Alive & Kicking

Kenya
Martin Barnard

Elevator Pitch

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

Making leather balls in Africa that allow kids to play more sport, create awareness of preventable illnesses and educate kids in the "North."
About You

Location

- Project Street Address
- Project City
- Project Province/State
- Project Postal/Zip Code
- Project Country

Your idea

Sport

Soccer

Year the initiative began (yyyy)

2004

YouTube Upload

Project URL (include HTTP://)

http://aliveandkicking.org.uk

Positioning of your initiative on the mosaic diagram:

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

Few effective tools for personal improvement

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

Include through sport

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?

Making leather balls in Africa that allow kids to play more sport, create awareness of preventable illnesses and educate kids in the "North."

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

The idea of using sport in development is not new. In Africa however, sports based initiatives, and the resultant opportunities for children to participate are limited due to a chronic shortage of balls. Alive & Kicking is addressing these issues by making large numbers of durable, repairable balls from local leather, and donating them to schools, orphanages, refugee camps and street-kids projects, or selling them at cost. All balls are printed with health awareness messages so that in the hands of an experienced peer group leader, the ball can be used to convey essential advice or behavioral messages to both the players and spectators who have turned up for a match. A set of awareness posters featuring top African sports personalities has been developed to supplement the messaging on balls. Alive & Kicking is also capitalizing on the global interest in sport (and the internet) to give children from developed countries an insight to the issues facing their peers in Africa.

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

Many children in Africa, especially those from poorer communities have limited opportunities to participate in organised sport because of the scarcity of balls. It is these same children who are most at risk from preventable diseases such as HIV/Aids and Malaria.

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

More than 120,000 balls have been produced to date at our workshops in Kenya and Zambia, where over 170 staff comprising printers, stitchers, supervisors, stock controllers, accountants, sales people and managers are involved in the ball production operation alone. Finished leather is canvas backed, PU coated and cut into ball panels at commercial tanneries in each country. Panels are printed and stitched at our workshops from where the finished balls are checked, packed and distributed to wherever they are required. Our Health Team is currently creating awareness through Roadshows that use a combination of sporting events, a presentation of awareness posters we have designed in Kenya that feature some of the country’s top sports personalities, and drama. In the two most recent Roadshows, all Form 1 students were given a set of mini-posters to share with their families. We involve youngsters in the “North” by visiting schools and encouraging students to visit our web site.

How do you plan to grow your innovation?

We are planning to expand Alive & Kicking in four areas: geographical; product variation; volume; and health. Having developed the concept in Kenya, we have been replicating it in Zambia since Feb 2007 and are currently starting up in South Africa. In addition to the PU coated leather footballs, netballs and volleyballs we are producing, we have introduced a cheaper uncoated version and developed a ball for the visually impaired. Our current plan to increase the volume of balls produced is to open rural stitching centres. The final area we are looking to expand is our health program. Once suitable partners have been secured, we will bolt resource centres onto the stitching centres. The resource centres will be used to train peer educators, house educational materials, provide a venue for counseling, and perhaps even the administration of basic medicines. The adjacent play grounds will be used as the focal point of community health programmes based on sporting activity.

Impact
Provide one sentence describing your impact/intended impact.

We believe our innovation will allow a kid in Africa to play more sport and raise his/her awareness of how to prevent contracting preventable disease.

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

On the access to balls front, our impacts will be minimal, because although we have distributed over 115,000 balls to date, there are an awful lot of children in Africa! The beneficiaries are mainly African children, although hopefully, kids in the “North” who have read about our work will have been positively affected too. Approximately 70% of the balls will have been distributed to schools, although we additionally target orphanages, refugee camps and street children.

It’s early days to talk about the impacts of our Health Education Work, but so far we’ve interacted directly with 20,000 Kenyan schoolchildren, and provided over 8,000 of them with HIV/AIDS awareness materials which we think they will look at. We might also add that our work has been endorsed by the Kenya Government, Kenya Red Cross and Pepfar to the extent that a full size set of the posters will be displayed in all 4,000 secondary schools in Kenya, potentially impacting on over 2 million children.

How many people have you served directly?

From start up just over 3 years ago, we have made and distributed over 115,000 balls, visited and presented our health awareness programme to over 80 schools, and conducted sports tournaments in 16 Districts. We have recently been asked by the Kenyan Ministry of Education to have our HIV/AIDS awareness posters printed and displayed in all 4,000 secondary schools in Kenya which means we will be directly reaching 2 million children in Kenya alone. During the two most recent roadshows conducted, we have distributed over 8,000 sets of mini-posters. At the Kenya Government’s Ministry of Education’s request, we have created awareness and counseled at the last two National Secondary Schools Sports Association’s Ball Games Championships.

