

BANKERS WITHOUT BORDERS®

Facilitating Access to Finance and Markets An E-Warehouse for Kenyan Farmers



Dow employees Everton Luz (left) and Anirban Ghose (right) collaborated with GF and BwB to assist with the project.

FROM ISOLATION TO INCLUSION

In Kenya, smallholder farmers are often trapped in a cycle of producing crops with low yields and marginal profits. Typically isolated from markets, many farmers lose large portions of their harvests to spoilage. Without access to financial services, most smallholder farmers are forced to sell their crops at sub-optimal prices.

Grameen Foundation (GF) recognized the role mobile technology can play in disseminating market information and creating linkages with financial institutions and buyers through its e-Warehouse initiative. With support from Dow Sustainability Corps volunteers, GF was able to strengthen its internal controls and processes around extending final payments to smallholder farmers at sale time.

MAKING AN IMPACT

Dow employees Everton Luz and Anirban Ghose were part of an effort to improve internal controls for the e-Warehouse project in May 2013. They assessed process maps, met remotely with project implementers in Kenya, and developed implementable risk management solutions.

"Volunteering with Dow allows me to give back a tiny fraction of what I've been granted," Everton says. "I enjoyed working on an initiative that will 'change the name of the game' for several farmers in Kenya. They will have the possibility to increase their profitability by changing the way they approach the market, raise their productivity, and enhance their knowledge about market dynamics."



A Village Knowledge Worker demonstrates the E-Warehouse technology

The leadership at GF is pleased as well. "We needed strong guidance and expertise in internal controls and were very pleased with Everton's and Anirban's insights where they strengthened our processes and systems and did so with a very tight turnaround time," says Debra Dean, Financial Services Director.

SOLUTION SPACE

Each day, people around the world seek solutions to the complex environmental, economic, and social challenges facing the world. At Dow, our corporate philanthropic efforts address these challenges and are inherent in everything we do as a global corporation. Our citizenship is a critical component of "Setting the Standard for Sustainability." It means we are focused on local citizenship, sustainable innovations, and global footprint reduction, directly supporting our vision to be the most profitable and respected science-driven chemical company in the world.

AT A GLANCE

Project: Facilitating Access to Finance Markets: An E-Warehouse for Kenyan Farmers

Purpose: Review GF's processes and develop a risk management strategy for the e-Warehouse program

Project Dates: May – July 2013

Volunteer Hours Invested: 100

Impact: A secure payment system has been developed that will allow farmers to sell their grain at higher prices. The program is working with over 4,000 farmers, 74% living on less than \$2.50USD/day.