

2018 Enactus World Cup - Egypt Finalist - 2nd Place

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You may now begin your presentation. When you hear about a resilient civilization, majestic pharaonic kingdoms, and the great pyramids, Egypt comes to mind. Since the beginning, Egyptians have lived with diverse cultures nurtured around every corner.

What brings these people together are the fertile lands that are nourished by the great Nile. We already know that, right? Now let's take a closer look. Egypt is like a field of flowers, rooting from agriculture and blossoming for the past 5,000 years.

Today, we'll be telling you about a story of a flower that comes from Jasmine Village, a village that's been thriving by exporting jasmine paste and making a mark on the multi-million dollar jasmine oil industry. This industry is important as it contributes to manufacturing medicine, essential oils, and fragrances. Here is a surprising thing.

According to the Egyptian Agricultural Bank, over 52% of the worldwide jasmine production used to be extracted from the jasmines that bloomed in Egypt. But unfortunately, over the past four years, Egypt went from being a top producer of jasmine, which was one of the main sources of our agricultural national income, to producing less than 21%. This isn't the end of the story though.

We knew we could nurture this village and make it blossom once again. In the next 60 minutes, we will be showcasing our team's 11,350 hours of perseverance and effort in order to bring back the resilience of the past and develop Egypt's future. My name is Yahya and joining me today are Dina Minna Abdurrahman Mayyb Ziad And we are Enactus October 6th University, representing Egypt.

A Chinese proverb says, all the flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today. But in Jasmine Village, all the poverty the inhabitants will be suffering tomorrow are because of the seeds they planted. That's why we began the first phase of our needs assessment by traveling over 14,000 kilometers and spending over 3,000 hours with our target audience in order to know which livelihoods they had and which were missing.

This needs assessment consisted of interviews, statistics, business evaluations, and lab tests. During our research, we had a conversation with a local farmer named Mahmoud. He told us how he would wake up every day before dawn and head to the lands with his whole family to pick the flowers.

An entire day's labor could be worth a mere \$1.40 on some days, while on others, they couldn't find anyone to buy these cultivated flowers. Mahmoud explained that he and thousands of other farmers have dwelled in this lifestyle for the past four years. Eventually, they stopped cultivating jasmine and gave up on the inherited business

completely because it neither provided income nor put food on the table for their family.

So, we partnered with the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture to analyze the situation and assess why the village's worldwide ranking among top jasmine exporters dropped. Our research showed that the root cause of the problem was the extensive usage of chemical fertilizers. You see, with the country's recent currency flotation, organic fertilizers became so expensive that these farmers weren't able to make any profit from the daily labor.

Bit by bit, international importers avoided purchasing these chemically infused jasmine flowers because they are weak and they affect the farmers' health. Soon enough, Mahmoud and the thousands of farmers in this community were out of this business. We realized that a sustainable intervention was heavily needed to revive this business and allow the community of Jasmine Village to blossom once again.

That's why we call this intervention Project Blossom. Project Blossom is a three-phase project, each phase complementing the other, yielding multiple technical effective solutions all wrapped up in a sustainable business model. Naturally, we focus on the root of the problem, quite literally, the root.

And by that, we mean the fertilizers absorbed by the root. You see, the chemical fertilizers used by these farmers end up damaging the soil's health, therefore yielding less oil from the flowers, and on the long run, emitting nitrous oxide that damages our ozone layer and making an impact on global warming. That led us to asking an essential question.

How can we produce a cheap, effective, and eco-friendly organic fertilizer that brings costs down and productivity up in order to help these struggling farmers make ends meet? The answer was vermicomposting. This is a container that consists of red earthworms that feed on organic wastes to produce an organic fertilizer known as vermi. Scientifically, vermi has five times more nitrogen seven times more phosphorus and 11 times more potassium than this chemical fertilizer.

Thus, it enhances the plant growth, doubles the flower's oil productivity, and reduces the production of greenhouse gas. Simply speaking, vermi improves the biological, chemical, and physical properties of the soil. Financially, vermi is a once-in-a-lifetime investment as you only purchase one kilogram of earthworms for \$100.

Each kilogram could produce up to one ton of organic fertilizer annually, which is sufficient enough to fertilize one acre of land. Within four weeks, these worms will have duplicated, meaning by the end of the year, we'd have 453 kilograms of earthworms. And you do the math.

So obviously, more earthworms mean more organically fertilized land. Our first action

was to connect the Egyptian Ministry of Agriculture with the Local Farmers Association, which is responsible for all the farmers in the village. Through this partnership, we passed down our entrepreneurship to over 1,500 farmers in the village and gave them technical know-how sessions that introduced them to vermi's production mechanism.

So far, over 152 acres of land have been fertilized using vermi. And what's even better is that the farmers are saving all the money they used to spend on chemical fertilizers, which is equivalent to \$15,000 monthly. Vermi composting proved to be a cost-efficient and suitable method because it's within the resources of the farmers.

