



SIFE Nottingham working with Glad's House



In the summer 2011 SIFE Nottingham ran a project with Glad's House with the aim of lifting some street children and the wider community of Mombasa out of poverty, empowering them through enterprise.

Project Report

Our team consists of six Nottingham students who spent three weeks working with Glad's House in Mombasa from 23rd June to 15th July 2011. Our aim was to empower ex-street children and the wider community of Mombasa through enterprise and improved employment opportunities.

Cyber Café

When we first arrived, the Cyber Café was already a relatively successful business. It is run by Joseph and supervised by Liz who seemed to be doing a good job. Nevertheless, we were able to implement two new main systems to the business.

Firstly, we looked at the accounting part of the Cyber Café. With Joseph, we created a spreadsheet in which he can easily record the cost to each customer of their internet session. The spreadsheet then calculates the total number of customers and the café's takings, per week and per month. This allows Joseph to efficiently and accurately retrieve data regarding numbers of customers and revenue, useful for tracking business performance. The data can also be used to see during which hours or on what days it would be beneficial to keep open the business. On the contrary, the data could be used to see during which



Joseph being shown how to use the revenue spreadsheet

hour(s) business slows; the use of computers could then be limited during these times to save energy.

Another way in which we thought we could improve the business was by increasing the number of returning customers. To try and achieve this, we chose to implement a loyalty card system; for every third visit to the café a customer makes, they are entitled to 20 minutes of free internet usage. We made the cards on the computers and also advertised the offer outside the cyber café with posters. Both Joseph and Liz liked our idea and thought it could really boost their sales.



Glad's House Cyber Café loyalty card and advertisement poster

Results

Using Joseph's new spreadsheet system, we recorded an increase in customers by over 25% in the first week of introducing the loyalty card system.

Jewellery Shop

Our aim was to re-launch the charity's bead (jewellery) shop by establishing long term relationships with hotels or shops to which we would sell the products. We began by re-employing Tom and Makau, the two boys who previously worked with the business. Tom and Makau only work on production so, at the director Bokey's suggestion, we employed a sales director (Jenny) whom we have given a 3 month contract. Jenny was an unemployed Magongo local desperately in need of a new job. Whilst Tom and Makau restarted production, we began pitching to hotels and shops. Jenny joined us so that she could learn to pitch confidently in the future.



Tom showing us how to make crocodile key rings



Makau sorting beads in the new office

We were relatively successful at first with approximately half the hotels we visited showing an interest in the products. However we soon learnt that it would be difficult to compete with other producers as the bead shop's production costs were much higher. This is because of the small scale of production and the (relatively) higher wages of the employees. After a second meeting with each of the interested businesses, we were successful in gaining an order of 80 necklaces and 15 key-rings from one shop. Tom, Makau and Jenny completed the order in a week which generated revenue of 6250 Kenyan shillings for the bead shop (one months' salary for the employees is 6000 KSH). Jenny continues to pitch to hotels to try and find more customers.

Previously stock records were not kept so we taught Jenny to record stock using a ledger book. She now records the type and number of products made each day and any products sold. Jenny also records the amount and price of goods bought to be used in production.

The three employees are also working in a newly built office in the base of Glad's House.

We now aim to export the products to the UK by building relations between shops in the UK and Glad's House bead shop.



Teaching Jenny how to record stock

Results

Three employed in the jewellery shop. A sale of 95 units, relationship with 'Il Covo' -the buyer-established. New office built for the production of the jewellery.

Café

The café is one of Glad's House's newest businesses having opened in January of this year. It is run by Okeke. When we arrived the café was doing well and appeared to be popular amongst the local community. The café also provides food for the street children that attend the charity's 'papassa' activities on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Initially we worked alongside the café staff to see how it was being run and to establish which areas of the business could be improved. The café was due to launch a new menu with new prices at the beginning of the month so we decided to create a written menu which they did not previously have. We made double sided menus with Swahili and English translations and also employed the Glad's House carpenters to make menu stands for the tables.



