

* Title

Women Against Poverty (WAP)

* Brief URL

Care for the people. Care for the land. Share the surplus.

Summary of Idea (less than 100 words)

Women Against Poverty partners with BetterCoop in Bafut, Cameroon, to provide quality High Value Agricultural Products(HVAP) -BetterTurmeric- that are sourced from ecologically responsible and organic agriculture, using “Permaculture the African way”. These products are bought at equitable prices directly from women farmers’ cooperative(BetterCoop) who own and control production. By reinvesting the social dividends in education, training as well as acquiring more land for the women we do not only sell a product: we promote healthy and responsible food production and consumption in Bafut and Cameroon.

PART 1: CREATE VALUE

* Customers

Who are your most important customers? What are their characteristics – their demographic profile, values, interests, beliefs, and where do they reside?

We are targeting people who value fresh organic pesticide-free produce as well as companies that value and promote high quality products and healthy lifestyle. Companies/organizations that want the competitive edge of using/selling organic products including Hotels, Grocery stores, rural marketplaces, Bafut Airport, restaurants, monasteries, and boarding schools. They use the ginger and turmeric powder as spices for food and for other medicinal purposes. On an international level, we are targeting the Western European markets, especially the Netherlands, who are the biggest European consumers and have a demand increasing by 16% every year since 2012, and the United Kingdom and France, who have a specific historical past with Cameroon (and facilitated trading alleys) as well as having a big part of their ginger and turmeric consumption sourced in developing countries -94% for the UK(Source : Eurostat 2017). We also target Pharmaceutical companies such as PAX Herbal in Nigeria which has already placed a demand for turmeric powder.

* Value Proposition

What value do you deliver to your customers? Why would customers purchase or use your product? What problem does your product/service solve?

We add value to turmeric directly by locally processing it into powder, and making it readily available in the market, thus allowing these women to compete and improve their livelihoods. We believe that empowering women is the most efficient way to trigger systemic change and bring sustainable development in African rural communities.

By buying our product, our customers are rendering a service to their own health, to the planet, and to the hard working women that laboured to produce it.

Moreover indirect value is created as we reinvest the surplus money is reinvested into a Trust Fund aiming at:

Acquiring more land for the women from the local authorities

Funding Training of trainers modules (offered by BWC and GEN ITL) to spread responsible, healthy agricultural and lifestyle practices exponentially in the Bafut community

This creates a self-reinforcing cycle where more jobs are available in the community and women make a higher income from farming, hence being able to buy more quality and nutritious produce.

Moreover, the training workshops allows to empower the women fully by having them take charge of educating the rest of the community about sustainable agricultural practices and healthy living - including knowledge about the health benefits and usages of the HVAP products we sell.

In a nutshell, this Trust fund will enable these women and their community to:

- Be financially empowered
- Have better access to land
- Be educated about food security, ecology, and responsible agriculture ...

... thus increasing both the supply and demand for the HVAP/ginger, which will in turn increase our financial sustainability while achieving desired social impact.

This will help to solve the problem of turmeric and ginger wastage due to lack of markets. In the Bafut village, there is an abundance of ginger but very limited demand. Because of lack of access to markets and inadequate equipments to process the turmeric, this ginger often ends up being dumped in the local markets. This is why WAP is dedicated to adding value to the turmeric by processing it and selling not only in local but in international markets, thereby eliminating the problem of waste and at the same time giving the women an equitable price that would improve their livelihoods. By marketing locally and internationally, we guarantee that their product is bought at an equitable price and part of our profits reinvested in further empowering these women through our Trust Fund.

Research shows that turmeric have a great potential benefit on the health of humans. Our product according to studies by Singletary Keith contains curcumin, a chemical that has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, which, in part, may contribute to prevent

diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer, heart disease, and arthritis, to name a few (Keith, 2010). Due to increasing levels of heart diseases, diabetes among other health problems in Cameroon, more people are shifting towards consuming organic products which is why our product is well tailored to solve some of these problems.

*** Channel**

Through what channel do your customers receive the product? How are you reaching them? (delivery, in store etc.)

