Community-based Sustainable Livelihood Project

Nigeria
Hey-Day (Uzo-Uwani Farmers’ Multi-purpose Co-operative Society Limited)

Organization type: nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector
Budget: $10,000 - $50,000
Website: http://twitter.com/heydaynigeria

- Employment
- Food security
- Hunger
- Income generation
- Poverty alleviation
- Rural development
- Technology

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

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

The project targets 22 rural communities with an estimated population of 180,000 people. Rice is their staple diet. But its demand has remained largely unmet. Most villagers cultivate rice on small scale basis but the quality is low due to poor milling facility. This project will establish standard rice milling plant and improve the capacity of these low-income rice farmers.

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

This project targets 22 rural communities in Nigeria with an estimated population of 180,000 people. Rice is the staple diet for women, youths and children in these communities. Consequently, the demand for rice in the area is very high but this demand has remained largely unmet. Most villagers engage in small-scale rice farming. Also, members of Hey-Day (Uzo-Uwani) Farmers’ Multi-purpose Co-operative Society Limited cultivate rice on individual plots and collectively. However, the quality of locally produced rice remains low and laden with stones, foreign bodies and breakages due to the absence of a standard rice milling facility. This has lead to considerable high demand for, and high cost of imported rice in the area. This project aims to establish a standard rice milling plant to boost the quality and quantity of locally produced rice, build the capacity, and improve the standard of living of low-income rice farmers in the area.

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

This project is unique because: 1. It is imbued with potentials to improve the capacity, skill, knowledge and standard of living of rural communities through the engaging of individual low-income rice farmers, rural women, vulnerable youths and children in the 22 project target rural communities as well as the communities itself in collective capacity for productive, income generating, and poverty alleviation purposes. 2. It will strengthen the communities’ economic and food security aspirations, create job opportunities for the jobless; reduce rural to urban migration, the incidence of crime and anti-social behaviors such as prostitution, and promote HIV/AIDS prevention in the communities. 3. It encourages the use of modern technologies such as solar energy to generate power for the plant, rice milling machine, dryer, washing machine, de-stoning machine, weighing scale, and bag sealing machine for solving mankind’s pressing problem of our time such as unemployment, hunger, poverty, food insecurity, diseases and the likes of it. 4. It will inspire change in the communities and make the communities stronger than what it used to be prior to the introduction of the project. This is because it will lower the price of table rice in the communities, help add value to locally produced rice so that it can compete favorably with imported rice in the local and regional markets, and consumption and over-dependence on imported rice will diminish and more and more people will become proud to patronize, purchase and consume locally produced rice instead of imported rice.
The impact of this project includes the following:

1. Improved management capacity, improved rice production, processing, milling and marketing skills, knowledge and capacity for low-income rice farmers in the project target communities.
2. Improved quality of locally produced rice, improved income for families, enhanced job opportunities for the jobless and vulnerable youths, and improved standard of living for rural communities.
3. Improved patronage and consumption of locally produced rice and drastic reduction in the demand for and consumption of imported rice and generally the reduction in the price of table rice in the local and regional market.
4. Improved technical capacity as evidenced in the adoption of modern technologies such as solar energy to generate power for the plant, rice milling machine, dryer, washing machine, de-stoning machine, weighing scale, and bag sealing machine by rural communities for productive and income generating purposes.
5. Better chances of expanding membership of the co-operative society and improving benefits to non-members and the communities at large.
6. Improved documentation of lessons learned right from the take-off of the project, particularly in the implementation of the adoption of better and modern industrial rice milling methods, management, marketing and the implementation of industry best practices for rice processing.
Impact

Actions

The steps being undertaken to ensure the success of the project include but not limited to the holding of regular meetings with all stakeholders; the establishment of a standard rice milling facility that is capable of drastically reducing stones, foreign bodies and breakages in locally produced rice; the provision of technical assistance, 2-day capacity building workshop for low-income rice farmers and extension services to rice farms leading to improved yields; continuous improvement in management, accounting, monitoring and evaluation, the development of long-term expansion and sustained rice milling activities; sustained membership growth and expansion, improved team work amongst low-income rice farmers as well as the co-operative society; the development of strategies for brand promotion, competition and marketing of quality locally produced rice in both local and regional markets. Government policies becoming averse to project activities and failure to co-operate on the part of low-income rice farmers may thwart these efforts.

Results

The expected results of these efforts are umpteen but suffice it to mention but few. First and foremost, within the project target communities, the quantity and quality of locally produced rice, method of rice production, processing, milling and marketing, the skills, knowledge and capacity of low-income rice farmers as well as the co-operative society’s accounting and management capacity will tremendously improve. Secondly, family income, job opportunities and the standard of living of the rural communities will receive a big boost. Thirdly, there will be glaring improvement in the patronage and consumption of locally produced rice and drastic reduction in the demand for and consumption of imported rice and generally the price of table rice in the local and regional market will be lowered. Fourthly, this will engender improved technical capacity as evidenced in the adoption of modern rice milling technologies by these rural communities for productive and income generating purposes.

What will it take for your project to be successful over the next three years? Please address each year separately, if possible.