Okeke hanging fly catchers in the cafe

We noticed that on a busy day, especially when there were many street children to feed, the café quickly ran out of crockery. We therefore decided to buy new stock such as plastic plates, cups and cutlery. The plastic crockery also made it easier to serve the food that was previously served in metal dishes (which became very hot and difficult to carry!). We also decided to fix the café's fly problem by suggesting they use hang up fly catchers which are relatively cheap. These were really effective, significantly reducing the number of flies and creating a more hygienic environment for customers.



New Glad's House Café menu



Showing Okeke how to use the stock and accounting manual

Furthermore, we introduced a new stock and accounting manual as they did not previously record stock or daily takings or spending. We also introduced a receipt book helping to keep a record of what was sold each day. This alongside the new ledger book would make it easier for Okeke to work out what food stock needed to be bought each week.

Results

Café now controls the fly problem. Results regarding profits pending.

Health Sessions

The health sessions took place in the second week of the project in the Glad's House base. Alex began the afternoon with his HIV/AIDS session; Chris delivered a session on malaria and Sara concluded the day with her general health session. Features of the various sessions included games such as hangman to guess key words, group discussions and role plays. We were really happy with both the turnout (around sixty boys from the Coastal Kings football team attended) and participation of our audience. We felt that each session was well-received by the boys who were very keen to contribute to discussions and answer questions as well as asking questions of their own.



Some of the Coastal Kings who attended the health sessions- so many turned up we had to move outside!



Part of Chris' session on malaria



Under 13s song performance as a matter of thanks

Also present for the health sessions were the three Coastal Kings coaches as well as four social workers employed by Glad's House. Through observation and using the teacher's packs (which were designed as a guide to delivering each session) the coaches and social workers will be able to run each session themselves. At the moment they plan to do this once a month for new members of the sports teams.

Results

Health sessions delivered to 60 children. During session children's test scores increased by an average of 20%. Trained 3 coaches and 4 social workers to deliver the sessions.

Business Sessions

During our final week we delivered a business session for the under 17 and senior Coastal Kings and Queens Football teams. We had been asked to give the session as many children finishing education lacked business knowledge necessary for setting up their own business- something that many are interested in doing.

We began with a speaker from Equity Bank's Changamwe branch who introduced the Kings and Queens to the bank and the services it offers. They were given an overview of the use of bank accounts and their benefits. The teams were also introduced to banking for businesses, learning of business loans and how to, and who can apply.

After the speaker, we talked to the teams about the basics of business. We spoke about supply and demand, their place in a market, and their effect on market price. In addition, the teams learnt about innovation and entrepreneurship, and three key areas; the importance of the product, location of where to base a business and capital to finance the initial investment.



Erick from Equity Bank speaking to the teams

Next, the teams split into groups of five or six and were asked to use their initiative and what they had learnt to produce a business idea. The groups presented their ideas to the others and were judged by a panel on product, location and source of finance. There was the possibility of funding for the winning

team if their business idea was viable. All teams produced some excellent ideas varying from selling clothes to selling charcoal. The winning idea was to sell football boots as there is a shortage in the area where many children and young people play football. This group had a meeting with Victoria (Glad's House UK Development Director) where it was decided that sourcing supplies needed to be investigated, especially within Kenya. This was to establish the sustainability of the business without relying on UK supplies. Once information has been gathered, the idea will be reviewed by Victoria and the Glad's House team.



Team with winning business idea of selling football boots

The Equity Bank speaker also offered the teams free 6 hour financial sessions for those interested and a long term relationship has been established between the charity's teams and the bank.

Results

Business session delivered to 30+ members of the Coastal Kings and Queens Football teams. Relationship established between charity and Equity Bank with free financial sessions for those interested. Possible new business idea for Glad's House.



