THE FIGHT AGAINST MALNUTRITION THROUGH THE CREATION OF A SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Summary: In 2006, GRET and IRD have distributed a specific flour to fight against infant malnutrition in Madagascar. After 4 years the program has evolved into a social enterprise, lead correlative by GRET and local actors.

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Programme
Start date: 2000
Implementation site: N/C
Budget: N/C
Source and specificity of funding: GRET

ORGANISATION(S)
Groupe de Recherches et d’Echanges Technologiques (GRET)
Campus du Jardin Tropical, 45 bis avenue de la Belle Gabrielle
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http://www.gret.org/

Employees: 700
Volunteers: 0

Review Committee
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Participant: Academic, research Institute, Association, ONG
Country: Madagascar

Beneficiaries: Children under 5, Bottom Of the Pyramid (BOP)
Stature of the programme: Local
Field of action: Education, Training, Budget, Essential goods, Food aid

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Background of the Programme
50.1% of Madagascan children under the age of 5 suffer from chronic malnutrition which has an effect on a child's growth and their resistance to sickness and also leads to irreversible cognitive consequences after the age of 2. This is due to poor dietary practices and a low level of understanding of the specific needs of young children. The national funds allocated to this fight are still small and the costs are still not met by the Madagascan government but by other organisations.

Goals of the Programme
Through the Nutrimad program, the French NGO "GRET" (Group of Research and Technology Exchange) and the Research Institute for Development (IRD) have looked for a long term method to fight malnutrition.

Implemented Actions
- Putting Koba Aina, a flour specially designed for infants between 6 and 24 months, on the market.
- Since 2000, distributing Koba Aina in the hotelin-jazakely (restaurants for babies) in popular neighbourhoods - consummation of prepared meals in the restaurant or the purchase of sachets for a feed later on.
- Organisers - management of hotelin-jazakely (maintenance, preparation of Koba Aina and its sale) "mobile tours" (door to door sales; autonomy in the organisation), education (preferring Koba Aina to normal meals). Revenue from daily sales paid to Nutrimad (thanks to the Orange Money system) and commission of 16% per ration sold paid weekly or monthly (their choice) paid to organisers.
- Random checks to guarantee the quality of Koba Aina.
- Supervision of the organisers by a coach (1 for 8 organisers) to overcome the difficulties of selling.
- Nutritional education (organisers): advice the practices to adopt according to the age of the child, weekly weighing of infants, educational leaflets of nutrition freely distributed.
- "Koba Aina Events" where the mothers test the product, learn how to prepare it, receive nutritional advice.
QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE RESULTS FROM THE IMPLEMENTED ACTIONS

- 1,936,414 rations sold in 2011; Koba Aina has become known as a recommended product (best alternative to traditional food).
- In Tananarieve: 16 Hotelin-Jazakely and 9 stands a very large product presence.
- Size of Koba Aina’s reputation is close to 100% (among household who have infants between 6 and 24 months in the established neighbourhoods).
- Nutritional education initiatives: gained the confidence of mothers.
- 62% product penetration in the homes of children between 6 and 24 months.
- Sales “outside of the target market” represent between 30 and 50% of total sales; some adults can have a meal in the middle of the day without loosing time or money thanks to Koba Aina.

ORIGINAL CHARACTERISTICS

In order to make this program independent, “GRET” has set up an efficient and clear system of distribution and administration due to a direct collaboration with local actors.

PARTNERSHIP(S) DEVELOPED IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PROGRAMME

University of Antananarivo, Taf, Blédina, French Development Agency, International Solidarity for Development and Investment, Investors and Partnerships for Development, Association for the Promotion of Business in Madagascar

FEEDBACK

Difficulties and/or obstacles encountered during the programme’s implementation:

- 2006, GRET wanted to leave the administration of the service to the organisers but there was a lack of desire from the organisers.
- 2008, creation of an association grouping the employees in the network but there were management problems.
- Low level of consummation of the product per infant (7.7% have at least one ration per day). The causes are: price, Koba Aina is considered to be a back up meal; some mothers refuse to take advice on the feeding of their children and some consider the program to be designed for the “poor”.
- The organisers don’t achieve fixed objectives and struggle to earn a good living; 107% turn-over (2011); Problems with the sales areas: stealing of revenue; suspicion of the organisers over revenue; unhappiness from Orange Money (hours and time lost to waiting).
- The sale of Koba Aina is a loss making activity (€74 000/year) and depends on financing from GRET.

Solutions used to overcome the difficulties and/or obstacles:

- 2010, creation of “Nutri’zaza”: private capital society in Madagascar to make Nutrimad independent of aid (profits directly reinvested in extending the network of Hotelin-Jazakely and their improvement).
- 2007-8, Partnership with Blédina: to improve the economic performance Koba Aina and to create an recognisable brand. Sales have increased significantly in the following years.
- The setting up of efficient training for the organisers to rapidly achieve their fixed sale objectives (theory and the terrain through a partnership system) - organisers satisfied.
- Commercialisation of sachets destined for comfortably off people through a classic distribution network.

Suggestions for future improvement:

- Open 60 supplementary Hotelin-Jazakely between now and 2015.
- To evaluate the social impact of Nutri’zaza (means, results) thanks to an ethical and surveillance committee (old institutional partners and Madagascan technicians at Nutrimad) - annual publication of a social report.

Summary of factors responsible for the programme’s success:

REASONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAM

- Koba Aina: product adapted to very young infants; price accessible to a large majority of the population; indispensable nutritional qualities for the healthy development of an infant (essential supplements); conformed to all the applicable norms; made up of 99% local farm products; corresponds to Madagascan tastes; quick preparation; simple and safe (flour mixed with cold water and brought to the boil for 5 minutes); daily consumption (2 rations between 6 and 12 months and 3 rations between 12 and 24 months) covers between 39 and 56% of energy needs and around 50% of recommended daily needs) and its nutritional qualities are beneficial to all ages.
- The telephone system “Orange Money” enables the reduction of cash payments.

ADVICE FOR AN EXPANSION OF THE PROGRAM

- The tours must be both regular (gain the loyalty of consumers) while leaving the possibility of appealing to new “non-targeted” customers. The organisers must come from the neighbourhood (essential for mothers to trust them).
- To extend the network who can access Koba Aina to the greatest number possible.

Idea for research topics, basic or applied, that could be useful for the programme:

The evaluation of the real impact on health remains a real difficulty. It is one of the major aims of the program. Another interesting theme with hindsight would be the impact of the passage from NGO program to social enterprise in terms of finance and the human impact.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

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TO KNOW MORE
Annexe 1: