Developing Innovations in School Cultivation

Mukono, Uganda

Edward Mukibi

Organization type: nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector
Project Stage: Growth
Budget: $10,000 - $50,000
Website: http://www.projectdiscnews.blogspot.com

- At risk youth
- Behavioral issues
- Child exploitation
- Early childhood development
- Education
- Education reform
- Youth development

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

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

Approximately 20 words left (160 characters).

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Many schools in Uganda and Africa at large are using farming and cultivation as form of punishment for small and petty offences committed by the students at school there by creating a bad image and stigma for agriculture and farming related subjects among the students who would chose to study them. This has made many young people hate farming yet it is one of the main sources of livelihood in Uganda. This make school going children look at farming as an activity of rebellious and irresponsible people in the society hence opting for moving to urban areas for Jobs

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!
Participatory planning and establishment of school and community gardens helps to bring students, teachers, parents and school administrators together to voluntarily plan, establish and manage school gardens without being forced there by creating a favourable, interest-oriented, learner-owned and practical learning environment for agriculture and related subjects. The school gardens established by project DISC helps bring together all these stakeholders to facilitate knowledge transfer and voluntary learning across different age groups, generations and cultures and hence reshape the way young people look at this important economic activity. Project DISC also profit so much on the experience-based and experimental learning through exchange visits and exhibitions.

Impact: How does it Work

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

The basic model involves participatory establishment of a school garden, collective planning and selection of agricultural enterprises, education and learning through practical sessions how to sustain the selected enterprises, exchange visits to older practitioners of the same enterprises, record keeping, marketing and also post harvest handling. Then the learners have been advised to start planning and implement similar initiative at their places out of school and of recent, Six small mixed farms have been established in Mukono district using the knowledge from Project DISC and these have been linked to markets like restaurants, homes and other consumers groups. The learners at this level are introduced to farming as a business and are facilitated to conduct their own market research.

Sustainability

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

Some schools are doing some farming in Mukono district for example, Bishop’s senior school but do not give much freedom and education to the students to be innovative to plan and implement their own initiatives and enterprises on the farm. They are doing farming because that is what the time table requires them to do at that time of the day. This is not the case with Project DISC where learners drive the activities and the entire planning process with the aim of harvesting knowledge.

About You

Organization:
Developing Innovations in School Cultivation (DISC)

First Name
 Edward

Last Name
 Mukibi

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 http://www.facebook.com/edie. mukiibi

Organization Name
Developing Innovations in School Cultivation (DISC)

Organization Country
MUK, Mukono

Country where this project is creating social impact
MUK, Mukono

Your role in Education
Social Worker, Other.

The type of school(s) your solution is affiliated with
Private (tuition-based)

How long has your organization been operating?
1-5 years

Innovation

How long has your solution been in operation?
2
Define your company, program, service, or product in 1-2 short sentences [136 characters]

Project DISC is a school gardening project that facilitates practical farming lessons and agricultural skill development in young people

Identify what is innovative about your solution in 1-2 short sentences [136 characters]

Learners plan the establishment and management of agricultural enterprises on their school gardens. The gardens are also think-tanks for

Social Impact

What has been the impact of your solution to date?

652 primary and secondary school going young people have been voluntarily trained and equipped with basic skills in practical farming, agricultural enterprise development and management, 13 school gardens established and well managed in Mukono district alone, 4 more gardens established outside Mukono district, 6 small mixed farms setup by our former students who have been linked to restaurants to supply vegetables and tubers weekly. Parents have started taking part in school gardening activities, schools now have field exchange visits for experience based learning, now all school under Project DISC have practical lessons to supplement the theoretical lessons they get from classrooms, Schools can now produce extra vegetables and other products to Incorporate into their general meals hence reducing termly expenses on food

What is your projected impact over the next 1-3 years?

Over 4000 young people trained and equipped with basic farming skills, influence the review of the current national teaching curriculum to include field and experience based lessons to school and vocational learners using our already developed extra curriculum for our schools, establish more community gardens for school drop outs and other community members so that they also have an opportunity to tap the knowledge flow from this Idea

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

School children in Uganda always change schools for many reasons beyond our control but we have already developed a project Protocol where we record the contact details of our learners that we can track their movements from school to school so that they can still benefit from the project. Very fixed school programs especially in Public schools which does not leave time for voluntary cultivation. We are already in talks with the Mukono district directorate of education officials (Central and Local Government) so that public schools can reserve at least 6 hours a week for Voluntary practical farming lessons. Inadequate finances to manage some activities in the project area. In this, we have registered the project as a community based Organisation with mandate to organise fundraising events

Winning entries present a strong plan for how they will achieve and track growth. Identify your six-month milestone for growing your impact

Capacity building and training and close garden monitoring while filling in the economic and sustainability monitoring hand book

Identify three major tasks you will have to complete to reach your six-month milestone

Task 1
Training of Trainers and regional coordinators, teachers and parents on key project management aspects and principles

Task 2
Exchange visits by the participants to other areas for more experimental and experience based learning, knowledge sharing

Task 3
Hold producer – consumer meetings and developing a mobile based system for communication of any developments in the Market

Now think bigger! Identify your 12-month impact milestone

Operating in 60 schools and communities. In this it means that we will be running 60 gardens in Uganda with over 13000 youth

Identify three major tasks you will have to complete to reach your 12-month milestone

Task 1
Training and capacity Building for new volunteers, school head teachers and agriculture teachers

Task 2
Hold planning meetings and consultations with the participants, education officials and local leaders

Task 3
Establishment and management of school and community gardens at school and community levels respectively, hold exchange visits

Founding Story: We want to hear about your "Aha!" moment. Share the story of where and when the founder(s) saw this solution's potential to change the world [125 words]

Project DISC was founded in 2006 to restore the relationship between young people and agriculture. It was designed to use school and community gardens as thinking places where young people could meet voluntarily, discuss and come up with innovative and practical solutions to various challenges facing farmers in Uganda. The idea came out of the fact that in Ugandan communities, schools use cultivation as a form of punishment for any offences committed by children at school. Many schools could reserve pieces of bushy land behind class rooms awaiting clearance from
late comers or those children speaking vernacular on the school compound. This has changed as these have now turned into school gardens with well managed crops voluntarily cultivated by school children in over 13 schools where the problem existed and after proven experience, 6 of the former project participants have been allocated land from their families to engage in commercial farming. We have linked them to near-by markets.

Tell us about your partnerships

Project DISC currently has a total number of 5 informal partnerships and 2 formal partnerships. The formal partners or collaborators include Slow food International based in Italy but operating in 150 countries and Buiga Sunrise community based Organisation. The Informal partners are those we work with but no signed collaboration agreement. These include; Uganda Environmental Education foundation, Community Transformation network, Mukono District National Agricultural advisory services, Makerere University Agricultural research Institute Kiganda Widows and Orphans care.

What type of team (staff, volunteers, etc.) will ensure that you achieve the growth milestones identified in the Social Impact section? [75 words]

Private Volunteers including teachers, parents and community workers from the areas where the schools are located. Some of them are retired civil servants. These have been trained for the past 5 years to manage different project activities.

Please elaborate on any needs or offers you have mentioned above and/or suggest categories of support that aren’t specified within the list.

I can offer my time and talent to help work with other ideas once given the opportunity to contribute to their development. In the same way, I still need volunteers from all parts of the world to achieve the aims and expansion of my Idea. The same applies to the need for increased visibility of the project, though I may not be in a good position to offer this, but I need it.

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