We will reach our customers using our delivery van to supply directly to Supermarkets, grocery stores chains and other retailers in cities.

The same van will to deliver to shelves at the local market, and to a stand at the Bafut-Bamenda airport which is right next to where the women farm.

International: we will ship merchandise to interested wholesale providers.

*** Customer Relationships**

What type of relationship do you want with your customers? How do you plan on establishing and maintaining these relationships?

We are building our approach on dialog and trust.

We have built strong relationships based on trust with women circles, Betterworld Cameroon, BetterCoop and the local traditional authorities in Bafut by going there in 2017 and staying for a month at the Ndanifor Permaculture Demonstration Center. We know the community, its customs and ways and have analyzed the habits of the people we claim to work with and improve the life of. It is through intensive dialogue and listening that we know directly from the ground the urgency for a ginger processing facility, and that if we actualize its potential we can unlock access to more lands for Bafut women from the local chief.

Just like we have built trust with the people of Bafut in the past, we will take time to send members of our team with some of the women of BetterCoop to reach retail stores directly and position ourselves as pioneers in this emerging niche through direct interaction, so they can meet the farmers behind the products they will sell. Enabling a proper feedback process for these retailers and their clients will allow us to make sure their needs are attended and maintain the link. Obtaining certifications for the produced food will be a rare token of quality still rare in the market that will make our offer more attractive for these stores.

In the neighbouring Bafut markets the word to mouth of the BetterCoop women will ensure we reach out to customers naturally, and us sponsoring and participating in the training of

trainer modules to spread healthy lifestyles locally will be our primary way of maintaining relationships

PART 2: DELIVER VALUE

*** Key Activities**

What are the key activities in your business? How do you make the product or deliver the service?

Key Activities include:

Buying or hiring people locally to produce machinery needed for processing

Acquisition of a Van for delivery to our major customers such as the hotels, monasteries, boarding schools,

Purchase ginger from the women farmers cooperative (BetterCoop)

Hire some of the women to process the ginger (clean, shred, and dry the ginger)

Organize and implement Packaging

Marketing:

- Building trusted relationships with the customers/brand loyalty
- Delivery Logistics using vans to urban centers and villages
- Quality control
- Obtain organic and fair trade certifications
- Acquisition of initial data for measurement

Key Resources

What resources do you require to run your enterprise? Please fill in the fields below:

*** Financial Resources (Capital needed)**

We need about 19200 CAD

*** Human Resources**

Mentors: Heather McShane, Catalyst-in-chief of the McGill Sustainability Systems Initiative (MSSI), Eduardo Quiroga, from Sylvagro Environmental consultants, Natural resource manager consultant Our relationship/ partnership with Bettercoop Social capital: trust built with local communities during our pilot project last Summer

*** Physical Resources (equipment, building etc.)**

Land

* Intellectual Resources (patents, trademarks, brand etc.)

NA

* Key Partners

Who are your key partners? Who are your key suppliers?

BetterCoop (key partner and supplier)

BetterWorld Cameroon (permaculture educator)

Desired:

Local universities for metrics

World Vision to provide resources and network, assist in implementing project

* Unanswered Questions

What are some of your unanswered questions about the venture? How can World Vision help you?

How to create links with international trading partners for exporting HVAP in Europe.

PART 3: FINANCIALS

* Revenue

Give us an overview of your Revenue streams. How do you plan on making money?

The revenue stream is the sale of the organic HVAP BetterTurmeric.

We predict a 14 Ton output of produce for the next ginger season, that would sell at 40 000 \$CAD in total, 55% out of which we assume will reach the farmers, 7% the retailers and 38% to us leading to roughly 15 000 CAD/ year.

There is one production of Ginger per year (9month growth).

The equipment is the leverage point that will allow the processing and hence the marketing and sales of the HVAP. This is why it is the most effective investment we can do for real, fast results. This consists of a Van to collect Ginger in the communities, deliver to customers and processing/drying machines. Some money will be put aside for the traditional ceremonies for

further land acquisition which is a major factor enabling future scaling up and creating direct impact for some women.

