

BANKERS WITHOUT BORDERS®

Agricultural Development in Latin America A Corporate Research Project

MOBILE INNOVATION

Smallholder agriculture in Latin America is characterized by its small economic returns caused by low productivity, isolation from markets, and high vulnerability of farm systems and family households. These smallholders are typically excluded from access to productive value chains, financial services, basic productive infrastructure, and appropriate technical assistance – including the ability to maximize the use of mobile technology to increase their productivity and income.

To address this gap, Grameen Foundation established a mobile innovation hub in Colombia, allowing for the development, testing, and design of mobile information products to reach the rural and unbanked poor with actionable information that contributes to their productivity. Additionally, our mobile products allow for the collection of detailed agricultural and socio-economic data at the farmer and producer cooperative level.



Research conducted by Dow employees Katherine Cooke, Kathleen Jurman and Kathleen Manley will help Grameen Foundation increase financial inclusion for smallholder farmers in Latin America

AT A GLANCE

Project: Conducting corporate, interview-based research to inform the business model of agricultural programs in Latin America

Purpose: Scale impact and sustainability of mobile information services that contribute to higher productivity and profitability of smallholder farmers

Project Dates: April 30 – July 29, 2013

Volunteer Hours Invested: 100

Impact: Informed the business model of a program that helps 409 farming families, with a goal of reaching 100,000 families over the next three years.

To date, Grameen Foundation has launched partnerships and established relationships with a few implementation partners including: mobile network operators, non-governmental organizations, agribusinesses, and government entities. But to scale impact, create more partnerships, and expand its current suite of mobile tools, Grameen Foundation must test various business models and strive for sustainability.

SKILLED VOLUNTEERS

Dow employees Katharine Cooke, Kathleen Jurman, and Kathleen Manley tested one of such business model hypotheses by performing a series of interviews with corporate buyers of coffee and cacao. Through these interviews our volunteers evaluated the farmer-level information gaps that commercial companies face when sourcing from cacao and coffee producers in Latin America, and assessed the potential monetary value that they would place in the information that Grameen Foundation currently collects.

Although the results of this project disproved a significant aspect of this particular business hypothesis, Grameen Foundation's Regional CEO for Latin America, Alberto Solano affirms that "the research that Dow employees conducted provided important insights on the information needs of commercial companies when sourcing from smallholder farmers in Latin America. Their recommendations are valuable input that will help us improve our field efforts to increase the inclusion of poor farmers in international markets and value chains."

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.

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