

Grameen Foundation – Community Knowledge Worker Initiative

Position: Community Knowledge Worker Project Manager (Regular Project Employee)
Location: Uganda (based in Kampala)
Job Type: 48 month term (minimum 24 months)
Starting Date: November 1st, 2009
Contact: jobs@grameenfoundation.org

About the Community Knowledge Worker Project and the Grameen Foundation

Grameen Foundation's Community Knowledge Worker (CKW) Initiative is building a sustainable business designed to improve the lives of smallholder farmers by improving the information and extension services available to them, and cost-effectively collecting feedback to represent their voices to key stakeholders including government, the private sector and NGOs. The CKW initiative is building a distributed network of CKWs, local leaders who utilize mobile devices to collect and disseminate agricultural information to improve the livelihoods of small-holder farmers. The CKW Initiative extends the reach of centralized expertise through "feet in the field", providing an efficient means to contextualize knowledge, deliver actionable information and collect information about the needs of smallholder farmers. This approach is complementary to existing agricultural outreach programs – with a mobile device as an enabler to deliver services more effectively. We expect that relevant, timely and frequent interactions between CKWs and farmers will increase adoption of best practices, along with crop yields and income.

Since November 2008, funded by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Grameen Foundation (GF) has implemented a Test of Concept in Uganda designed to learn how to identify, recruit, train and support a sustainable network of CKWs. In partnership with the local mobile operator, MTN Uganda, we have built a team, recruited and trained over 40 CKWs, and established relationships with diverse partners, data consumers and a range of agricultural organizations. CKWs completed more than 5,000 surveys and completed more than 14,000 interactions with smallholder farmers over the course of the pilot. The surveys enable agricultural organizations to improve planning with up to date knowledge on crop production trends and provide a channel to better understand and address farmer needs. Smallholder farmers have relied upon information services to improve productivity and increase income, for example by deciding when to plant crops, how to treat pests and diseases and how to ascertain the fair market price for their produce.

In the next phase, the team plans to continue delivering and measuring impact while building a sustainable and scalable model. We seek to achieve sustainability at both the individual CKW level and the CKW organization level through strategic partnerships with data consumers as well as mobile operators. Grameen and its partners aim to scale the CKW network to include at least 4,000 CKWs reaching more than 250,000 farmers, and prove a "portable" model which can be replicated in other regions. We are seeking an executive leader capable of guiding all aspects of the project and ensuring its overall success.

The CKW Project is an initiative of the Grameen Technology Center (part of the Grameen Foundation). The Center focuses on technology that makes microfinance operations more efficient, creates income-generating opportunities for the rural poor and provides poor communities access to information and resources. Our efforts support the Grameen Foundation's mission to enable the poor, and especially the poorest, to create a world without poverty.

Please visit www.grameenfoundation.org and www.applab.org for additional information.

Job Description

Grameen Foundation seeks an executive manager to guide the scaling and sustainability of the CKW initiative. He or she will be directly responsible for the success of the project in Uganda, providing strategic and operational leadership of our efforts. The CKW Project Manager will work closely with a range of partners, manage the local team, guide research, track and report results and guide overall strategy. In this high-profile position he or she will shape the CKW evolution and hold primary accountability for achieving sustainability and scale with the program. He or she will leverage innovative technologies to overcome some of the biggest challenges in reaching smallholder farmers and build creative solutions to increase the incomes of hundreds of thousands of smallholder farmers. *This is an unparalleled leadership opportunity for a dynamic and experienced development professional with a belief in the potential of technology to contribute to rural livelihoods.*

Specific Responsibilities Include:

Develop strategy for building the CKW Model in Uganda

- Deepen relationships, leverage strengths and understand needs of local partners (major mobile operator, agricultural extension organizations, microfinance institutions, content partners, data consumers and others)
- Identify and vet high potential partners and develop deep partnerships that enable us to maximize impact in the lives of smallholder farmers
- Gain deep understanding of complementary initiatives, global trends in information and communication technology in agricultural development and learning from related experiences and incorporate into implementation strategy
- Develop short-, mid- and long-term CKW strategy in Uganda and update regularly based on learning
- Implement approach for achieving sustainability and increase percentage of sustainable funding sources year on year
- Manage key stakeholder relationships with institutions including Ministry of Agriculture, district governments and other entities with a vested interest in project outcomes

