

Global Development Awards Competition: A Case Study

Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project (MIDP) 2017:
Dandora Dumpsite Rehabilitation Group



Applying modern farming techniques to improve livelihoods in rural Kenya

George Onyango is the Executive Director of Dandora Dumpsite Rehabilitation Group (DADREG), a local humanitarian organization based in Kenya. In 2018, George won the third prize of the Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project (MIDP) of 5,000 USD to continue his work on improving livelihoods of women and youth through modern farming techniques.

Farming with vulnerable groups of women and youth

Before starting his work for DADREG in 2012, George Onyango used to work in another slum area in Nairobi. The focus of his work was primarily on the improvement of education for women and young people that lived and worked at the dumpsites. During this work he observed the need for development of sustainable activities to help young people and women become competitive in the job market, while at the same time improving their nutrition status.

DADREG started piloting urban farming near the dumpsites. They worked with women in the urban centre of Nairobi to promote carrot and other vegetable farming for consumption. While there was clear potential in the approach, they faced two issues - Lack of land ownership opportunities for women and the limited spaces of land available for urban farming.

Many women that are living on the dumpsite originally come from the rural areas of the country. Poverty and food insecurity drives them to the city to look for a job and better livelihood. However,

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Farmers bringing produce to the market

when they cannot find this job, they end up working at the dumpsites. George Onyango and his team realised that it would be a good idea to start a project in the rural areas where these women come from, besides their existing project on the dumpsite. In this way, they could enable their beneficiaries to employ themselves, farm at a large scale and support their families. With this idea, DADREG applied for the Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project award, which it won in 2018.

Winning the Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project

The GDN award ceremony took place in New Delhi, where George Onyango learnt of many organisations working on similar thematic areas. He was able to learn from them how their projects work, and this experience broadened George's

mind and gave him new ideas for his project.

With the MIDP grant, DADREG was able to take a slightly different approach than before. First, they began to focus more on obtaining land for women to grow food on and second, they moved their project to the rural area of Mbita County. With the help of the grant, DADREG was able to enable marginalised women in Mbita County, to engage in modern farming of watermelon, tomatoes and other vegetables, to name a few. “With the grant from GDN we were able to upscale our operation and move towards rural areas,” shares George.

DADREG provided the targeted women with seeds and assistance in the form of mechanised labour such as ploughing. The organisation also hired a small piece of land for one year, for women to start farming. The profits earned from the sales of their produce would enable the women farmers to continue renting the land for themselves, after the first year lease.

“There is an increased capacity in the beneficiaries to generate an ample income, feed their children, send them to school and buy medicines.”



“Winning the grant opened our doors to collaborations and to winning other grants. Without the GDN award we would not have won the other award.”

Implementing the MIDP grant gave DADREG a platform to demonstrate to other parties what they were doing in practice. Winning the grant set in motion some developments for the project. First, DADREG was able to multiply the grant through winning the Prince Talal International Prize in 2019. With this funding they were able to implement irrigation systems, so that women could have access to water for domestic use and irrigation. This grant also allowed DADREG to scale up to more women and to include young people in the farming project.

“They now look up to us as professionals. They see that we can really make things happen on the ground.”

Ambitions to upscale the project concept and add more value

When looking at the future, DADREG has numerous plans on how to increase their impact further. They plan to put the whole area under an irrigation scheme to boost agricultural productivity and income. George Onyango’s personal ambition for the future is to develop one of the largest organisations that introduces women and youth to farming methods that help generate more income. He plans to set up a training center focused on value addition to the farming products. This would allow women and youth to set up a small enterprise and make their products more valuable through drying or other methods of processing. With these promising livelihood opportunities available locally, George foresees, that the marginalised people will no longer have to move away from their communities in search for employment in the city.

AWARD

The Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Project (MIDP) 2017

– Third Prize

This award category awards projects currently at the stage of implementation, and which have a high potential for impact targeting exceptionally marginalized and disadvantaged groups located in low- and middle-income countries by local non-profit NGOs.

INTERVIEWEE

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KEY WORDS

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About the Global Development Awards Competition

The Global Development Awards Competition (GDAC) is an award scheme that identifies talent, supports the career advancement of researchers in developing countries, and funds innovative social development projects, implemented by NGOs, to benefit marginalized groups in the developing world. The award categories include the Japanese Award for Outstanding Research on Development (ORD), the Japanese Award for Most Innovative Development Projects (MIDP), and the Japan Social Development Fund Award (JSDF).

About GDN

This initiative is administered by GDN, funded through the Policy and Human Resources Development Fund (PHRD) trust fund at the World Bank, and generously supported by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Japan. The competition has awarded US\$4 million in grants since 2000 to more than 200 projects.

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