



Papyrus Reeds, Our Future Hope : Kenya

Enhancing community empowerment, economic self-sufficiency and environmental protection through papyrus reed products

Project description

Papyrus Reeds, Our Future Hope is a sustainable enterprise that harvests and processes papyrus reeds and crafts them into high-quality products including baskets, purses, and furniture. The reed waste is used as natural manure.



Business model

The business educates community members in the use of locally-available materials (papyrus reeds) to address their social and economic challenges while conserving the environment at the same time.

Growing conditions for papyrus reeds are maintained by planting tree seedlings and the production waste is reused as manure.

Revenues from the sale of papyrus products go back into the community and are used to provide training in tree nursery management and entrepreneurship.

Scaling up activities in 2011

- Planting of 10,000 trees annually on river banks to protect papyrus reeds growing conditions.
- Develop into a cooperation where the initiative buys papyrus products from communities and provides a market for them.
- Acquire a fast papyrus harvesting and processing machine.

Immediate needs

- Training in entrepreneurship & environmental conservation.
- Environmental conservation support for tree seeds and seedlings.
- Financial support for business to increase production and sale of papyrus products.
- Marketing of the products and market development.





SEED Awards 2010

for entrepreneurship in sustainable development

WINNER

Partnership

- ❶ **Pamoja Women's Group:** Product exhibition, design and monitoring of the product sales and trends.
- ❷ **Rural Disaster Response Programme:** Research, entrepreneurship training and environmental conservation education for the initiative.
- ❸ **Zactech ICT Communication Enterprise:** Develops marketing and communication strategies, and advertising for the initiative.



Social, environmental and economic impacts

Social impact: The initiative will create over 100 job opportunities within one year; provide entrepreneurial skills training to youth, rural women/disadvantaged groups; protect local culture (weaving) and strengthen community engagement in development projects.

Environmental impact: The initiative protects the ecosystem through the supply of tree seedlings to homes, and the planting of 10,000 tree seedlings annually; training and educating the general

public about the impact of establishing tree nurseries; and providing alternative cheap and environmentally-friendly products for residents or the local communities.

Economic impact: The initiative will create stable sources of income for individuals while generating community funding. This will result in increased labour productivity, and investments in environmental research & development, training of employees and community education.

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SEED Partners

SEED is hosted by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Other current partners are the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature); and the governments of Germany, India, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.



About the SEED Initiative

The SEED Initiative identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental entrepreneurs around the globe, entrepreneurs that while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion.

SEED provides these social entrepreneurs with know how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making.

More information: www.seedinit.org

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