TWO CAN PLAY AT THIS GAME: FIGHT BACK!

Italy
Esohe Aghatise

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Creating viable economic possibilities, education and economic sustenance for girls in Nigeria to fight human trafficking at its origin, through the employment of former victims in preventive efforts and their training as peer educators of others.

About You

Location

Project Street Address
Project City
Project Province/State
Project Postal/Zip Code
Project Country

Year the initiative began (yyyy)

1998

YouTube Upload
Web site (url)

http://www.associazioneiroko.org

Positioning of your initiative on the mosaic diagram

Which of these barriers is the primary focus of your work?
Vulnerability of targeted populations

Which of the principles is the primary focus of your work?
Mobilize peer groups and communities to raise awareness

If you believe some other barrier or principle should be included in the mosaic, please describe it and how it would affect the positioning of your initiative in the mosaic

Another barrier is use of cultural and religious precepts to enslave the vulnerable. Careful attention will be paid to this aspect in the preparation and fulfillment of the program.

Innovation

What is your signature innovation, your new idea, in one sentence?

Creating viable economic possibilities, education and economic sustenance for girls in Nigeria to fight human trafficking at its origin, through the employment of former victims in preventive efforts and their training as peer educators of others.

Describe your innovation. What makes your idea unique and different than others doing work in the field?

Usually measures used to fight human trafficking are projected on solutions in destination countries. Our program would concentrate on fighting the root cause of trafficking of which poverty is the most evident, while actively raising awareness on the risk of being trafficked amongst young people. Creating job opportunities for those at risk removes the need for them to accept offers to “emigrate” to rich countries. This project is uniquely beneficial in many ways. Ex victims of human trafficking will receive training in a number of professions, with the goal of implementing business opportunities in Nigeria in social cooperative partnerships with young women at risk of being trafficked. They will act as catalysts in a positive peer educational and awareness raising role for possible victims. Financial support will be provided for the group to create multiple social business for their sustenance and as a safety net for both potential victims by involving them in the creation and management of the business and for ex victims to prevent them from being re-trafficked.

Delivery Model: How do you implement your innovation and apply it to the challenge/problem you are addressing?
A target group will be identified, made up of ex victims in Italy who wish to return home and of those at risk of being trafficked in Nigeria. The target group will be assisted to choose economic activities which best responds to their needs and appropriate training will be implemented. Once training is completed, the ex victims will travel back to Nigeria to begin the program in association with possible victims. Iroko Staff will provide support in all areas as needed.

How do you plan to grow your innovation?

Through the involvement of local women’s agencies. Participants will refer new arrivals to IROKO for possible addition to the program. Fund raising will be necessary at the initial stage while the economic activities are expected to lead to self sustenance for the program in the long run. The aim is to induce a multiplier effect by the creation of social cooperatives that will benefit the greatest number of women. As an important base for the program, agricultural production from the primary production stage to the transformation and direct sale of products will be actively encouraged. Direct sale to women’s groups will be a policy of product commercialization. The preventative aspect of the program will also be actively promoted as a model alternative to being trafficked. Additionally, direct contact will be established between women with the means of supplying jobs to those women in need. Ex victims and possible victims will have the opportunity to learn from and work with each other in a cohesive and positive environment. Furthermore, those victims who wish to return home will have a dignified and economically viable means to do so within a productive integrative system.

Do you have any existing partnerships, and if so, how do you create them?

IROKO already has a working partnership with the Nigerian National Agency Against Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) with which it organized an International Conference on Trafficking in Benin in 2007 and with two NGOs in Nigeria: COSUDOW and RUFARM. IROKO also works in a network in Italy with various NGOs. The active collaboration of these NGOs will be cultivated in the fulfillment of the program. They will play active roles in the identification of possible program participants in their training. They will also be involved as program counselors and resource capacities.

Impact

Provide one sentence describing your impact/intended impact.
The elimination of human trafficking through the creation of viable economic opportunities and incisive awareness raising on grassroots level.

What are the main barriers to creating or achieving your impact?

Inadequate funding to initiate the programs; discordant government policies which block effective participation of youths at risk and or do not permit the creation of necessary social structures for program implementation.

How many people have you served or plan to serve?

In the implementation of this program, IROKO plans to serve an initial direct benefit group of 10 women made up of 5 ex victims and 5 possible victims. In its multiplier effect, the program is expected to reach out to at least 80 persons as if the additional indirect beneficiaries made up of women’s groups and family members are taken into consideration. If the aspect of awareness raising is also included, within a public announcement and reach-out program for large groups, the numbers are then expected to run into thousands. In Italy, Iroko serves, on average, sixty-five direct beneficiaries per year. This number quadruples when the indirect beneficiaries such as victims’ family members are taken into consideration. Overall, Iroko has assisted more than seven hundred victims of trafficking both in Italy, in Nigeria and in response to international requests for assistance over the past ten years.

Directly

Direct beneficiaries will be 10 young women and girls made up of 5 ex victims willing to return home in a dignified economically viable manner and 5 possible victims – that is young women and girls at risk of being trafficked in Nigeria who accept to be inserted in an economically viable project to assure their self sustenance and their possibility to assist members of their family.

