

Economic Empowerment of Rural Women: Snail Farming



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AYPAD Snail Farm Project Proposal 2018

Summary

Many African women are faced with a heavy burden as a result of still existing patriarchal structures, some deeply rooted in cultural traditions, others more recently introduced by colonial practices. Especially in rural areas, it is not uncommon to meet an African woman who rises long before the sun to cook for her family, walks miles to collect water, cleans the household, spends the afternoon farming to feed her family or raise money, stopping only to prepare the evening meal, and all that with a baby strapped to her back. This is not to say that African men are not hard working, but unlike their female counterparts, they are awarded the privilege of putting their feet up.

Tackling patriarchy in Africa will require a multipronged strategy that involves economic and psychological emancipation for women, and education of society as a whole about the value and strength a society gains when its women are given equal status to its men. Africa Youth for Peace and Development created the snail farm project in Ghana to assist women, mostly commercial sex workers, single mothers and local farmers in raising the large snails, thus empowering them with economic opportunity and access to education. As they raise our next generation of leaders and creators, we see it as paramount that women have space to become leaders and creators in their own right.

This project will also help create a sustainable supply of the highly sought-after snail in the Ghanaian market. Due to its high nutritional value, snails have become a very popular delicacy. Snail meat is very rich in calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, selenium, vitamin E as well as vitamin C. Presently the consumption level of snails by Ghanaians is over 15,000 tonnes, however not even a quarter emanates from the country, about 13,000 comes from neighbouring Cote d'Ivoire.¹

Virtually every part of snail is of vital use in food, pharmaceutical industry, manufacturing and fishing industries. Our farm aims to sell three products: snail meat, snail shells and snail slime, with emphasis initially on the meat. Ghanaian

climate is one of the best for snail breeding as it is the natural habitat of the Giant African Land Snail. Snail farming in Africa requires small capital and the running cost is very low. It is a clean animal to raise and it requires very little time daily.

Our short-term goal is carrying out improvements to the existing commercial snail farm, such as securing and increasing the number of breeding and growing pens. The long term goal is to create a large enough farm capable of sustaining itself and supporting dozens of women, empowering them to become self-sufficient entrepreneurs.

About Us and Our Team

Africa Youth for Peace and Development (AYPAD) was established on 24th October 1995 in Sierra Leone and registered as a non-profit charity in the Government of Sierra Leone in 2000 by holding a United Nations Economic and Social accredited Status. AYPAD begun when a group of seven young men who had happened to see the harsh reality that is being experienced in the entire continent as a consequence of war and the following violence galore, decided to do something about it. They founded AYPAD with the vision of continental integration for peace and development for youths.

AYPAD believes in establishing opportunities for young people in Africa through our multifaceted development programs that enables peace, sustainable development, and social integration. Our goal as a non-profit charity is to create opportunities, enable and empower particularly disadvantaged young people, and the marginalized whose lives are constantly under threat because of their deprived economic and social situation.

Our organization works with young people facing difficult circumstances around Africa and provides them with direct or indirect employment, education and sustainable livelihood programs through our multi faced development approach.

Our Mission

Advocate and Campaign

We advocate for civic education and literacy programs for youth and campaign against gender based violence, child labor and human trafficking.

Provide Solutions

We seek lasting solutions for peace, unity and development among youth in Africa and the rest of the world.

Dignity and Engagement

We promote dignity and enhancement of cultural heritage as well as engaging in the war against hunger programs.

Our Vision

AYPAD is committed to ensuring peace and development among youth around Africa through enabling empowerment activities such as, capacity building and leadership training, formal and non-formal education, social soft skills activities, environmental health, IT skills and sporting activities.

Creative

We seek to promote a Creative Economy as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by inspiring social change and encouraging creative self-expression via sustainable livelihoods as a way to raise women empowerment and awareness on gender equality.

Innovative

AYPAD is seeking innovative ways to accelerate empowerment of the youth and women by providing a multi-faced approach, which includes farming, education, entrepreneurship and access to information and communication technology.

Informative

We think knowledge is key to development; this is why AYPAD has conducted studies to attain a better understanding of the socio-economic and well-being conditions of young people and women in Africa. We rely on case studies and look forward to influencing local government and international partners in the need of planning and implementation of integrated development programs.

Snail Farm Project



Problem Statement

We believe that the best path towards lasting success for anyone is through economic opportunity. Often times women are not afforded with the same opportunities as men, relegating them to menial or degrading ways to raise money. They often experience great difficulty buying or renting land, finding good jobs, and accessing financing. By providing work they can be proud of, we will not only be increasing the money they have to buy food, shelter,

and pay for school fees, but we will be empowering a new generation of entrepreneurs. These women will be able to maintain their traditional family responsibilities, earn extra income, educate themselves and become positive role models of success for their families and their communities.

