

## **A PROFILE OF THE COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE WORKERS' PROJECT**

**Name of project:** Community Knowledge Workers' Initiative

**Donor:** Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

**Implementing organization:** Grameen Foundation

**M&E organization:** Internal Grameen Foundation staff and one external Impact Assessment firm to be hired

**Project start date:** January 2010

**Project end date:** December 2013

**Geographic coverage:** (countries): Uganda

**Status of impact assessment (when are/were baselines to be conducted, what quantitative or qualitative assessments have been done, etc.):**

- Gender needs assessment, participatory wealth ranking and project gender profiling done early to mid 2010 for one district in which the project is operational – Kapchorwa
- Three year M & E architecture including quantitative tools on our in-house technology platform, field qualitative tools and RCT impact assessment in place
- Gender and poverty analysis of information users and usage done on a routine basis off the technology platform
- Qualitative assessment of gender needs, farm systems and community profile to be done by district we roll out in and/or by partner we roll out with
- Baseline for RCT to be conducted mid 2011 and RCT to follow shortly

**To what extent is the project targeted to women?**

Grameen Foundation helps the world's poorest, especially women, improve their lives and escape poverty through access to microfinance and technology. This vision is significantly embedded within the CKW initiative. The project has a target have women comprise 50% of our network of Community Knowledge Workers. We target that 75% of the farmers we reach be poor (living under \$2 a day) with the knowledge that most rural women fall in this category of farmers.

To reach women better, we source and provide agricultural information with the needs of women in mind. For instance, over 50% of our information is on planting cycles of crops, information that is of most interest to women as they do the majority of on-farm labour. That, despite the fact that our usage reports show market information to be the most highly demanded for.

The model itself, that uses neighbours as information intermediaries is favorable to targeting women who may not be able to travel far from home to information telecentres and other agricultural information resources.

**Does this project aim to directly build assets, or would increases in assets be a secondary effect (e.g. project aims to increase incomes, but people might then invest in assets)?**

Project aims to increase incomes

**What kinds of assets might have observable changes (for men or women)?**

- Physical capital (e.g. housing, equipment, cell phones): Cell phones and related accessories like phone charging batteries
- Financial capital (savings, credit, remittances): Savings
- Social capital (e.g. group membership, connections, either within communities or with outsiders): connections with outsiders
- Human capital (e.g. education, skills, health, nutritional status): skills in mobile telephony

**Brief abstract about the project—what is it trying to achieve, what is the strategy being used for integrating gender into project implementation and in M&E/impact evaluation? (max 1 page)**

This project aims to build a network of peer-nominated farmer leaders across Uganda- Community Knowledge Workers (CKWs). These CKWs will use mobile phones to share agricultural information with up to 300,000 smallholder farmers living on less than \$2 a day by 2014. They will also collect information from those farmers for agricultural extension organizations through mobile phone-based surveys. In this two way information loop, farmers benefit two fold. First: they immediately get access to up-to-date and relevant information at the village level about things such as weather, agronomy practices, crop disease prevention, and markets. Second: organizations serving them learn from the surveys about farm conditions in a timely and affordable manner allowing them to improve their services to better meet farmers' needs. Ultimately, this initiative of Grameen Foundation will demonstrate a model that can be scaled to reach millions of smallholder farmers throughout the developing world.

#### **How We Work**

*Farmers in Kapchorwa set 5000/= as a minimum price for chicken when they found out from CKW Search that it goes for 9000/= in Kapchorwa town – Edward Chelengat, CKW Kapchorwa Field*

We form deep partnership with leading NGOs and extension agencies (e.g. World Food Program) and together we recruit, train and support CKWs in remote areas of the country. CKWs are nominated by peers within their communities, on the criteria that they are trusted community leaders with a spirit of service. We also work with expert organizations to build a database of agricultural information that we package so that it is understandable and actionable for rural farmers and can be transmitted over a mobile phone. Then, we build mobile phone applications (software) both for disseminating and collecting information.

Using mobile phones and applications, CKWs access our expert sourced information (on new farming techniques, markets, suppliers etc) and share it with farmers when and where they need it. Because CKWs live and work in the communities they serve, they understand the challenges the farmers in that area face, can put information in context for them and are more available than an agricultural extension agent who may only visit villages sporadically, and often never reaches very rural farmers.

At the same time, this CKW network and the robust technology platform that is

being developed to support it will enable agricultural organizations to compile detailed, up-to-date information on rural areas using location-aware mobile phone-based surveys which dramatically cut the time and cost of data collection, and allow for other advantages like GIS analysis. For example CKWs are working with World Food Program to collect baseline information on the agronomic and post harvest practices and capacity of farmers in Kapchorwa district, Uganda. The information will help WFP to plan how to include Kapchorwa farmers in its Purchase for Progress Initiative.

A combination of frequent one-on-one interactions between CKWs and farmers, and the capacity of mobile technology to accelerate the two way information flow to and from farms has the power to transform the way agriculture extension services are provided, reducing costs and ultimately reaching many more, poorer farmers with better information and services.

#### **Working to Include the Poorest, Especially Women**

To ensure we reach women, in recruiting CKWs we set a 50:50 gender composition of the network. However to date, this target has been very difficult to meet because few women meet the literacy standards essential for one to serve farmers using a mobile phone.

We have also undertaken a farmer registration exercise that captures the gender of each farmer we serve and are therefore able to draw gender analyses routinely to understand what impact we have on women especially the poorest one. With support from the Nike Foundation, we worked with a gender consultant who engendered our results framework, developed project & department gender monitoring tools and trained the project team on gender targeting and monitoring.