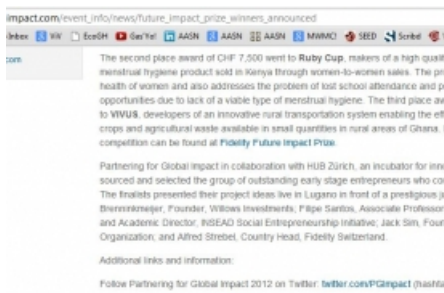
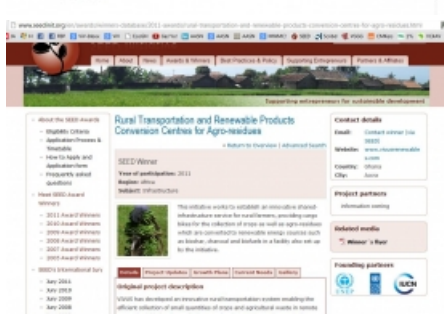


# DEAL-OF-THE-DAY SMS FOR STREET FOOD WOMEN VENDORS IN GHANA

Accra, GhanaAccra, Ghana



Richard Seshie





**Organization type:**

for profit

Project Stage:

Start-Up

**Budget:**

\$10,000 - \$50,000

Website:

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/109737977/Vivus-12-Slides-12-Reasons-Why-Vote-for-Us-A...>

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Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

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

VIVUS has developed a mobile-based sales system enabling a near “zero-rot” trade of food staples and an innovative rural transportation system enabling the efficient micro collection of crops in Ghana

About Project

**Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?**

Ghana’s focus on export cash crops has left its domestic markets for food staples inefficient and informal. At the sourcing level, farmers receive very low pay from traders who own the trucks or have to commute to the nearest rural market for better prices (up to 10 km by head portage or 2-3 bags bicycle loading) At the retail level; food staples are sent to feed Accra. Like many African capitals, Accra has exploded in size with 3 million people and an area exceeding 40 km. Informal table-top women vendors dominate the retail of staples to consumers. Yet, we have just 2 ‘centralized’ wholesale markets translating into expensive commute + stuck in traffic for women buying staples from wholesalers. 30 to 40% of crops also go to rot during handling; as unsold produce (trader and women)

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

We do two things: (i) At the retail level, we have developed a mobile-based “crowd-purchasing” system for women vendors enabling a near “zero-rot” trade. We send out field agents to mobile-register street women vendors. We then send them ongoing ‘DEAL OF THE DAY’ SMS, offering staples at discounted prices. By allowing women vendors in effect to “pre-order” their staples; we are able to source right-at-the-time, leverage their quantity during transport and cut significantly through rot (better handling + sales analysis provided to women) which results into a discounted price for them as “revenue efficiency share” We then take advantage of “nude” soccer fields and uncompleted houses to set-up proximity, temporary early morning wholesale markets (ii) At the farm level, a lead farmer is designated to aggregate the food produce from other fellow farmers backed with attractive prices. We empower them with carts/cargo bikes to convey their produce to the farmer’s yard as a collection point

Impact: How does it Work

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

1. INFRASTRUCTURE AS A SERVICE. We establish mobility centers' comprised of carts and/or cargo motorbikes at a cluster of villages-level.

They serve to transport crops during harvest time and for families' daily short-distance mobility needs (firewood, trading staples...) 2. INNOVATIVE FINANCING FOR FARMERS. We offer to farmers' several affordable finance solutions: single or dual family ownership cash-and-carry, barter exchange vs. staples or leasing backed by a revolving loan fund. We start by holding promotional days in villages so that farmers/families can acquire carts. We use a village group buy-in model: only upon a substantial number of farmers' interest secured either to acquire carts or trade willingness do we open a 'mobility and agro-products collection center' 3. FARMERS GET A NEW MARKET. Farmers are part of a de facto, non-formalized farm club and a lead farmer aggregates food produce (his kitchen space or house yard acts as the collection center). Farmers know our pricing offer a day earlier and convey the quantity of produce they are willing to sell this day. Trucks then transport produce to our temporary urban markets 4. FARMERS GET A NEW MARKET. We act as a "hub" trader of crops. (i) we use daily deal-of-the-day SMS to offer discounted prices of crops to women vendors who can pass some of it to consumers and reduce drastically commuting time with proximity wholesale markets (i) we use refrigerated carts to sell packaged fruits/vegetables in middle to high income urban areas 5. We weave a country-wide network of mobility and collection centers

