

Case Studies Analysis

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We support the Sustainable Development Goals

Global Citizens Open Innovation SDGs Challenge

The Global Citizens Open Innovation SDGs Challenge is an exciting program designed to actively involve individuals and organizations in addressing the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

These 17 goals outline a global roadmap for creating a more just and sustainable future, encompassing a broad spectrum of issues from eradicating poverty and hunger to advancing quality education and tackling climate change. Participants are invited to develop innovative projects, campaigns, and solutions that align with one or more of these goals.

By fostering creativity, collaboration, and actionable strategies, the SDGs Challenge aims to drive impactful contributions towards global sustainability and enhance collective well-being.

This case study will explore the influence of the SDGs Challenge on the two winning projects, delving into their development, achievements, and personal stories to illustrate how their initiatives have made a meaningful difference in advancing the SDGs.



Nikmati:

Transforming Education in El Salvador and throughout South and Central America through Innovative and Collaborative Teaching Techniques

Insights:

Nikmati, co-founded by Georgina and Carmen, was inspired by the pressing need to improve the quality of education in El Salvador. The name "Nikmati," derived from Nawat, the indigenous language of El Salvador, means "knowledge," reflecting the founders' deep commitment to fostering education and preserving cultural heritage. Their personal experiences, along with observations of the challenges faced by the country's education system, drove them to seek innovative solutions.

During their journey, Georgina and Carmen discussed their experiences improving education through collaboration and personalized training. They emphasized the importance of investing in quality education for economic growth and the impact of tailored training for teachers. The name and branding of Nikmati were carefully designed to reflect their Salvadorian origins and a sense of belonging to all. They worked closely with designer Javier Santos to create the name and colors of their foundation, while the three of them collaborated on the content and design of their website, with significant contributions from Javier. Carmen highlighted their experience with mentorship from the SDG Challenge, which provided valuable feedback and helped them focus on their strengths as a team. The challenge also played a pivotal role in solidifying Nikmati's concept, transforming initial ideas into actionable plans. Despite discovering the SDG Challenge just days before the application deadline, they seized the opportunity and prepared a comprehensive video detailing their concept. This intense preparation not only honed their presentation skills but also deepened their understanding of the project's goals and potential impact.

Challenges and Successes:

Establishing a nonprofit organization in El Salvador posed significant challenges, particularly due to the strict government regulations. Carmen faced the daunting task of getting the nonprofit legally established within nine months, a process that required meticulous planning and perseverance. Throughout this period, Carmen and Georgina also dealt with the constraints of limited time and resources. Despite these hurdles, they successfully registered Nikmati as a foundation in 2021, thanks to the support of their network, including legal assistance from a friend.

The SDG Challenge enabled Nikmati to launch pilot programs in collaboration with local communities and schools. These programs, conducted online due to the pandemic, focused on training teachers in modern educational tools and techniques, allowing for widespread participation and having a significant impact on the local education system. The challenge also provided access to mentorship and feedback from experienced professionals like Peter Cleaves, which was instrumental in shaping their business plan and focusing on their strengths.

Business Growth and Expansion:

After the SDG Challenge, Nikmati saw significant growth and expansion. Carmen shared how the program, which started with teachers in San Salvador, quickly expanded to other cities and states through partnerships with local organizations. This community-driven approach, combined with personalized training sessions—preferably in-person—allowed them to address the specific needs of teachers in El Salvador. They focused on empowering educators to choose training subjects, particularly 21st-century skills for children and teenagers.

The pandemic served as a catalyst for this initiative. While Georgina was confined due to COVID-19, both she and Carmen were driven by their shared passion for education and their desire to improve their country. They delved into extensive research on best practices in education and the economic impact of investing in quality education. This research laid the groundwork for the Nikmati approach and the subsequent development of their educational model. Their efforts were further amplified when they connected with the CEO of another NGO in El Salvador, who inspired them to pilot their educational model. Starting with this NGO's educators, Nikmati's impact began to multiply. They expanded their collaborations, now working on multiple projects with various NGOs focused on education in El Salvador. Despite their success, Carmen and Georgina acknowledge the ongoing challenges, particularly the limitations of time and resources. However, they remain committed to their mission and are proud of the progress they've made.

Outcomes:

Despite these challenges, the SDG Challenge pushed the founders to refine their vision and develop a comprehensive strategy for Nikmati. The successful launch and operation of pilot programs have already made a significant impact on teachers and students across various regions in El Salvador. These programs trained teachers in utilizing digital tools and adopting modern educational practices, thereby enhancing the quality of education. Moving forward, Nikmati plans to continue expanding its reach, refining its programs, and building networks to ensure sustained impact on education in El Salvador.



Empowering Change: AgriCycle Uganda's Journey thanks to the SDGs Challenge

Insights

AgriCycle Uganda envisions a world where the environment is preserved, and people's livelihoods are improved through sustainable agricultural practices. Their mission is to promote these practices by producing and selling organic agricultural products, particularly charcoal briquettes. Participation in the SDGs Challenge was driven by their alignment with this mission, opportunities for growth and learning, potential funding and resources, and global recognition. This experience has significantly influenced their business model, leading to a stronger focus on sustainability, diversified revenue streams, improved impact measurement and reporting, strategic partnerships, and scalability.

