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Craig Heintzman's New Entry: Internet for people without internet.

Nairobi, KenyaKenya
Craig Heintzman

Year Founded:
2013
Organization type:
for profit
Project Stage:
Established
Budget:
$250,000 - $500,000
Website:
http://arifu.com

[SHARE]

- Employment
- Income generation
- Information & communication technology
- Poverty alleviation

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

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

Arifu is a digital adviser training people for their climb out of poverty. Arifu can teach learners about a wide range of topics such as entrepreneurship, farming, or financial literacy. It's completely free to learners and accessible over any mobile phone, even where there's no internet.

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

What if anyone with a phone could access the knowledge they need to get out of poverty, whether or not they had internet?

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

The deep and pervasive lack of access to information, products, and services experienced by the 4.5 billion people living on less than $8 per day. Most of these people now have access to a mobile phone but they tend to no have internet so are unable to access Web-based services. Meanwhile, large organizations lack ways to effectively engage, teach, and learn from these audiences who are playing increasingly important roles in their value chains.

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

Arifu is a digital adviser training people for their climb out of poverty. Arifu can teach learners about a wide range of topics such as entrepreneurship, farming, or how to access capital. Its content is offered by some of the world's leading organizations who pay to make it widely available because of the impact they can achieve and the data they can capture about learners in their value chains. The best part? It's completely free to learners and available over any mobile phone, even where there's no internet.

Awards

Winner of the Pivot East 2015 Mobile in Society category

Impact: How does it Work

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

We launched our service in Kenya in March 2016 working with a $15bn agribusiness who wanted a more scalable and effective way to deliver

training and inputs to smallholder farmers. We piloted with 5,000 farmers who were actively learning on the Arifu platform. With us, they had access to content we co-created with the agribusiness, drawing from the field of behavioral economics to make the learning more effective. Learners would go 14 messages deep into the content (we have since seen a depth of engagement of 28 messages across our current 41,000 learner base). Our partner's independent M&E found that, compared to a baseline, those who learned with us had 55% higher yield and earned and $187 more per acre!

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

So far we have reached 41,000 low-income learners in Kenya and Tanzania with 11 partners in agriculture and financial services. In addition to the discover that our farming learners were experiencing 55% increase in yield and $187 more per acre, we've also had results back from Tanzania showing that those who interacted with our financial literacy training are on average saving 2x more than those who did not learn on our platform. We have now begun additional partnerships to expand our content offering reaching 1 million people in 2016 and 2 million people by 2017.

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

Continue to partner with great companies operating with shared value and inclusive growth models in countries around the world Make sure it does what we claim and actually helps people get out of poverty Spread beyond interactive SMS to include IVR for low literate populations and Android application for those with smartphones so we can be ubiquitous. Integrate into the SDG agenda as a scalable solution for change.

Sustainability

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

We have a B2B model that positions education as having a strong value proposition to organizations. We charge for: • Partner Services: fee-for-service for content digitization and evaluation • SMS Markup: 20%-50% markup applied to all outgoing SMS • Platform Subscriptions: monthly access and support packages for organizations • Advertising: a range of in-platform advertising Moving forward, we will be integrating 3 additional revenue stre

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

Physical training and traditional media are the most common substitutes to the Arifu offering but the only category that represents a competitive threat is mobile learning tools. Of them, developed market learning platforms like BrightSpace are not suitable for rural, low-income learners. TTC Mobile, eSoko, and EchoMobile are a few of the emerging providers competing for the BoP learning audience and they have set precedence for business models that charge for platform access, outgoing SMS, airtime, and analytics. However, none have captured significant market share.

Team

Founding Story

While working as a Research Assistant at MIT with the inventor of the Web and other ICT4D experts I realized the potential of mobile phones to help solve some of the biggest and oldest problems in society. I needed to know what I could do and what I cared most about so I moved to Zimbabwe to live with a friend who was struggling to support his family and needed help building a microenterprise. Through that process came the idea of Arifu.

Team

1. Craig Heintzman: Founder and CEO. 8 years in ICT4D in Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia. Web Foundation. Research at MIT CSAIL. B.Commerce, B.A. Philosophy from Queen's University. 2. Clement Marini: Software Engineer. 8 years in Software. Chase Bank Mobile Payments. Lipa Na M-Pesa. Tangazoletu. M.Sc from Strathmore. 3. Kevin Audi: Data Architect. IPA. CEGA. Bridge Int'l Academies. B.A. Economics from Berkley. 4. Marisa Conway: Chief Learning Officer. 10 years as educator in Mali, Guinea, Japan, and US. Co-Founded A Place in the Sun Foundation. M.Ed from Harvard.

Background

Please confirm how you heard about the Unilever Awards:

Web

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

Founder and CEO

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]

No Poverty, Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Leadership and the Unilever Awards

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

A transportation microenterprise in Zimbabwe and a $100,000 painting company when I was a kid!

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

Our 11 partners include large telecos, a bank, a global agribusiness, and specialized technical partners focused on financial inclusion, consumer protection, and behavioral economics.

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