Creating Social Change Through the Tennis For Africa Cup

Kenya

Liz Odera

Project Summary

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

We have de-mystified tennis, giving poor and privileged children by creating a platform to learn, play and compete with each other fairly.
Your idea

Sport

Tennis

Year the initiative began (yyyy)

1999

YouTube Upload

<object width="425" height="355"><param name="movie" value="http://www.youtube.com/v/mvMHS_89mxQ&rel=1"></param><param name="wmode" value="transparent"></param><embed src="http://www.youtube.com/v/mvMHS_89mxQ&rel=1" type="application/x-shockwave-flash" wmode="transparent" width="425" height="355"></embed></object>

Project URL (include HTTP://)

www.sadili.com and www.tennisafrique.info

Positioning of your initiative on the mosaic diagram:

Which of these barriers is the primary focus of your work?

Stereotyping that excludes

Which of the principles is the primary focus of your work?

Social cohesion

If you believe some other barrier or principle should be included in the mosaic, please describe it and how it would affect the positioning of your initiative in the mosaic:

This field has not been completed

Innovation

What is your signature innovation, your new idea, in one sentence?

We have de-mystified tennis, giving poor and privileged children by creating a platform to learn, play and compete with each other fairly.

Describe your innovation. What makes your idea unique and different than others doing work in the field?

Creating equal opportunity to compete, reducing tension and developing lifelong friendships across economic, religious and racial communities in East Africa through tennis. Tennis is a sport that is often seen as a sport for the rich only, we wished to show that it is a perfect game to build individual character, and well as use the typical tennis social rules of fair play to develop acceptance amongst people who would otherwise never relate in any way. We are able to do this because our location is between both communities and we have developed trust and rapport on both sides, since Sadili Oval opened its doors in 1992.

What are the existing barriers, the biggest problem, your innovation is hoping to address/change?

1. Tension and fear between races and between the rich of Langata and Karen and the poorer community of Kibera (the largest slum in Africa) has meant that children have often never had an opportunity to meet each other.
2. Social separations between tribes, races, and religions (Muslim and Christian)
3. Lack of spaces to play and train for regular and poor children, courts are all restricted to private member clubs
4. High charges for national competitions

Delivery Model: How do you implement your innovation and apply it to the challenge/problem you are addressing?

Providing an opportunity for children to train and compete irrespective of sex, colour, race, and economic level through training camps initially, monthly individual and team competitions that include socially organised fun activities and chance to get a ranking through different levels of tournament series. The Tennis for Africa Cup is open to all children aged between 5 and 18 years both boys and girls as long as they are resident in the African region. While playing together, we provide workshops that emphasise character-building, cultural understanding and environmental leadership. We follow up on how well a child does in school and encourage them do well.

How do you plan to grow your innovation?

1. Registration to participate in the Tennis for Africa, by post or by e-mail. Registration card is US$ 5. Players who cannot afford are given an opportunity to enter free on successful application.
2. Entry to tournaments is free for all players.
3. All players are ranked according to the tournaments that they play in. Tournaments are in different categories depending on the level of play, and age group.
4. Awards take into account the following:
   - Team of the year
   - Sportgirl/Sports boy of the Year Award: top ranked players in each ranking category
   - Education Award – willingness to go to school, top honours in education
   - Peace Award – participation in environmental and peace building activities
Development Award – commitment, improvement, discipline, excitement for the sport and technical ability.

Top ten in each ranking category

Depending on the number of additional available sponsorships, effort is made to reward every player in a small way for participating.

Impact

Provide one sentence describing your impact/intended impact.

So far, we have registered 762 players in our events and 16 tourneys from Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi and Sudan, as well as residents of Europe and USA

What impact has your innovation had to date/or what is your intended impact? Exactly who are the beneficiaries?

1. 14 children were trained in Florida under top coach Bill Murray in Dec 2006
2. 2 children have received scholarships to play college tennis in USA
3. Safari Junior Tennis Camp is the largest camp in East and Central Africa
4. Our centre is the only one of its kind in Africa, with all communities working and playing together and 762 children training every week
5. We now have additional camps and tournaments on Tanzania, Burundi and Uganda
6. We are attracting interested people who wish to sponsor the talented but poor children to school and academy training
7. We have expanded our programme by including graduates of our programme, and have them come back and help provide training, organise fun events, provide peer counselling support while they compete at senior level.

How many people have you served directly?

762 boys and girls aged between 4 years and 22 years. A large majority of them come from the slums and lower income communities of Kibera and the Langata estates.

How many people have you served indirectly?

22 Parents and 137 children who wish to benefit from our programmes through an extension into their schools. This has provided opportunity to bring in our own trained junior/community coaches. These coaches are young men and women (we provide equal opportunity for them to apply) from Kibera, who would never otherwise get a job as they lacked the skills. There are also people who have heard about us and just turn up from their hotels to pay a visit and play with the children (on average, they are 12 per month)

Please list any other measures reflective of the impact of your innovation?

1. Improved interest by the richer communities to help pay school fees to 8 children
2. Willingess by 3 upmarket clubs and two schools to host 4 tournaments
3. Increase in the number of children playing tennis, from an estimated 36 children from 4 schools to 762 children from 54 schools in our network.
4. Banda School are top International School (British Curriculum), while Malezi School are overall national champions since 1999.

What are the main barriers to creating or achieving your impact?