Indirectly

Indirect beneficiaries will include members of family of the 10 direct beneficiaries, which may be quadrupled when one considers the socio cultural context from which the women are chosen. That means that families are usually the extended family system; Local women’s agencies to be involved as promoters in program growth. In this case, the numbers of indirect beneficiaries are expected to be in the hundreds. The general public which will be the direct target of preventative part of the program especially young women and girls and their families. This number is expected to run into thousands.

Please list any other measures of the impact of your innovation?

The major impact of this innovation is the creation of varied economic generating opportunities coupled with preventative activities. This is an important and life saving alternative to sacrificing a family member to be enslaved by traffickers into prostitution. Thus the positive impact of this program will be twofold: the community as a whole will benefit from increased wealth while the potential victims and their family members will directly benefit from having dignified job opportunities locally within their own cultural context.

Is there a policy intervention element to your innovation?

The involvement of NAPTIP is aimed at inviting the Nigerian Government to review their policies towards youths, especially towards the girl child. Government agencies will be lobbied to contribute to the prevention of trafficking in persons through the creation of youth friendly programs for Nigerians. This program will be the first of its kind to foresee an active cooperation between women who have been previously trafficked into Italy and potential trafficking victims in Nigeria, thus in effect making the basis for the creation of an entirely new policy aimed at youths. Ideally, our goal is to turn this program into a trafficking prevention policy to be financially supported by the Nigerian authorities. The aim is that this program can be best practice for all.

Exactly who are the beneficiaries of your innovation?

Young women and girls who are past victims of human trafficking and potential future victims of human trafficking in Nigeria. Potential victims will be the main focus of actions under this initiative. Specifically, this program will target girls and young women residing in the state of Edo as well as in Benin City, the capital city. This area represents the highest rate of trafficked women into Western Europe from Nigeria.
**Sustainability**

**How is your initiative financed (or how do you expect your initiative will be financed)?**

Through funding requests to government agencies, private banking foundations and to funding agencies worldwide. Fund raising activities will also be actively promoted through social dinners, sales, social promotions and request for private donations.

**If known, provide information on your finances and organization**

- Annual budget: US$ 114,125
- Annual revenue generated: US$ 3,000
- Number of staff (3 boxes: full-time, part-time, volunteers): Fulltime – 1; part-time – 5; Volunteers - 9

**What is the potential demand for your innovation?**

Potential demand for this innovation is very high and the need for it arose out of request from young women being assisted by IROKO for a dignified and economically viable way to return home. This was also linked with a request to make use of their unfortunate experience to prevent other young people from falling prey to traffickers and having to endure the type of trauma they experienced. For them, this will make something positive out of their traumatic experience.

**What are the main barriers to financial sustainability?**

Difficulty due to the present political, social and economic situation in Nigeria. This may lead to beneficiaries using the funds provided by the program to solve the economic problems of their families, without first creating the viable economic basis for their personal sustenance as the program intends to do, which will permit them to also be of economic assistance to their families. Lack of sufficient start-up funds to initiate the program in a viable manner.

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**The Story**

**What is the origin of this innovation? Tell us your story.**

This innovation grew out of direct work with victims trafficked into sexual exploitation in Italy. Over 60% of victims trafficked into Italy are Nigerian and of that number, over 80% are from Edo State in south-central Nigeria. Many of the rescued victims have difficulty integrating into the Italian society, due in part to the divergent social and cultural contexts and due also to the trauma which many of them associate to their presence in Italy. During regular meetings and brain storming work with them, the problem of their lack of employment and need to re-integrate in their country of origin lead to exploration of various means to assist them in achieving their goal.

**Please provide a personal bio. Note this may be used in Changemakers marketing material**

Ms. Esohe Aghatise is a lawyer with a doctorate in International Economic and Trade Law as well as an Ethno-clinical Cultural Mediator who has worked for more than 13 years with victims of trafficking in Italy. In 2002, she was appointed Expert on Trafficking to the UNDAW Expert Groups’ Meeting. She is the Founding Director of Association Iroko Onlus, in Turin, Italy. She was recently honoured by the US State Department and nominated a 2007 Hero in the fight against modern day slavery.

**Emphasis of Work**

The Organization operates to safeguard and improve the life and living conditions of socially and economically disadvantaged persons, with special emphasis on the promotion of the rights of women and especially of the girl child. The organization works for the prevention of violence against women and children in all areas of its expression and ramifications. The Organization operates for civil commitment, for the welfare and promotion of human rights with the exclusive aim of social solidarity, by keeping up its activities intended to protect and improve the conditions of life of socially and economically disadvantaged persons, irrespective of their places of origin, nationality, social or religious creed or sexual orientation. In carrying out its objectives and in coherence with the same, the Organization gives voice and visibility to the problems of disadvantaged persons, especially women and children, with the aim of making them active protagonists in changing the unfavourable economic and social conditions of their lives. This with the aim of changing the situations, which reduces them in a state of indigence, transforming the such conditions of economic and social difficulty in social stigma.