Implement with excellence

- Prepare ambitious but achievable project plan for each phase of the project building up to nationwide scaling and development of independent organization within four years
- Actively manage implementation -- problem solving and removing barriers as they arise
- Provide technical subject matter expertise and work closely with partners to ensure effective technical implementation
- Craft effective sensitization, education and field outreach programs to deploy information services in rural areas and reach hundreds of thousands of farmers through CKWs
- Develop creative, efficient and effective training programs

Track and report results

- Clearly define success metrics for each workstream, including building the CKW network, developing mobile applications, and providing data collection services

- Establish transparent and easily accessible reporting framework to measure and communicate progress on a real-time basis (including budget)
- Prepare timely and comprehensive analyses of progress against metrics and milestones, suggest approaches to strengthen applications, business models and network development and draw conclusions about scaling potential and approach
- Develop clear monitoring and evaluation framework with responsibilities for M&E activities embedded in each workstream
- Articulate an approach for incorporating gender and reaching the poorest farmers and develop metrics and a system for tracking progress against those metrics
- Prepare summary updates and reports as needed

Manage local resources and vendors/suppliers

- Prepare RFPs for vendors and suppliers, evaluate responses and manage procurement
- Build, manage, direct and mentor local team in establishing and following diverse workstreams
- Administer sub-grants to local partners to build capacity and support program objectives
- Identify local experts to serve on Steering Committee and Expert Review Board and convene as appropriate

Promote CKW efforts in Africa (local representation)

- Generate awareness about our CKW efforts in Uganda and beyond (as appropriate)
- Represent the CKW Project in Uganda in discussions with a wide range of partners
- Explore opportunities for additional CKW Project implementations in other African countries (pending results of work in Uganda)

Ideal Candidate Profile

Outstanding project management skills

- Experienced and savvy project manager with a proven track record of achievement under a range of challenging situations (ideally in multiple countries)
- Demonstrated experience in managing complex projects (operational and tactical) – with proven ability to work effectively with diverse partners

Strong business leadership abilities

- Strong, innovative and creative problem solver and strategic thinker
- Excellent analytical, communication and interpersonal skills
- An entrepreneurial spirit -- with the ability to think strategically and act tactically
- Comfort with unstructured problems and ability to manage complexities under pressure
- Ability to promote knowledge transfer through strong mentoring and team building skills

Enthusiasm and passion for development work in Uganda and beyond

- Deep understanding of and commitment to development in Africa and agriculture in general
- Enthusiasm for learning from different cultures – eager to build cultural realities into products and project plans

- Belief in the potential to leverage information and communication technology (ICTs) for the benefit of smallholder farmers – preferably with practical experience
- Commitment to building social and gender equity into program design and approach
- Equally comfortable presenting to a room of business executives and discussing needs with villagers sitting on the dirt floor of a rural home
- Passionate about the work of the Grameen Foundation and the importance of technology in poverty alleviation

Qualifications

- Advanced degree in international development, economics, public policy, engineering, business (MBA) or related field
- At least 10 years of project or organizational management – ideally with a leading agricultural organization or top consulting firm
- Experience working in agricultural development in developing countries – ideally in Sub-Saharan Africa
- Experience in information and communication technology (ICTs) preferred
- Fluency in oral and written English is required

Compensation

- Competitive salary with potential for Expat benefits
- Unparalleled opportunity to build creative business models and develop innovative solutions to improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, with the potential for global replication and broad poverty alleviation

Contact

- Applications due by close of business on October 19th, 2009
- Send e-mail to jobs@grameenfoundation.org . Include in the Subject Line: Uganda CKW Lead
- Include resume and brief cover letter explaining why you're interested and what you will bring to the position
- No phone calls please