And now that we've nourished the root of Jasmine Village's business by maximizing the soil's potential and producing more flowers, we could have stopped just there. But no, a bigger opportunity to accelerate economic growth was looming in the horizon, jasmine oil extraction. We partnered up the Farmers Association with the Faculty of Pharmacy of October 6th University, in which the faculty provided the farmers with an extraction unit to extract the oil from the flowers.

Naturally, we had to test out the oil's purity. So, with the help of our research partners, lab tests conducted showed that the oil is a staggering 74% chemical-free, as opposed to the previously 31%. And the essential components of the oil are within international standards.

Let me just say this, though. This is the very first time in the history of this village that the farmers are extracting the oils for themselves. That enables us for even more growth.

You see, 300 tons of raw jasmines would have been sold for approximately \$200,000. Yet, that same 300 tons could have produced 100 kilograms of oils, which could have been exported for \$500,000. Now, all that's left was finding a distributor.

So, we looked into reopening international trade. And after months of research for international importers, we found Ladinush, a Swiss oil distribution company. And soon after, we were able to sign a renewable contract with them to purchase the extracted jasmine oils from the farmers.

And thus far, Ladinush has purchased 100 kilograms of oils from them. As a result, each farmer will gain a net profit of \$3.5, instead of the mere \$1.40, increasing his monthly income by 250%, which exceeds the Egyptian minimum wage by 85%, taking us one step closer towards the first SDG. This oil extraction unit costs \$15,000, meaning that the return of investment was made from the very first three kilograms sold. What's even surprising is that our jasmine oil has become the cheapest in the international oil market.

And that's true. However, the oil extraction led to about 125 tons of jasmine waste. Naturally, this waste would be burnt, causing a large greenhouse gas output.

That's why the third phase of our project focused on utilizing this waste by feeding it back to the earthworms. Thus, we have reduced harm to the environment and increased the earthworms' productivity, bringing us closer to achieving the 13th SDG, making this a zero waste project and ensuring a cool cycle to our business. And by that, achieving the 12th SDG, putting us on a path towards blossoming and scaling.

Yet, as we know, the key to scalability is sustainability, which is the heart of our business plan and where our project blossoms. And as we worked side by side with the farmers of the village, we understand that ultimately, they are the core of our projects. So the real question was, how can we create more opportunities, not just for a few, but for as many of the inhabitants of the village as possible in order to build a human capital to expand this enterprise? Our answer was to empower all of the family members.

We started by empowering the farmers through managerial and financial enhancement sessions, as well as teaching them green cultivation and greenhouse gas reduction techniques. This helped them become advocates of promoting a greener world, achieving the third SDG. We then assisted 12 of them to get hired by the Farmers Association and to be responsible for the village's oil production, allowing them to keep track of the village's growth and progress.

Despite this, the women and girls in the village still face multiple barriers based on their gender, preventing them from accessing quality education and occupying managerial positions in this business. According to the International Labor Organization, 9.1 million women in Egypt are still illiterate. So we worked on empowering 576 women through literacy classes because we believe that a country's economical growth is raised through educated human capitals.

Their eagerness to learn more and secure a better life for themselves has encouraged us to pass down to them our entrepreneurship and teach them business ethics as well. This not only started mainstreaming the importance of women in this village, but it also helped us put 20 women in managerial positions. They are now responsible for reading and signing the contracts set between the farmers, the community partners and the international oil distributor, taking us one step closer towards fulfilling the fifth SDG, gender equality.

However, during our initial needs assessment, we were led to another disheartening issue. We met Zahra, an eight-year-old girl who worked alongside her parents to pick the flowers. When we dug a little deeper, we found that the European Union reported that the number of employed minors in Egypt jumped to 3.8 million.

That means that right now in Egypt, 3.8 million children are working instead of attending school. Over 11,000 of them in Jasmine village. These children were deprived from their basic right of education and had to work because their parents were financially unstable.

Imagine having no choice but to make your children work, ripping them from the opportunity to live a regular childhood. To put an end to this, we assisted 1,152 children in getting enrolled into a school nearby. We then agreed with the Farmers Association to incentivize the parents to keep their children at school by permitting access to the oil extraction units only to parents that do so.

Thus, fulfilling the fourth SDG. This project is no longer an idea but has evolved into an evident reality that leaves a daily impact on both our inhabitants' lives and our global beneficiaries' lives. That's why this year, our goal was simple yet ambitious to ensure long-term sustainability for this enterprise.

So how do we do it? Simple. We partnered up the Farmers Association with five community partners to support them and an international distributor to continually purchase their product. Additionally, we signed an agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Social Solidarity in order to supervise this project throughout this development.

