

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: As soon as possible
Contact: jobs@grameenfoundation.org

About the Community Knowledge Worker Project and the Grameen Foundation

Grameen Foundation is building a social enterprise called the Community Knowledge Worker (CKW) Initiative. This sustainable business is designed to improve the lives of smallholder farmers by improving the information and extension services available to them. Through the same two-way channel established using mobile phone applications, CKW will cost-effectively collect feedback to represent the voices of the farmers to key stakeholders including governments, NGOs and private firms who operate in the agriculture sector. The CKW initiative is building a distributed network of CKWs, local -leaders of grassroots farming organizations who will 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, improving the overall practice of extension in Uganda.

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 built a team, recruited and trained over 40 CKWs, and established relationships with a range of partners, data consumers and agricultural organizations. CKWs completed more than 5,000 surveys and conducted more than 14,000 information exchanges 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 while reducing costs, 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, or where to find a buyer who will give them that price.

In the next phase, the team plans to continue the delivery and measurement of 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 organizations who manage networks of agriculture extension workers already out in the field, data consumers who we will target as the first customers of the CKW information services, and mobile operators. GF and its partners aim to scale the CKW network to include 4,000 CKWs reaching more than 250,000 farmers, and prove a “portable” model which can be replicated in other regions. We are seeking a motivated, dynamic, entrepreneurial, and mission-focused 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 the poor with direct access to critical 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 ongoing demonstration of impact, 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 meaningfully improve rural livelihoods.

Specific Responsibilities include the following:

Develop strategy for building the CKW Model in Uganda

- Develop short-, mid- and long-term CKW strategy in Uganda and update regularly based on feedback and learning
- Own the CKW financial and impact metrics, allocate resources, manage the team and make decisions on the basis of progress against these metrics
- Understand needs, deepen relationships, and leverage strengths and of local partners (major mobile operator, agricultural extension organizations, microfinance institutions, content

partners, data consumers and others) in order to maximize impact in the lives of smallholder farmers.

- Leverage team's knowledge, partner discussions and completed research studies to develop a deep understanding of complementary initiatives, global trends in information and communication technology in agricultural development, and use learning from related experiences to incorporate into implementation strategy
- 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
- Oversee development of effective sensitization, education, field outreach and training programs to deploy information services in rural areas and reach hundreds of thousands of farmers through CKWs

Track and report results

- Clearly define success metrics for each workstream, including building the CKW network, developing mobile applications, providing data collection services, meeting financial sustainability targets, and most importantly, achieving and measuring social impact
- 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
- Oversee development and ongoing use of 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 for HQ, Grantor, etc.

Manage local resources and vendors/suppliers

- Develop or oversee development of RFPs for vendors and suppliers, evaluate responses and manage procurement
- Build, manage, direct and mentor local team in establishing and following complex, diverse, and interrelated 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 general and project management skills

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

Strong business leadership abilities

- Mature and experienced leader
- Strong, innovative and creative problem solver and strategic thinker
- Excellent analytical, communication and interpersonal skills
- High energy and 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, agriculture and the poor
- 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 or negotiating with 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, business (MBA) or related field
- At least 10 years of project or organizational management – ideally with a leading agricultural organization, poverty-focused NGO 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 February 19th, 2010
- 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