners who train and support the employment of the youth include the Uganda Film and Television Institute, Zambia Institute of Mass Communication, Tanzanian Kilimanjaro Film Institute, Rwandan Kaliwimbi Cinema Production and Haitian Creative Studio Video Production.
- Our main technology partner is Best Buy/Future Shop who donate an extensive “Sawa Youth Media Kit” to local media partners with the goal to support the training and monthly work of the youth reporters. This includes items such as portable camcorders, tripods, microphones, mini projectors and speakers. They have included suppliers such as Kodak. Sawa World is also currently in communications with Sony and Apple to join these efforts with product donations.
- Our main corporate sponsor is Western Union. They provide access to their global fund transfer system free of charge. This allows us to wire funds to our local media partners and youth reporters when needed. Western Union is also a corporate sponsor to support the employability of some of the Sawa Youth Reporters.
- We work in close partnership with Ashoka Canada and Ashoka USA to assess the scalability and business development opportunities of Sawa World’s model. The Director of Ashoka USA is a Board Advisor in the area of social enterprise development.
- We also have partnerships with Milton Rose (creation of employment contracts) and the Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia (income development strategies), and are currently in collaboration with global companies including Virgin Unite and Quakers Foods.

Explain your selections

Sawa World has fundraised over $300,000 in the last three years. Our funding has grown every year between 15 percent and 100 percent. The main sources of funding have come from private philanthropists and business in North America.

How do you plan to strengthen your project in the next three years?

Our vision is to strive free of charity and create earned income to support our operations and field programs. To support this goal, we have an internal “think tank” of 12 volunteers called the Income Development Team. They are currently assessing 65 income options and identified 12 for further exploration over the next three years.

This has led to a meeting with senior staff members at the United Nations Global Compact, a network of 3000 leading global businesses that have a commitment to the solving global poverty. We envision providing this network with the opportunity to hire the Sawa Youth Reporters in documenting, on short video, best practice to specific poverty issues. These can then be used for training, marketing or replication purposes by the businesses.
Challenges

Which barriers to employment does your innovation address?
Please select up to three in order of relevancy to your project.

**PRIMARY**
Underemployment

**SECONDARY**
Lack of skills/training

**TERTIARY**
Lack of access to information and networks

Please describe how your innovation specifically tackles the barriers listed above.

See earlier sections that fully describe how our innovative approach tackles the above barriers.

Are you trying to scale your organization or initiative?
If yes, please check up to three potential pathways in order of relevancy to you.

**PRIMARY**
Grown geographic reach: Multi-country

**SECONDARY**
Grown geographic reach: Global

**TERTIARY**
Influenced other organizations and institutions through the spread of best practices

Please describe which of your growth activities are current or planned for the immediate future.

See earlier sections that fully describe growth activities of the next three years.

Beyond the three years, we will work towards an entire paradigm shift in international aid and youth employment in developing countries. Sawa World plans to scale up to five new countries every two to three years until we reach all of our targeted 50 countries and have thousands of youth employed as Sawa World Youth Reporters. These youth will have the ability to reach and empower millions of people with access to local solutions to solve their own poverty issues.

Do you collaborate with any of the following: (Check all that apply)
Technology providers, NGOs/Nonprofits, For profit companies, Academia/universities.

If yes, how have these collaborations helped your innovation to succeed?

See earlier section in partnerships that fully outlines our partnerships and impact.

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