The annual costs for the first year of production in salaries, employing people driving the van and processing the BetterTurmeric have been included - in addition to a healthy dose of advertising and communication budget to reach out to more potential customers.

*** Costs**

Give us an overview of your costs? What are your major costs? Why are you spending money this way?

Van 8000 \$CAD

Processing Machine x2 2000\$CAD

Dryer 1200\$

Rituals for traditional land acquisition practices 1000\$ CAD

Communication and Advertising 2000\$ CAD

Annual costs, Salaries + fuel of 5000 \$

TOTAL 19200

*** Profit/Breakeven**

When do you anticipate to breakeven? To become profitable?

With 15 000 CAD revenue, minus annual costs we should break even in 2 years, and become profitable in the 3rd year.

PART 4: SOCIAL IMPACT

*** Mission**

What is the social mission of your enterprise? Why are you focusing on this particular challenge?

We are dedicated to empowering and improving the livelihood of women through permaculture farming. We believe that women are the backbone of the African rural communities, and therefore, empowering them through responsible agribusiness and education to be financially independent and healthy can go a long way to bringing long lasting change in these communities.

The core values of permaculture are care for the people, care for the land, and sharing of surplus. Our model, like their farming, follows these principles.

*** Competition**

What other enterprises are trying to solve this problem? Please give us one example of a failure and success and why they succeeded or failed?

Microfinance companies in Cameroon that provide capital to women are a competition. Ecofin, Credit Mutuel and Caisse d'Epargne are 3 Cameroonian Microcredit institutions that have been placed in administrative suspension due to mismanagement and corruption. Their failure is due to the prevalence of corruption in the financial sectors of Cameroon. In addition, people are required to provide collateral securities for this method which not every woman has access to.

MC2 is a successful example of microfinance in Cameroon, because its approach is participatory.

*** Measurement**

How are you measuring your impact? What metrics will you use to determine success?

We will combine qualitative and quantitative measurements to determine the success of our venture.

We aim to seek partnerships with local universities' and McGill students/professors in order to monitor metrics mostly from economical, social and soil sciences.

The number of women employed in the

- Increase in per capita income of BetterCoop women
- Shelf life of the ginger
- The price of ginger per kilogram
- Increase in local supply of organic turmeric and ginger products
- Surface of land ownership in Bafut
- Amount of turmeric processed by the machines
- Qualitative survey of customer satisfaction
- Decrease in pesticide usage in the Bafut community
- Soil fertility and pesticide concentration

PART 5: TEAM and OTHER

*** Strengths & Weaknesses**

What are your team's biggest strengths and weaknesses?

Our strengths:

- The trust we have built with our key partners already.
- The project can start as soon as we received the funds as our partners are ready to produce, is easily feasible and can be scaled due to its cost efficiency, and because we can extend to other nutrient rich HVAP such as Moringa.
- Our team leader is a woman from the region and knows the reality these women lives and food security condition in Bafut first hand from growing up in a neighbouring village.
- The permaculture approach of our supplier partners prepares the farmers for climate change reality adaptation and has the lowest environmental footprint: assuring a better supply in the future compared to unprepared farmers.

Our weaknesses:

- Quite evidently we lack the capital to initiate project.
- Although we have developed extensive links with the Bafut community and the primary beneficiaries of our project, there is still work to be done in connecting with the Cameroonian market and building customer loyalty.

*** Critical Assumptions**

What critical assumptions have you made in developing your venture?

We are assuming that from our partnership with BetterCoop, we will have a stable supply of ginger.

We are assuming that we will obtain the organic and international export certifications in a matter of months.

We are assuming that the local demand for organic ginger will increase as people become more aware of the health benefits of consuming organic products especially turmeric.

*** Most Significant Challenge**

What do you anticipate will be the most significant challenges in building this venture? in bringing this venture to scale?

Dealing with the poor infrastructure level of rural Cameroon, especially its road system, is what we think might be the biggest challenge we face in setting up a logistical chain.