Solution

Alleviate poverty and malnutrition, and provide economic opportunity and education through a sustainable farming program by empowering at-risk women in Ghana.

Target Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries will be 15-30 women selected from a pool of applicants. Single mothers, sex workers and other women in vulnerable situation will be our priority. As the main activity is food production, the children of these women must be included among the direct beneficiaries as snail meat is highly nutritious. The additional income will also help pay for the children to attend or stay in school.

Location

Boyshe is a suburban area of Accra, capital city of Ghana. It is a new community that is currently undergoing infrastructure development. Due to the vast agricultural land located in the community, 60% of the inhabitants are into farming. 25% are also small scale business owners who have their own shops and sell basic products needed by the inhabitants. It holds about 4000-5000 people. There is currently no school in Boshye nor pure-bond potable drinking water.

The location is the perfect launch point for this project. The Ghanaian climate is the natural habitat for the Giant African Land Snail, so maintaining proper conditions is very easy. The snail market in Ghana is quite large but the supply of snails, mostly gathered from the jungle during the rainy season, is becoming overharvested and very scarce in the dry season. The scarcity then leads to inflated prices which most people can't afford, taking an essential source of healthy protein

out of their diets.

Structure of the program

AYPAD Training Farm will be the key location where the snails are breed and raised. This will also be the training grounds for the women served by the program. Women will be recruited in groups of 5 to come in for about 30 minutes every day for the first few months to learn about snails, clean the pens, feed the snails, etc. Once the hatchlings are mature enough, around 3 to 6 months old, the women will each be given a small batch to bring home and raise to maturity.

The women will continue to come to the Training Farm once a week to make sure they are maintaining proper techniques and to assist with the work on the farm. Each week there will be a new topic of additional training on entrepreneurial skills, managing people, and how to market and sell.

When the snails are large enough to sell, AYPAD will buy them back in order to sell to the market efficiently. Keeping a large and consistent supply of snails all year means that AYPAD can help the farmers maximize their income by selling the snails when it is most

advantageous, but also providing the individual farmers with consistent income throughout the year.

Goals

- Empower women with economic opportunity and additional income;
- Offer education on high value farming techniques to maximize return on investment;
- Teach financial responsibility and entrepreneurial skills;

- Enable the women to start their own small enterprises that could employ and educate increasingly more women;
- Build relationships with suppliers and customers that fosters peace and community development;
- Cultivate a sustainable supply of low cost meat to promote healthy diets;
- Protect the natural snail population from over-harvesting;
- Contribute to the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Cooperation with other organizations

The plan will only be realized with the help of donors. We have already run a test farm raising snails to make sure that it is a viable operation and we have recruited an initial group of 5 women to begin training and working on the AYPAD Training Farm. We will need to expand on the success of the trial and increase the size of the farm in order to launch the program.

Sustainability

We view sustainability from a program level and as it relates to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Financial sustainability is one of our main priorities. In order to make a lasting impact, this project needs to continue expanding for years to come. The snail farm plans to be self sufficient within the first year of operation, not relying on annual donations to keep running. Once the initial funds are raised to establish the farm, it will be run like a business. AYPAD is a non-profit organization, so any profit will be reinvested in the program allowing us to recruit, train and empower more women. This means that costs will be carefully monitored and there will be continual market research performed to ensure we can sell the mature snails for a profit. With increased size the organization can run more efficiently, reducing costs even further and putting more income into the hands of the women we are working to support. In order to grow quicker or expand to other cities, it may be necessary from time to time to

seek additional funding, but it will be the goal of each farm to run operations sustainably.

The program will also be run with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in mind. It will contribute to the achievement of at least 5 of the 17 goals. Goal #1 No Poverty. Women in this program will have an opportunity to increase their daily income, which will give them access to additional essential resources needed to fight poverty. Goal #2 No Hunger. The program will help end hunger by increasing access to highly nutritious protein without straining the environmental resources of the natural snail production by overharvesting. Goal #5 Gender Equality. By focusing on women, this program will be building a foundation of peace and prosperity in them and their future generations. Goal #8 Decent Work and Economic Growth. The snail project offers women an opportunity to increase their income without disrupting their other responsibilities. Through financial sustainability, the program will continue to increase the number of women and families that are served, and the more entrepreneurial women may choose to start their own businesses, further increasing the number of people employed and empowered. Goal #12 Responsible Production and Consumption. Raising the snails locally will reduce the environmental impact of transporting food and raising them in their natural habitat minimizes the inputs necessary in their production, reducing the carbon footprint even further.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The supervision will be done daily by the instructor, and reports regarding the women improvement will be sent every two weeks to the headquarters. Monthly reports can be sent to the donor organization in order to monitor the improvement, as well as financial reports. Regarding the success of the project will be evaluated through the amount of the snails breed, number of women fully employed in the main farm, number of snails farmed and the number of buyers we get.

