Bees for Hope: Advancing Local Engagement Against Poverty (A LEAP)

Bopolu, Liberia
Monrovia, Liberia

Edmond Cooper

Year Founded:
2013

Organization type:
hybrid

Project Stage:
Start-Up

Budget:
$1,000 - $10,000

- Health education
- Early childhood development
- Poverty alleviation
- Youth development
- Sustainable agriculture
- Social enterprise

Elevator Pitch

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

Bees for Hope's is a social entrepreneur program in rural Liberia that help local farmers generate income to alleviate poverty, and provide employment for youths. Through beekeeping, communities are empowered, crops pollinated, source of income generation and family nutritious, and health remedies.

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

What if Bees can be use to fight poverty and save lives by empowering rural women and villages to generate income from beekeeping?

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Liberia is in a continuous struggle to reduce poverty within its population, especially for youth and families in rural areas. With more than 65% (2.5 million) of the country’s population living at the national poverty line, a quality standard of living is compromised by hardship that consequently reduces the quality of life. Youth unemployment is at the highest peak. Extreme Poverty has the potential to limit human development and progress.

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

In an effort to bridge this poverty gap, the idea of beekeeping came alive. Bees for Hope's is commitment to establish a social entrepreneur program in rural Liberia to help local farmers generate income to alleviate poverty, and employment for youths. This program seeks to provide local farmers with education and material resources needed for beekeeping as well as learning how to develop a market for honey. By providing a source for rural income generation, youths and villagers can improve their health and standard of living. Early childhood development is essential for developing tomorrow’s leaders that will be capable of contributing to society and through Bopolu Child Development and Care center we are developing Liberia future.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference: include its primary activities.
Our social programs create ripple effects in communities and schools and have long lasting effects on the lives of family members. For example, our educational and recreation social impact program at the Bopolu Children Development and Care Center will provide support for the development of healthy, strong, and happy children that will grow up with high quality education foundation, during the productive hours that their parents are engaged with the project. A sustainable environment and the promotion of the conservation of biodiversity is another trickle-down effect of this social venture. Bees pollinate a third of the world’s crops and beekeeping will help increase crop yield in villages, thus, helping reduce food insecurity.

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

• ECONOMIC IMPACT: Economic empowerment, Youth Employment opportunity, Rural income generation, Natural Honey
• PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT: Honey is a sources of nutrition and traditional healthcare remedy
• EDUCATION IMPACT: Increase in percent of children and girls with higher literacy, Increase in small business and social entrepreneurial literacy, Child Nutrition promotion,
• ENVIRONMENT IMPACT: Sustainable environment and promoting biodiversity conservation, Increase in crops yield, crops pollination

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

In the next 5-10 years, the project will morph into a full fledged business, offering income for farmers, employment for youths, and tons of social impact projects including providing quality primary education for 100's of vulnerable children in rural Liberia. This project has the potential to transform rural farming in Liberia. It will increase crop yield significantly, alleviate poverty and increase sustainability on agriculture as a source of livelihood. Much more importantly, the society will learn to appreciate local solution to solving problems in their communities.

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

One important advantage of the Bees for Hope social impact initiative is that it is sustainable and has the ability to support itself over a long period of time. Unlike other social programs that depend fully on donations, Bees for Hope will be capable of using funds generated from its honey production to initiate social impact projects in partnership with the communities and villages where the initiative takes place.

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

At this point in time no other organization is working over any of the same idea. Since the end of the 14 year civil war in Liberia, there is no organize activities of beekeeping in the country. Local farmers use the traditional methods to harvest honey. This is a new market that is opening up and there is a potential for others to join in, but what is very special about our Bees for Hope business plan is that it is a social business with social impact focus and not profit making. Appropriate beekeeping is sustainable activity, as it requires little cost inputs and little space.