Impact of SDGs Challenge

Participating in the SDGs Challenge was transformative for AgriCycle Uganda. It provided Moses and his team with invaluable knowledge, resources, and inspiration to refine their business model and enhance their sustainability practices. The mentorship from experts like Lisa and Eric was outstanding, offering strategic insights and support. Winning the challenge increased their visibility both locally and internationally, raising awareness about their mission and attracting potential partners and supporters. The practical training sessions equipped Moses and his team with essential skills, particularly in sustainability and impact measurement, crucial for redefining their business strategies.

Challenges

Despite their successes, Moses and his team continue to face significant challenges. Limited access to funding remains a major hurdle, slowing their ability to acquire essential machinery and fulfill contracts. Their manual briquette production process is labor-intensive and inefficient, necessitating motorized briquette machines to increase production capacity and meet growing demand. Additionally, the lack of a vehicle for raw material collection and product distribution has made managing their supply chain difficult. Financial constraints have led to missed opportunities, including not being able to fully capitalize on high demand for their briquettes, fulfill supply contracts with schools, or partner with UNHCR to supply briquettes to refugees. These limitations have significantly impacted on their ability to scale operations and grow as desired.

Future Plans

Looking ahead, Moses and his team have set top priorities, including acquiring motorized briquette machines to boost production capacity and efficiency, securing a vehicle to streamline logistics and distribution, and expanding their market reach. They plan to explore new markets, including supplying briquettes to refugee camps, aligning with their mission to support vulnerable communities and promote sustainable energy solutions. The SDGs Challenge has had a lasting and transformative impact on AgriCycle Uganda. It has improved team morale, enhanced skills, and increased visibility and capacity for innovation. Despite ongoing financial constraints, Moses and his team remain committed to scaling their impact and achieving their mission of providing sustainable energy solutions while positively affecting their communities and the environment.



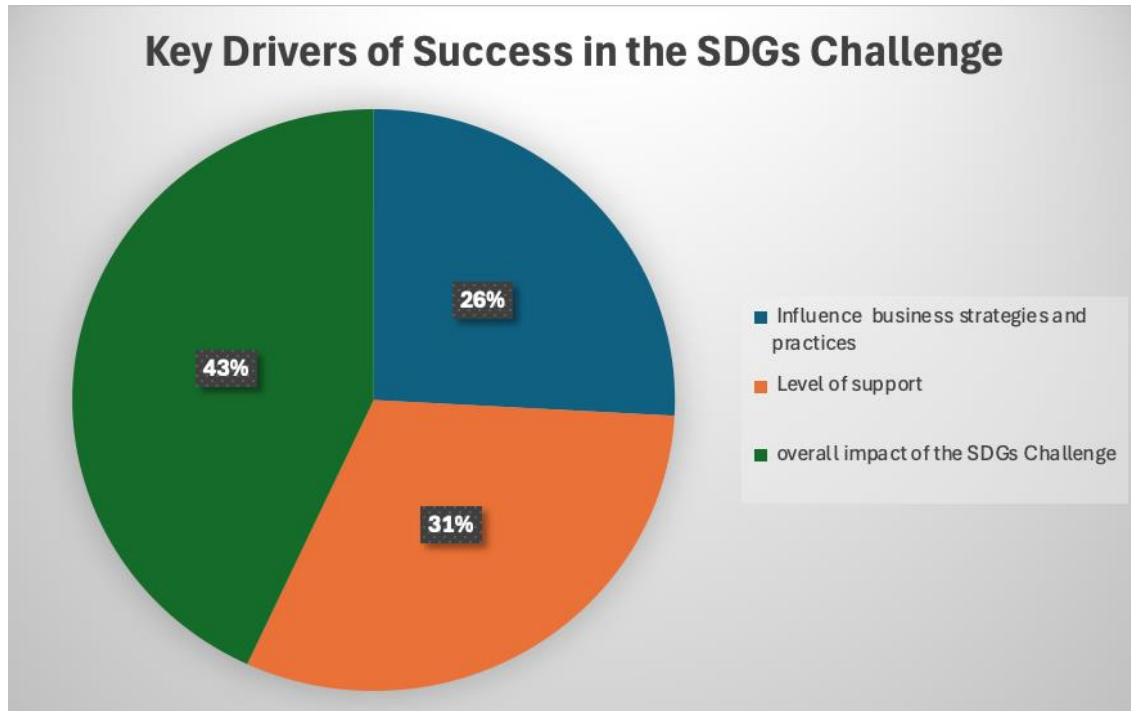
Global Citizens Open Innovation SDGs Challenge IMPACT

As part of the final analysis in this case study, the following pie chart provides a visual summary of the critical factors contributing to the success of the SDGs Challenge, drawn from a survey conducted with the winning start-ups Nikmati and AgriCycle Uganda.

The data highlights the overall impact, level of support, and influence on business strategies as key drivers of their achievements. The largest portion, at 43%, represents the overall impact of the SDGs Challenge, underscoring its significant role in driving progress.

The level of support accounts for 31%, reflecting the importance of backing from stakeholders in achieving the goals. Lastly, the influence on business strategies and practices is represented by 26%, indicating a notable but smaller impact on how businesses align with sustainable development objectives.

This data offers valuable insights into the experiences and outcomes of these innovative start-ups in their journey through the SDGs Challenge.



Resources:

SDGs Challenge website: <https://sdgschallenge.org/info>

Nikmati Website: <https://nikmati.org>

AgriCycle Uganda Website: <https://agricycleuganda.org/>

Qualtrics survey:

https://qualtricsxmnpkx5jv2.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/preview/previewId/960e2f5a-d95c-4e5e-bdbb-4133a10b7f10/SV_ePWYytiodmCsce?Q_CHL=preview&Q_SurveyVersionID=current