How many people have you served indirectly?

Every ball given to a child will be used by others, and every set of mini-posters will be shown to siblings, parents, extended family and friends. Whole communities come to support teams in tournaments and so will be exposed to the awareness campaign in its entirety. Through the above, we have reached many, and not just children. If we achieve our goal of turning stitching centres into community centres, we will be helping to provide entire communities with access to sport, health information, voluntary counseling and testing, and even simple medical treatment.

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

Roadshows that include sports tournaments provide an ideal opportunity to assess our impact as they combine all aspects of our current work i.e. the distribution of balls with messaging, the posters, the sporting activity itself and the drama. Currently we are using a simple questionnaire attached to the mini-posters to measure the impact of our awareness work. Analysis of the results shows a good understanding the issues presented.

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

The biggest challenge to the initiative is the availability of finished leather. There are not many tanneries in Africa that produce the splits from which balls are made, so guaranteeing a regular supply of quality material in the tanneries that do is always going to be an issue. In countries that don’t produce finished leather, it will have to be imported. Another challenge that has to be faced in some African countries is an official reluctance to talk openly about condom use.

Sustainability

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

For the past 18 months, the ball making operation in Kenya has been self sustaining, although grants from foundations and private individuals amounting to £98,000 were used to fund the feasibility study and raise the necessary start up capital. It must also be appreciated that Jim Cogan, our Founding Trustee, committed months of his time free of charge, and spent a lot of his own money visiting Kenya. A £140,000 DfID grant payable over 3 years through the Business Linkage Challenge Fund has been used since to fund Project Management Costs, and the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation gave 68,000 Swiss Francs to fund the Health Programme. UK Sport and Foundation Grants totalling £65,000 have been used to fund start up in Zambia.

If known, provide information on your finances and organization.

Alive & Kicking Kenya’s budget for 2007 was £ 437,000
Revenue generated in Kenya in 2007 was approximately £ 400,000
Staffing Full-time 170
Staffing Part-time 0
Staffing Voluntary 1

What is the potential demand for your innovation?

The demand for an affordable ball in Africa is almost infinite! How many children want to play sport? How many children want a ball? And no matter how hard we try to design a durable ball, how long will it last given the harsh playing conditions encountered on the continent?

Health education too will always be necessary because there will always be viruses, diseases or sanitation issues that threaten people’s health, especially the young in poorer communities.

What are the main barriers to financial sustainability?

The main challenge to the financial stability of our social enterprise is the continuity of orders. Another is paying for the caliber of professional staff...
The Story

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

The Alive & Kicking concept is the brainchild of Jim Cogan OBE, sadly now deceased. Having spent 35 years addressing social inequalities in Africa, Jim, a teacher by profession with a particular interest in health education, stumbled on a formula for using sport as a development tool. Walking in Iringa, Tanzania one day, he saw a cobbler stitching a leather football by the side of the road. “You make footballs in Tanzania then?” Jim asked. “A few” came the reply. “But the real expertise is in Nairobi. If you’ve got time to go there, look up Moses Akama. He knows all there is about making them.”

Jim had spent hours preparing written material, but was never confident that the essential advice he wanted to impart to young people would ever get to them. He realised during that chance meeting in Iringa that if balls could be made and distributed cheaply in Africa where they’d be cherished, the ball could serve as a conduit for delivering his pamphlet, and even carry his messages.

So Jim went to Nairobi and found Moses who’d been responsible for the quality of all Adidas footballs made in Kenya by Orbit Sports until they’d folded some 10 years previously. Moses assured Jim that given the necessary resources, he could revive the industry he’d worked in for 40 years, giving Jim the confidence to proceed with the initiative and register the charity in UK. The rest is history. Apart from replacing the pamphlet with a set of youth friendly posters, Jim’s Vision has become reality.

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

Martin Barnard is a Chartered Engineer with over 25 years experience of development projects in Africa. Born in London, he got his BSc in Civil Engineering from Surrey University. On arrival in Kenya in 1980, Martin soon made friends in sport by playing league football, club cricket and presenting English football on Kenyan TV. After the 1998 terrorist attack on the US Embassy in Nairobi, Martin initiated a Trust that took ownership for creating and maintaining the August 7th Memorial Park.

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

At the Next Steps Conference in Namibia

Affiliation (please list all that apply)

Sport for Development; UK Sport.

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