

The Haller Farmers App: Farming the Unfarmable

Kent, United Kingdom
Nairobi, Kenya
Nomusa Taylor-Dube
<http://vimeo.com/110188377>



Year Founded:
2014

Organization type:

hybrid

Project Stage:

Growth

Budget:

\$100,000 - \$250,000

Website:

<http://www.hallerfarmers.org>

Twitter:

<https://www.changemakers.com/%40hallerfarmers>

Facebook:

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

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Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

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

The Haller Farmers App is an open source web based app helping farmers farm the unfarmable in Kenya. Using video, audio, photos and text in English and Kiswahili rural farmers can access localized, sustainable and verified farmers techniques on their mobile devices for free anywhere, anytime.

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

What if smallholder farmers could farm the unfarmable, transforming barren land into fertile soil where communities and nature thrive?

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Much of the developing world's economy is agriculturally-based but productivity does not match due to poor access to information and widespread inefficiencies. IN KENYA, There are over 5 million smallholder farmers who rely on 5,500 extension workers for all of their information and knowledge (Source: CABI) resulting in slow, inefficient and expensive practices ● Smallholder farmers have limited access to tried and tested best farming techniques

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

Inspired by 50+ years of Dr. Rene Haller's work teaching proven, pioneering, sustainable farming techniques to smallholder farmers, the Haller

App was developed to scale and disseminate agricultural best practice. It is unique in that it uses pictures, text and audio in English and Swahili to empower smallholder farmers with proven, curated knowledge whilst using less than 1 MB of data size.

Awards

GSMA Mobile 360 Cape Town mAgri Presenter 2015

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 Haller App connects key actors via simple mobile technology throughout the Kenyan Agricultural value chains to increase profitability per smallholder farmer, per year. This is achieved by directly linking smallholder farmers, content providers, agribusinesses and financial institutions via a mobile web based platform to address the ongoing barriers faced by small holder farmers through the following objectives: - Facilitate market access for buying and selling of crops, goods & services - Increase farmer productivity through the dissemination of curated, localized agricultural best practices (content) - Growth beyond subsistence farming by providing financial products tailored to the unique needs of Kenyan farmers

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

Watching Patricia plant her plot in rural Kenya, it is amazing to see her reach for her smartphone, not to make a call, but to find step-by-step instructions on what she needs to do to grow more food and make more money. We want all smallholder farmers to have the same opportunity as Patricia. Currently: - 7500 farmers access the app in over 140 countries - 14,500 total user sessions - 90,000 page views - 8 pages per session for over 6 minutes each time The goal is to reach 100,000 users by the end of 2016 to increase their productivity & yields by 15% year on year - ultimately resulting in more money in the pockets of smallholder farmers.

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

With the success and scale of the Haller App an increasing number of local and international financial institutions, content providers and agribusinesses will be able to offer products directly to smallholder farmers via mobile phone. Being the first to market as a integrated platform means existing mAgri & mFinance companies will not only be incentivized to give a provide a stronger offering to their existing clients due to competition but to also use the Platform to access new clients. After the platform scales regionally (250,000 users) , the next step would be to spread across Africa.

Sustainability

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

Revenue Generation: Based on the competitive telecommunications landscape in Kenya, mobile operators have relatively low data & SMS rates in comparison to the rest of the African continent. Accordingly, the monetization of Haller's agricultural content at 100-300KES per end-user, per month is passed on to the marketers, advertisers, government & NGO clients in the agricultural eco-system.

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

Currently there is no direct competition for a platform that integrates 50 years of curated localized agricultural content, financial services tailored to the needs of farmers and agri-input offerings through agribusinesses in Kenya or East Africa. While there is a growing number of mobile phone agri-content providers, financial mobile phone products and agribusiness mobile apps, Haller recognizes the power is in the integration and interplay of various apps hosted on one (Haller) platform, easily accessible and focused on meeting the needs of smallholder farmers.

Team

Founding Story

The Haller Foundation was launched in 2004, inspired by the work of Dr. Rene Haller, UNEP Global Laureate, which promotes environmental regeneration to bring economic security to poor, small-holder farmers living in inhospitable land in Kenya. In 2014, a spin off company was established to scale the foundation's work. The Haller App lead by Nomusa Taylor-Dube is an accessible and intuitive way for smallholder farmers in Kenya and East Africa, to access best practice sustainable farming techniques, verified agricultural input distributors and tailored financial services directly on their mobile phones for free.

Team

Nomusa Taylor-Dube (Daily management, strategic partnerships & business development) Dr. Renee Haller (Agronomist & namesake of the app) Louise Piper (Fundraising) Jo Sheppar- Baron (Content collection & curation) Emma Hooper (Premium content collection & curation) Kelly Trendal (Finance) Sarah Merriman (Social Media) Annabel Hammond (Website) Peter Balazs - Technical (App Developer)

Background

Please confirm how you heard about the Unilever Awards:

Referral

Please confirm your role in the initiative (eg Founder/co-Founder) and your organisational title:

Director of Strategic Partnerships & Haller App Lead for Africa

Which of the 8 UN Global Goals (Sustainable Development Goals) pre-selected for this competition does your solution relate most closely to? [select all that apply]

Leadership and the Unilever Awards

Please provide examples of any previous entrepreneurial initiatives you have pioneered.

I have been involved in the successful scaling of three leading East African startup businesses including: 1) www.msurvey.co.ke (SMS survey tool), 2) eatout.co.ke (largest restaurant guide and reservation engine) and 3) esoko.com (oldest mAgri platform in Africa).

Beyond your existing team, who else are you working with to achieve your objectives, eg partners, advisors, mentors?

Jennifer Wong at Facebook for Internet.org (<https://0.freebasics.com/desktop>) - Sole agricultural content provider for all of Africa on internet.org

Dr. Renne Haller at The Haller Foundation (<http://haller.org.uk/>) - Content collection

Cain Ullah at Red Badger (red-badger.com) - Technical app support

Jonathan Ford at PearlFisher (www.pearlfisher.com/) - Design guidance

Sebastian Wanyamma at the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya (<http://www.kilimo.go.ke/>) - Extension worker supports

Source URL: <https://www.changemakers.com/globalgoals2015/entries/haller-farmers-app>