And now that we've explained the project, how about we tell you about the impact that we've made this year? That's right. Throughout this enterprise, we've expanded our entrepreneurship to 1,536 farmers and expanded their network to promoting their products on a national and international level. We've established one global partnership and five community partners achieving the 17th SDG.

Empowered 576 women and 1,152 children are saved from child labour and alleviated over 7,600 people from poverty. We prevented 125 tons of waste from being burnt and decreased 152 acres of land from emitting nitrous oxide through converting it to organic fertiliser. And 1,536 families are given access to products and practices that promote health and are able to access consumer goods.

We saved over \$188,000 by using Vermi and generated a total revenue of over \$688,000 just this year. Now based on our business model, within two years, over 1,100 acres of land will turn to using organic fertilisers and not just that, over \$2 million will be generated in revenue from this project. This expansion has allowed us to create a franchise model and plant the seeds of this enterprise in 27 villages in Egypt that were directly impacting an estimated amount of 30,000 farmers.

This project may have started in Jasmine Village alone, but how we see it, Egypt is getting back to sharing its blessings with the world. This year, we worked on achieving nine SDGs, directly impacting 7,680 people and indirectly impacting 23,550 people, changing a total of 31,230 lives. We believe that the biggest achievements of sustainable development have come from working with ordinary people in extraordinary ways, believing in the impact that can be achieved when the disempowered are given the opportunity to support themselves and become change makers for the better.

As a renowned Nobel Prize winner said, social entrepreneurs are not just content to give a fish or to teach how to fish, but they will not rest until they have revolutionized the entire fishing industry. For yesterday, we were just ambitious college students, but today, we are a proud change maker. We are Enactus Egypt.

Thank you, Egypt. Judges, you may now begin the question and answer period. Thank you.

Thank you very much for this impressive project. One question. The farmers taking over this business is very critical to the sustainability.

What did you do to enable the farmers to run this business professionally in terms of educating them in technological and business know-how and abilities? Thank you so much for your question. We started by passing down our entrepreneurship to the farmers and teaching them green cultivation, as well as financial business models in order to enhance their revenue. Then the sustainability we established through an international partnership we did with a Swiss company named Ladanish in order to annually purchase the cultivated jasmines.

I hope this answer satisfies your question. Hello. Two questions.

One, it is an incredibly impressive project. Do you actually do all this in one year? I must say the needs assessment has started before because you've achieved an awful lot. Was it all one year? Second question is that you said you traveled, I think, 11,000 kilometers just for the needs assessment.

Now, to do all the subsequent work, that must have been thousands of thousands of kilometers. Is that right? Yes. Thank you for your question.

All the impact was established in one year. The project itself started during the academic year. Yes, we traveled this amount of kilometers in order to reach our target audience and do the needs assessment with them as we spent thousands of hours with them in order to analyze their situation and build our needs assessment on a solid platform.

Thank you, and I hope this satisfies your question. Congratulations. Can you just give us a very quick breakdown of your \$688,000 in revenue and how you got to that number? Thank you for your question.

The oil, each kilogram of oil is sold for \$5,000, which is the cheapest price internationally. So we extracted and sold 500 kilograms, which is equivalent to 100 kilograms, sorry, which is equivalent to \$500,000. And then the \$15,000 were generated from selling the continuous and growing amount of vermi annually.

I hope this answer satisfies your question. Great presentation. My question is, who's going to duplicate your project to the 27 other villages? Thank you for your question.

We started establishing a franchise model, and in order to ensure its effectiveness, we built it on the Triple B, partnering with the private sector, partnering with the public sector and partnerships for the goals, which is the 17th LDC. So we partnered with three Egyptian ministries, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Social Solidarity and Ministry of Environment in order to build an effective franchise model in 27 different villages in Egypt and the Swiss company, exporting company, in order to purchase the cultivated flowers annually to ensure the annual revenue. Thank you for your question.

I hope this satisfies your question. Thank you. I understand the increase in revenue from the oil.

Are the costs that it's taken in order for the labor to do that included in this document? The written number is the net profit. The cost breakdown is as following. We spent \$100 on purchasing the first kilogram of vermi of the earthworms, red earthworms, and then another \$100 in order to purchase the incubator itself, and then \$15,000 in order to purchase the distillation unit.

Our fundraising team gathered this amount of money in order to purchase the distillation unit, as well as fund provided by our faculty at pharmacy at October 6th University. And then the ROI and the break even point was established when we sold the first three kilograms of oil. I understand that.

But the question is around labor. A farmer who farms and now you're asking him to also produce oil, cannot do both of them at the same time. Is that included in the cost? OK, I'll pass down the question to my fellow here in order to answer.

Thank you for your question. I believe you are considering we're talking about the income of the farmers. As we've mentioned before, the farmers have increased their income towards towards at least over 50 to 200, 250 percent from their previous income.

That specific increase includes their work in extracting the oil. The question and answer time has expired. Judges, please join me in thanking the team from Egypt, October 6th University.

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