Budget

Estimated for two years

Phase 1 – Fixing the existing pen and hutches

Item	Description	Amount (€)
Materials and Labor	Secure the pen and hutches to protect from sun, predators, and thieves	€300
Equipment	To be used for the daily care of the snails, shovels, scales, etc	€50
Breeding Snails	Stock the initial pens with snails, some can be gathered from the wild others will need to be purchased.	€100
Total		€450

Phase 2 – Maintaining the farm (per year)

Item	Description	Amount (€)
Farm Manager	Yearly income. We will need to pay the farm manager to handle the day to day.	€600
Snail Food	Snails can eat table scraps but as we grow we will have to purchase food from the market until we can grow our own. Annual cost.	€350
Farm Maintenance	Clean soil, calcium supplements, pen, maintenance	€200
Total		€1150

Phase 3 – Market snails and recruit more woman

Item	Description	Amount (€)
Market Snails	Need cash on hand to buy mature snails from woman before we can sell them in the market.	€1000
Equipment	To be used for the daily care of the snails, shovels, scales, etc.	€50
Hutches	Materials to build new hutches for new group of 5 women so they can raise hatchlings from home.	€300
Total		€1350

Phase 4 – Expansion of the farm

Item	Description	Amount (€)
Buy Land	With dedicated land we will be able to increase the number of pens, snails, and grow our own food.	€10000
Build Pens	6 large grower pens, water, and pipes	€1900
Building Structure	Basic building to secure and protect the snails	€4500
Total		€16400
Grand Total		€19350

Timeline

Phase 1

December 1st, 2017 - February 28th, 2018

Application Process

- Reestablish AYPAD Training Farm
- Recruit pilot group of women
- Apply for Funding
- Establish community relationships

Relationships have been established and a group of 5 women has been recruited to be the initial group of farmers. They had a briefing and all are excited to learn how to raise snails. We also found an experienced snail farmer willing to assist us.

About €1600 is needed immediately to improve and secure the pens so they are ready for use and purchase farming materials. Currently AYPAD has four 1 m² wooden hutches and a metal growing pen 15m x 1,5m x 1,5m that can hold 300-600 adult snails. We also need to increase the number of breeding snails to make the project viable. This is vital to establish before we can begin helping any women.

Funding is currently being sought.

Phase 2

March 1st, 2018 - March 31st, 2018

AYPAD Training Farm

- December 1st, 2017 - February 28th, 2018
- March 1st, 2018 - March 31st, 2018
- Get initial stock of snails to breed
- Complete curriculum
- Market research
- Begin breeding

A well functioning farm is key to be able to train the women at. With the help of the initial group, we will complete the training farm and get the snails to start reproducing so we have hatchlings to raise.

There are many key relationships to form. We can work with local produce markets or restaurants to collect their leftover fruit and vegetable refuse to use as feed for the snails. We can talk with the same people about buying the full grown snails from us in the future. It will be important to increase the number of buyers and learn their needs. We will hone our curriculum and prepare materials for the training.

Phase 3

April 1st, 2018 - December 31st, 2018

Run the program

- Daily training at AYPAD Training Farm
- Soft skills education
- Provide initial brood of hatchlings
- Agree to buy snails back and sell to market

The women will come to the farm every day for 30-45 minutes to learn about snail farming and how to take care of the snails.

Once we have sufficient hatchlings we will provide the women with hutches for their homes to continue raising the hatchlings. Similar to a microcredit transaction, we will establish a deal with them to buy the grown snails back at an agreed upon price, which will be mandatory in order to get next batch. We will then package and sell the snails. We will need them to continue to come in and train at the main farm at least once a week so we can continue to educate them on soft skills like sales, profitability, money management, and nutrition.

Phase 4

2019 and beyond

Growth

- Review successes and challenges
- Recruit more groups of women
- Secure additional funding
- Buy land to build a bigger farm

At the end of the year we will evaluate the success and determine how best to build on it. Since the snails reproduce rapidly, we should be able to continually expand the breeding stock. We will be able to sell the snails at a profit and ensure the self sufficiency of the farm. It will also help us grow the farm organically.

Organic growth will be slow however. To dramatically increase the number of people we can empower we will need to purchase land and build our Ideal Farm. This will likely need additional outside funding.

We can also begin to look for other markets, either in different countries or we can start to sell the snail shells and slime.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR COLLABORATION



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