In our candid opinion, what it will take for this project to be successful over the next 3 years is better discussed at one and the same breath than broken into three parts, one year after the other. This being the case, permit us to say that for this project to achieve the desired success a standard rice milling plant must be established in the project target area. This must be followed by capacity building workshop and the production and distribution of fliers, amongst others, to raise awareness about the project. The project must be prudently managed by a 4-man committee made up of representatives from the Enugu State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture and Extension Services at Uzo-Uwani Local Government Area, Low-income Rice Farmers and the Hey-Day (Uzo-Uwani) Farmers’ Multi-purpose Co-operative Society Limited, represented by its President. The community as well as individual low-income rice farmers in the area must support the project. In addition, the project must utilize volunteers who are students, farmers, extension workers, and professionals. The volunteers must have as their main interest, the serving of the community, not making money or advancing their careers. They must remain open to new ideas and ready to adapt to changing needs of those served by the project. Also, they should think about the project as a means of advancing the fight against hunger, poverty and food insecurity through co-operative enterprise and in the spirit of the Millennium Development Goals, particularly Goal #1. The project must seek and obtain technical advice and assistance as and when the need arise from relevant agencies.

What would prevent your project from being a success?

As we have stated earlier, Government policies becoming averse to project activities and failure to co-operate with and or effectively participate in the project by the project target group, that is, low-income rice farmers may thwart these efforts and prevent this project from becoming successful. Again, it is trite that every good project proposal requires adequate fund, sufficient human and material resources, sound accounting and management procedures, good public and human relations, effective marketing strategies and team work or healthy working relationship amongst project participants to succeed. This project is not different. Therefore, should all, any or a combination of some of these essentials of a successful project proposal become deficient, the success of this project may be marred. Furthermore, lack of participation from the local business community and the relevant government circles to provide support and technical assistance for the project could affect the project negatively. Corrupt political influences and inordinate economic interests of big time rice importers within the country could prevent this project from attaining the desired success.

How many people will your project serve annually?

More than 10,000

What is the average monthly household income in your target community, in US Dollars?

$50 - 100

Does your project seek to have an impact on public policy?

Yes

Sustainability

What stage is your project in?

Operating for less than a year

Is your initiative connected to an established organization?

Yes

If yes, provide organization name.

Hey-Day (Uzo-Uwani) Farmers’ Multi-purpose Co-operative Society Limited

How long has this organization been operating?

More than 5 years

Does your organization have a Board of Directors or an Advisory Board?

Yes
Does your organization have a non-monetary partnerships with NGOs?
Yes

Does your organization have a non-monetary partnerships with businesses?
Yes

Does your organization have a non-monetary partnerships with government?
Yes

Please tell us more about how these partnerships are critical to the success of your innovation.

Partnerships are vital to the success of this project because through co-operation, it becomes possible for people, particularly low-income rice farmers, as in the instant case, to work together successfully, for an individual to help lift another person out of poverty whilst trying to lift himself/herself out of poverty and/or for the members of the co-operative to collectively lift themselves as well as their communities out of poverty through co-operative enterprises. However, co-operation has to be learned through a gradual process for the various individuals to get to know each other very well, gain mutual trust, confidence and above all, learn how exactly a co-operative concern works. Partnerships will facilitate this learning process, and help actualize the long-term goal of the project. What this means is that to alleviate poverty, all hands must be on deck for as a clever saying goes, ‘Working together, we can overcome poverty!’

What are the three most important actions needed to grow your initiative or organization?
The three most important actions needed to grow this project as well as the organization are as follows:
1. Establishment of a standard rice milling plant in the project target area,
2. Capacity building workshop, technical assistance and the production and distribution of fliers to create awareness about the project.
3. Recruitment and training of volunteers.

The Story

What was the defining moment that you led to this innovation?
A recent community needs assessment report on the affected communities, that is, the project target area reveals that:
1. The demand for table rice in the area is very high.
2. The price of table rice in the area is also very high.
3. The demand for imported rice in the area is very high despite the high cost of the product.
4. The demand for locally produced rice in the area is very low despite that its price is very low compared with that of imported rice.

In the search for answers to the “?” posed by this findings, it was found that despite the fact that most villagers engage in small-scale rice farming, and despite that members of Hey-Day (Uzo-Uwani) Farmers’ Multi-purpose Co-operative Society Limited cultivate rice on individual plots and collectively, the quality of locally produced rice in these communities remains low and laden with stones, foreign bodies and breakages due to the absence of a standard rice milling facility. This was responsible for the high demand for, and high cost of imported rice in the area. This project emerged as a solution to the above identified problem(s) of these communities. Consequently, the project aims to establish a standard rice milling plant in the area that is capable of drastically reducing stones, foreign bodies and breakages in locally produced rice. It also aims inter alia to build the capacity of rice farmers, increase the patronage and consumption of locally produced rice by members of the communities and drastically reduce the demand for and consumption of imported rice and generally to reduce the price of table rice in the local and regional market.

Tell us about the social innovator behind this idea.
Mrs. Joy Eze is the social innovator behind this project. Born on the 14th day of June, 1975 in Benin City, Edo State popularly known and called the “Heart Beat of the Nation,” Nigeria Joy is a graduate of Business Administration and Management. A social entrepreneur, she founded the Hey-Day (Uzo-Uwani) Farmers’ Multi-purpose Co-operative Society Limited in 1999 to fight hunger, poverty, diseases, joblessness and food insecurity. Through this outfit, she has empowered many rural women, vulnerable youths and children in her locality. Her hobbies include cooking, reading and peace building.

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