Team

Bees for Hope is an idea that I have been thinking about since 2013, when I was selected, based on my social innovation commitment that focuses on social impact, to participate in the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGIU) in St. Louis, USA. At the conference I made a commitment to establish a social entrepreneur program in rural Liberia to help local farmers alleviate poverty, and improve their health and quality of life, without causing harm to the environment, by becoming involved in the simple act of beekeeping. I branded my commitment Bees for Hope because many people in Liberia can be characterized as prisoners of hope as a result of a fourteen-year civil war (1990—2003) that ravaged their livelihood, a chance at a good education

Organization:
Bees for Hope
About You
First Name
Edmond
Last Name
Cooper
Twitter URL
Facebook URL
https://www.facebook.com/ezcooper

About Your Project
Organization Name
Bees for Hope
How long has your organization been operating?
Impact - Reach: How many people did your project directly engage in programmatic activities in the last year?

Do you have separate programs or initiatives that target the following types of populations?
- Job Creation
- Entrepreneurship
- Training/Skill Development
- Rural Economies

Intervention Focus: Identify which of the following best explain key parts of your solution

- 6-12
- 13-17

As a major step in the right direction, youths have to be empowered using innovation and local engagements. In order for Liberia to rise from the ashes of the bloody civil conflict and maintain the fragile peace, it is uncontestable that poverty must be alleviated. Youth have to be given the opportunity to learn a trade or work for our project and earn income. These youths will have full access to our production facility. These youths will be independent to run their own beekeeping centers with their knowledge obtained from the training or they can work for our project and earn income.

In an effort to bridge this poverty gap, the idea of beekeeping came alive. This program seeks to provide local farmers with education and material resources needed for beekeeping as well as learning how to develop a market for honey. Selected youth organizations will be provided training through a 20% Theory and 80% Practical Approach. Following the training, these groupings will then be supplied the beekeeper starter kits and will have full access to our production facility. These youths will be independent to run their own beekeeping centers with their knowledge obtained from the training or they can work for our project and earn income.

There is a need for a social purpose sustainable business approach in order to unleash these people from poverty and break the circle of handout dependency. There is a need for a social purpose sustainable business approach in order to unleash these people from poverty and break the circle of handout dependency. Bees for Hope is using the land to increase productivity. As an agriculture enterprise beekeeping does not require land ownership or rental, it can be started with equipment and tools that can be sourced locally and in many instances skills and knowledge for such an enterprise are found within local traditions. As a business enterprise it offers not only diverse products, for example honey and wax among others, which can be sold in local market and internationally become an important source of regular income for farm families but can also provide complementary services such as crop pollination. Moreover bee products improve farm family nutrition and can provide for traditional health care remedies.

The major challenge that might hinder the success of the project is raising fund to start the Beekeeping development project. Recently, plans have been put in place to address this challenge. I am speaking with campus organizations and school administrators at Mercer University to establish fund raising activities that will provide funding for my project. I am 2013 graduate of Mercer University in Macon, Georgia USA. During my time at Mercer I was involved in a lot of extra curriculum including the Senior Senator of the Student Government Association and Founder and President of the African Student Association. I can use my influence and relationship with the school to raise funding to support my project.

Funding challenge is a one time challenge. The Bees for Hope project is very sustainable and after the initial investment the project will be able to support itself.

How does your idea help young people create bright futures and improve opportunities for meaningful and long-term careers?

With more than 65% (2.6 million) of the country’s 4 million population living at the national poverty line, a quality standard of living is compromised by hardship that consequently reduces the quality of life. The only thing these 2.6 million people have is the land and themselves and unless these people can increase the productivity of this land, they are doomed.

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In order for Liberia to rise from the ashes of the bloody civil conflict and maintain the fragile peace, it is uncontestable that poverty must be alleviated as a major step in the right direction. Youths have to be empowered using innovation and local engagements.

Target Age Group(s): What age group(s) do(es) your solution target through it’s programming?

- 6-12, 13-17.

Intervention Focus: Identify which of the following best explain key parts of your solution

- Job Creation
- Entrepreneurship
- Training/Skill Development
- Rural Economies

Do you have separate programs or initiatives that target the following types of populations?

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Applicable - yet! (we are at the idea stage or start-up)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of People Directly Employed by Your Organization</strong></td>
<td>Fewer than 10</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Volunteers</strong></td>
<td>Fewer than 10</td>
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<td><strong>Does your project utilize any of the innovative design principles below?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Create New Industries: recognize opportunities in the marketplace to build new professions or new markets</td>
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<td><strong>Is your project targeted at solving any of the following key barriers?</strong></td>
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<td>Lack of youth empowerment</td>
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