1. Finding easy and fun ways to reduce tension and build trust
2. Persuading and failing to convince the national association to join hands in support. This has effectively locked out some 70 or so children who benefit from joint events
3. Feeding the poor children
4. Providing kitting for the poorer children to avoid them being embarrassed, especially when they travel to play in the upmarket clubs
5. Courts are too few: four courts to train 762 children a week!
6. Balls, String!

Sustainability

How is your initiative financed (or how do you expect your initiative will be financed)?

1. We receive limited donations of racquets, strings and balls
2. The Professional Tennis Registry sponsors 6 tennis events a year
3. We make makeshift boards to work as racquets for teaching the younger players
4. Malezi Foundation pays for some of the recurrent expenditures
5. We run regular coaching sessions during our off-peak hours for those who can afford
6. We run a mother's tournament every quarter, and those who attend brings in donations from friends to buy specific items such as nets.
7. We run special camps and fun events that help raise money
8. We are on GlobalGiving, who have helped put us on the international platform

If known, provide information on your finances and organization.

Full-time paid staff-22; Part-time paid staff -14, Non-paid volunteers-24; Paying Members-1200, Trustees/Board members - 5,
Annual Budget: CURRENT YEAR OPERATING BUDGET $91,097.00
PREVIOUS YEAR OPERATING BUDGET $61,643.00
MAXIMUM OPERATING BUDGET $102,000.00
Funding Source: Foundation grants- 4.9%; In-kind donations – 44.9%; Membership dues – 14.5%; product sales – 31.6%, Rental – 3.9%

What is the potential demand for your innovation?

I has grown and superceded what we originally imagined. There is now pressure for us to expand our network to other parts of East Africa. We
have coined the style and professionalism to an extent that it is possible to raise some survival money. We are now serving an outreach of 5 schools and 3 clubs (that serve 11 other schools), but there are requests for our programme to run in 4 more schools. There is every indication that this programme can continue to expand.

What are the main barriers to financial sustainability?

1. Not enough qualified coaches, need to grow the existing in-house coaching programme
2. Not enough courts, though the spaces to build are available.
3. Limited equipment available locally

---

The Story

What is the origin of this innovation? Tell us your story.

Sadili Oval is an indigenous non-profit making community-driven sports center; one of the few of it's kind in East and Central Africa. It is a project of the Malezi Foundation. Sadili is dedicated to improving the standards of various sports. Facilities include 5 lawn tennis courts, 1 table tennis, mini-athletics track, basketball court, 6-a-side soccer/rugby pitch, 20 m swimming pool, a gymnasium and volleyball court. Sadili Oval is situated in 5 acres, 10 km from the Nairobi City Center, Kenya. The name comes from a Kiswahili word meaning "all round fitness and health". Sadili Oval is winner of the "Spirit Of The Land" Award 2003 from the International Olympic Commission for Sport, Peace and Environment, the G-ForSE Award in 2003 in Japan, and the PTR "Humanitarian of the Year" Award in USA in 2004, the Presidential Commendation Award (HSC) in 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya. Sadili Oval was selected as the model Centre for Excellence for Africa by UNEP in August 2001, when they jointly piloted the Nature and Sports Camps-Kenya project, which has since been included in the worldwide Michezo Campaign by the UN Governing Council in early February 2003. In the last ten years, Sadili has provided over 7000 children in communities in Nairobi (Langata, Upper hill, South B, Nairobi West, South C, Ongata Rongai (a middle-class area) and the adjoining Kibera (a slum area) in Nairobi city) and Kisumu City (Manyatta area - low income area), with an opportunity to aspire, be trained and become environmentally conscious as well as act as role models for other children in their communities. Sadili seeks to recognize the outstanding quality of children by providing education scholarship opportunities for some of the more talented children. The camps provide sport training for selected children and involve them in weekly environmental projects including community cleanup, recycling and tree planting. Sadili Oval also provides technical support to many Community Based Organisations and Sports Associations.

Please provide a personal bio. Note this may be used in Changemakers marketing material.

Dr. Elizabeth Odera is Director and Head Professional at Sadili Oval. She initiated award-winning programmes at Sadili Oval 11 years ago and has continued to run them personally, bringing in various partners including UNEP GSA, France SFD Programme and PTR. She has instilled professional and financial discipline in the projects and often works as a volunteer consultant for UNEP where she has piloted UNEP's Nature and Sports Camps. Her credentials include BEd (Hons), MSc (Human & Medical Parasitology), PhD (Human Immunology), PTR Professional and Sports Medicine Specialist. In 2004, she received the Humanitarian of the Year Award from the Professional Tennis Registry. In 2006, she was awarded the Head of State Commendation from His Excellency Hon. Mwai Kibaki, President of Kenya, for her work in promoting sports amongst underprivileged children, as well as the national teams.

How did you hear about this contest and what is your main incentive to participate? (this is confidential)

We heard about this competition through the Sports for Social Change Network and NIKE. We want to be able to encourage others who wish to make change to know that they must be willing to step out there and be counted. It has been particularly difficult for me as I have personally suffered in changing the face of tennis in this region. I have had to face rejection from my own community and the national association have withdrawn my own children from the national team, and none of the children in the programme that we run are accepted to play for the national association. The wonderful thing is that the community around us have embraced change fully and committed to stay and make Tennis for Africa Cup mean something for them and their children. Our programme has, as a result built real character and independence amongst the children. This is an experience that has been life-changing for all of us, young and old, and it has saved many children. It is a story that must be told.

Affiliation (please list all that apply)


Source URL: https://www.changemakers.com/competition/sports/entries/creating-social-change-through-tennis-africa-cup#comment-0