#### Sustainability

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

Competitors include middlemen, traders as well as other direct/indirect competitors in the rural mobility (local manufacturers of bicycles) and agric extension services (govmt extension workers and NGOs). While concentrating on one aspect of the value chain; Vivus has designed an inclusive and integrated supply chain. By doing so, we are able to pool the use of carts not only to collect crops; provide rural cargo mobility services and in collecting agro-residues in the near term. Our IT deployment is unique. Mobility providers will be partners (manufacturing carts for us carts on top of bicycles) and we will leverage the trust capital of agric extension providers to roll out our village centers. Women vendors will self-appropriate our technology and severely limit the resistance of traders

#### Team

#### **Founding Story**

7 years in the non-profit sector and I felt it was time to look at for-profit ventures. Upon returning from India, my then new found vegetarianism met frustration with high prices of vegetables and repeated power cuts led me to discover and question why agro-waste wasn't valorized. An AHA! moment occurred when realizing that farmers originated both crops and waste; so a common and innovative value chain could serve both issues. Hundreds of stakeholder interviews and an earlier pilot project led to this operating model.

#### About You

#### **Organization:**

Vivus

#### About You

#### **First Name**

Richard

#### **Last Name**

Seshie

#### **Twitter URL**

#### **Facebook URL**

<http://www.facebook.com/vivusghana>

#### About Your Organization

#### **Organization Name**

Vivus

#### **Organization Country**

, GA, Accra

#### **Country where this project is creating social impact**

, GA, Accra

#### **Age of Innovator**

18-34

#### **Gender of Innovator**

Male

#### **How long has your organization been operating?**

1-5 years

#### **Has the organization received awards or honors? Please tell us about them**

-Vivus is the winner of the UNDP-UNEP-IUCN Seed Award Initiative Award 2011, one of the 35 most promising social and environmental start-ups in the developing world

-Vivus is a winner (3rd prize) of the Fidelity Future Impact Prize held as part of the Partnering for Global Impact Conference 2012 in Switzerland  
-Vivus and its founder Richard Seshie has been inducted to the Yoxi Atlas, a global database of the hottest, most promising entrepreneurs and change makers. Richard was also featured as a Social Innovation Rock star. Yoxi is founded by the co-creator of American Idol  
-Vivus was a semi-finalist at the CTI-PFAN Clean Energy Africa Financing Forum 2012 in South Africa  
-Richard Seshie was selected as an Echoing Green Finalist

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

##### How long have you been in operation?

Operating for 1-5 years

##### Which of the following best describes the barrier(s) your innovation addresses? Choose up to two

Cost, Transparency.

#### Social Impact

##### What solution(s) does your initiative address to better the lives of girls and women by leveraging technology? (select all applicable)

Access to technology, Access to economic opportunity.

##### What has been the impact of your solution to date?

We run an earlier pilot project, albeit on a different operation model (did not use the SMS system) whereby we engaged a dozen women vendors. Social impact metrics were not available. The insights from this pilot have tremendously fed the new operating model.

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

Within the next 5 years, 20,000 women vendors benefit from a 10% increased income through our "deal-of-the-day" SMS service and other social benefits; 40,000 food crop farmers (the majority being women) receive 20-30% more for their crops as "efficiency revenue share"; 1 million rural households achieve 3 to 4 times more efficiency in load collection by enjoying our cargo mobility solutions.

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

Middle-men resistance will be won over by the appropriation/self-use of the SMS system by women vendors themselves and our proximity, temporal wholesale markets fall out of their traditional geographic sphere of influence

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

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

###### Task 1

Establish the first Rural Collection and Mobility Center in the Ashanti region of Ghana

###### Task 2

Customize to a specific SMS and CRM solution

###### Task 3

Fully roll-out our operations

##### Now think bigger! Identify your 12-month impact milestone

We engage 53 women vendors, empower farmers with 165 carts and source 1185 tons of crops during our first 12 months of operation

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

###### Task 1

Establish the first Rural Collection and Mobility Center in the Ashanti region of Ghana

###### Task 2

Customize to a specific SMS and CRM solution

###### Task 3

Fully roll-out our operations

#### Sustainability

##### Tell us about your partnerships

(IT Partner) A US-based IT solutions social enterprise harnesses cloud- and mobile-technology to improve the monitoring, evaluation, and management systems of social service organizations.

(Manufacturer) The Ghana Bamboo Bikes Initiative will be the local manufacturer of push and bicycle carts  
(Knowledge Partners) An Indian-based successful agricultural trading social enterprise and a local agricultural research organization are providing market insights and technical assistance to roll-out our operations

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

Apart from looking for grants, Vivus has recently launched a seed funding round. We are also always looking at expanding the team with volunteers. And we are finally looking for an expert to provide support in identifying the suitable locations of our village centers and cart vending points

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**Source URL:** <https://www.changemakers.com/girltech/entries/deal-day-sms-street-food-women-vendors-ghana#comment-0>