

Teens Rising To End Extreme Poverty : An Innovative Social Entrepreneurship Program For Teens

Salinas Santa Cruz



Carmel Jud



Year Founded:

2002

Organization type:

nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector

Project Stage:

Scaling

Budget:

\$250,000 - \$500,000

Website:

<http://www.risinginternational.org>

Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/RisingIntl>

Facebook:

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



- [At risk youth](#)
- [Conscious consumerism](#)
- [Economic development](#)
- [Women's issues](#)
- [Social enterprise](#)

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

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

Rising International trains local women and teens to be social entrepreneurs by running their own Rising home party businesses. Parties feature education about the plight of women worldwide and create a marketplace for beautiful crafts handmade by women survivors of war, rape and human trafficking.

WHAT IF - Inspiration: Write one sentence that describes a way that your project dares to ask, "WHAT IF?"

What if women and teens worldwide could lift themselves out of extreme poverty?

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

The problem is extreme poverty locally and globally. Locally, single mothers, many of whom are teens, fall victim to the highest poverty rates. This problem is exacerbated by the growing lack of economic mobility for the poor in Northern California. Globally, over 1 billion people are trying to live on less than \$1/day. The majority are women who are struggling simply to find a place in the world economy.

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

Rising International is the first non-profit to use the 117 billion dollar direct sales model to solve extreme poverty locally and globally. Here's how it works: Zaina, a rape survivor in eastern DR Congo, makes beautiful aprons but can't find a viable market. Rising purchases her aprons

at a living wage, sustaining Zaina. Rising trains high school student, Tina in East Salinas, to run her own Rising home party business. Tina learns Zaina's story and turns empathy into action. A homeowner in Pebble Beach hosts a Rising party where Tina sells Zaina's crafts. Through her training, Tina is able to educate party attendees about Zaina and others like her, while earning \$28/hr. Party goers are inspired and sign up to host more parties.

Impact: How does it Work

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

Susana completed Rising's program while attending high school. Her training included creating a presentation on global poverty, and selling products made by struggling artisans. After graduating, she decided to continue as a social entrepreneur. Then tragedy struck. Her brother was killed in a drive by shooting. After running just three Rising home parties, she earned enough money to help move her family to a safer neighborhood. She did much more than just keep her family safe. Products sold at those three home parties impacted Fatima in Afghanistan, a widow that makes dolls to sell at Rising Home Parties. Fatima earned enough money selling her dolls to send her children to school. Susana and Fatima empowered each other to rise.

Impact: What is the impact of the work to date? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.

We believe vibrant communities are diverse and inclusive. Every year, over 10,000 Bay Area community members participate in Rising home parties and events. Parties are held in main street homes, mansions, dorms, beauty salons, and tech companies. We've trained over 100 women and teens to be local entrepreneurs. 82% come from low-income backgrounds. 44% are Hispanic, 37% Caucasian with the remaining varied. We believe vibrant communities have an abundance of opportunity. Our local entrepreneurs come to us with little or no previous experience, and earn an average of \$28/hr. selling crafts at home parties. 64% reported expanding their social capital by acting upon a new education or income prospect as a direct result of meeting someone through Rising's home party network. These local entrepreneurs, while rising themselves, are lifting 15,000 women artisans and children out of poverty.

Spread Strategies: Moving forward, what are the main strategies for scaling impact?

We will train over 200 Bay Area teens to be Rising entrepreneurs, and become part of our Rising America Initiative. We then plan to replicate our program across the US, bridging economic and cultural divides. Our long term vision is to create one of the largest global networks for ending extreme poverty. Avon for example, has 5 million reps selling make up. Now imagine 5 million teen entrepreneurs selling goods made by the poorest women in the world. We accomplish a mass spread of empathy, intelligent and compassionate awareness of each other, and a self sustaining market for millions.

Sustainability

Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution's plan to ensure financial sustainability?

Our direct sales approach uses an established revenue generating model. Direct sales yields more than \$32 billion in sales in the U.S. alone. Over 74% of Americans have purchased goods or services through direct selling. Our strategic plan shows we can be self sustaining once we're holding 9700 parties per year, a conservative goal to an industry norm of several hundred thousand parties per year, and achievable in 5 years or less.