Coastal Kings and Queens teams who attended our business session

Briquette Business

We decided to try and introduce a new business venture to Glad's House at the same time as introducing a new product to the market in Magongo. This was the biomass briquette. These briquettes are a form of renewable energy made from compressed, dried out waste vegetation. Not only are they eco friendly and more efficient than charcoal, but they are also a solution to waste problems in Kenya, reduce the fuel expenditure of anyone who buys the fuel instead of charcoal and act as a solution to deforestation. We were introduced to this idea by Doctor Mike Clifford at Nottingham University who made fuel out of grinded up banana skins and sawdust which was a great success. Due to the rising

charcoal prices in Kenya we felt there would be a high demand for this product if we undercut the price of charcoal. Bokey chose Riziki (Glad's House care taker) to lead up the business. We worked with Riziki for a week teaching him how to make the briquettes and how they work. We had to collect lots of waste materials from around Magongo to test out which briquette worked best. The community were more than happy to help out which was brilliant. We had carpenters saving their sawdust and wood shavings for us, and market stalls saving their waste fruit and vegetable produce. We felt a real buzz in the community, everyone was excited. To increase production we hired a local engineer to build a compressing machine that removes excess moisture from the biomass and moulds the shape of the briquette. This machine saved Riziki a lot of time and made the product look more professional, as well as increasing the efficiency of the fuel.



From top: making handmade briquettes, trying out the new compressor, building the compressor

We decided that the most efficient briquette was made out of five ingredients; banana skins, skuma (kale) stalks, sawdust, clay soil and waste charcoal. We ensured that as many people as possible from the charity had a go at making these briquettes so they understood how they worked, as well as the street children. The next step was to test our chosen briquette in the community. Riziki chose about ten households and gave them a couple of briquettes each. The results were fantastic! On average the briquette burned for one hour; there was little smoke and no smell. One mother claimed "they are better than normal charcoal", and when we asked if she wanted more, she replied, with a big grin on her face, "Yes ... I need it!". Due to these results we decided to quicken production further so we could start selling as soon as possible. We ordered a second machine which grinds up all the materials, instead of Riziki doing it all by hand. This reduced labour time by about 50%.

Production is now in full swing with a further three people being employed – a total of four now working on the briquettes. The team have to make enough briquettes so they are ready to start selling as they will sell in bulk. Due to the briquette being created solely by waste products we will be able to sell the fuel at half the price of charcoal.

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An average income of a Kenyan living in Magongo is about 300 KES (£2) a day, some living on as little at 150 KES (£1) a day. The average family buys one sack of charcoal a week – this costs 1000 KES (£6.70). You can see how being able to buy fuel at half the price could have a dramatic effect on people's lives. Additionally, in the wet season charcoal can be scarce, increasing the price further. We can make our briquettes all year round so scarcity will not be a problem.

We look forward to hearing how the first sales go.



Making briquettes from different combinations of materials



Testing the briquettes

Spreading the knowledge

We recognised that although we want to create profits for Glad's House, the people that Glad's House help could really benefit from making hand-made briquettes themselves. Firstly we decided to teach the Caddies employed by Glad's House who live in Vipingo. Most have families to feed and they often have spare time during low season at the golf club. We taught the nine caddies how to make hand-made briquettes out of waste materials in Vipingo – they loved the idea and plan to sell these to the community in Vipingo. If this business is a success after one month Glad's House have agreed to invest in capital by buying a compressing machine for them. Secondly we decided that a group really in need were the street mamas. They struggle to afford fuel and could benefit greatly from selling the briquettes. We taught five of the mamas how to make the product.



Ronald, a Vipingo caddy, grinding materials to make handmade briquettes



Riziki with one of the street mamas trying out briquette making

Results

Briquette business set up for Glad's House (Magongo). Briquette business set up for Glad's House caddies (Vipingo). Taught 5 street mamas to make their own fuel.

We expect great results from this section of the project and will be collecting them over the next few months.



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