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

Many organizations have committed to ending poverty. However, to the best of our knowledge, there are no other non-profits using the direct sales model to impact poverty both locally and globally. Using this proven and highly successful model means we don't have to waste resources "re-inventing the wheel". In addition, although social entrepreneurship is at all time highs, there's a scarcity of social entrepreneurial training programs for teens. Our training engages youth in solving poverty while gaining business acumen that paves the way to become college or career ready.

Team

Founding Story

I was a teen runaway. Entrepreneurism changed my life. I started my first company at 19. I can't think of a better way to have learned problem solving, self confidence, and the importance of listening to others. I started Rising after hearing about the Taliban imprisonment of Afghan women. I was shocked. I searched everywhere for something I could do about it. I found a project that was supporting widows who were making pillows in a refugee camp. I ordered one. I'll never forget the moment it arrived, traveling oceans and mountains to my home. It was her messenger. I heard her say "I have hopes and dreams. Please don't forget about me." I started holding home parties, sharing stories, selling crafts and mobilizing people to care.

Team

Our executive director has over 20 years of experience running a marketing and advertising firm. Clients included Microsoft, AT&T and Macys. Working advisors: Dean of Strategic Management at MIIS; Attorney with Morrison and Foerster; Researcher at MIT's Poverty Lab; Former CFO of DHL and Visa; HR expert, City of Santa Clara; Several leading experts in direct sales. Several high school and college teachers actively involved as volunteers.

About You

Organization:
Rising International

About You

First Name

Carmel

Last Name

Jud

Twitter URL

<https://twitter.com/RisingIntl>

Facebook URL

<https://www.facebook.com/risinginternational>

About Your Project

Organization Name

Rising International

How long has your organization been operating?

Project

Organization Country

United States, CA, Santa Cruz

Country where this project is creating social impact

United States, CA, Salinas

What awards or honors has the project received?

Funding: How is your project financial supported?

Friends and family, Individuals, Foundations, Businesses, Customers, Other.

Supplemental Information

On which of the following California counties does your project focus its impact? (check all that apply):

San Benito, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Monterey, Other.

How does your idea help cultivate empathy skills to strengthen communities and equip young people to become leaders of change?

"Everyone comes to our high school trying to help us. Rising was the first to tell us we could help others." Said Tina from Alisal High School. Most Rising teen entrepreneurs tell us that they didn't know that they had the power to affect change. Participating in our program gives them a channel for exercising their empathy, and expanding it locally and globally.

Our teen entrepreneurs learn to acknowledge and talk about some of the biggest issues faced by the world today, such as human trafficking and genocide. While many people look the other way, our teens learn to effectively share and act on their passion for the issues that mean the most to them, and ultimately inspire empathy and action in others.

Needs/Others

Need
Offer

Tell us about your partnerships

We've implemented a variety of programs at schools including:
Castilleja Independent School for Girls – Developed a jewelry design workshop that enabled students to co-create a pendant with women rescued from brothels in India
Alisal High School - Developed a youth social entrepreneurial training course
The Harker School – Launched our first student lead Rising Club
UC Santa Cruz - Co-founded the groundbreaking course, Social Change

Challenges

Our primary challenge is the lack of paid staff. Just 2 full time, and 2 part time members oversee the local entrepreneurial program, and the global program in 25 countries. The remainder consists of volunteers and interns. With this grant, we could add more highly skilled staff members including a full time local program director, teen outreach recruiters and training facilitators. In addition, we plan to recruit working business mentors from the home party/direct sales industry. We have a strategic plan to recruit at least 20 seasoned home party professionals in the next year.

Does your project use any of the following approaches to cultivate community members as empathetic and collaborative leaders?

encouraging philanthropy, building leadership skills, storytelling, immersion, collective problem-solving, identifying shared values and differences, instilling courage, enabling action.

Target Age Group(s)

6-12, 13-17, 18-35.

Source URL: <https://www.changemakers.com/packardempathy/entries/teens-rising-end-extreme-poverty>