

Human Rights Principles

Assessment, Policy, Goals

ECO VITA in its corporate policy upholds the internationally recognized UN Declaration of Human Rights as a baseline for its business practices.

Implementation

ECO VITA states in our company motto that we recognize that businesses should respect and support the internationally proclaimed human rights on our website, business contracts, employment contracts, and business brochures (see http://www.ecovitausa.com/429/Moringa_Project).

Labor Principles

Assessment, Policy, Goals

ECO VITA actively seeks out practical projects that will provide jobs to communities in need with a commitment to stand against all forms of compulsory or forced labor. ECO VITA also tries to find alternative solutions to forced labor through pursuing a long-term strategy that would create a vibrant local economy.

Implementation

ECO VITA is committed to working directly with local farmers and importing our materials through community-based NGOs rather than working with brokers or middlemen, whose main objective is to increase their commission.

ECO VITA has created women's employment opportunities at a local farming community in Ghana. The main economic activity for people in the small community located in the North Volta region in Ghana with 8,000 people relying on subsistence agriculture. Moringa is a community-owned project and its production involves the entire community. The men of the community clear the forest and women help plant the trees. Until the Moringa project started, there was very little economic opportunities for the women of the community.

Measurement of outcomes

The Moringa project encourages self-governance and strategic planning for those involved. For example, the women formed their own organization with a president and a secretary. About 10 women would work together at a time and individually get marked for the shifts they worked. They get paid as a group and at the end of the month, the leaders of the group distribute their pay according to how much time they put in. Thus, the Moringa project offers flexibility in terms of how much time the women chooses to work, which means they also have time to tend for their farms and families.

Environmental Principles

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ECO VITA aims to decrease its carbon footprint by funding and supporting planting and growth of the Moringa plant which is known to be particularly effective at consuming CO₂ gas and producing oxygen. Apart from the Moringa tree growth, ECO VITA is actively involved in the Energy Cook Stove Program for needy families in Ghana in 2011.

Implementation of the project

PROJECT AIM

1. To provide needy families with fuel-efficient cooking stoves, which reduces the use of wood and improve health conditions in the local area, particularly for women who do most of the cooking. We believe that this project directly and indirectly implements the Global Compact principles in each of the four issue areas: human rights, labor, environment, and anti-corruption.
2. To reduce global warming through planting the Moringa Trees in Ghana. This project encourages communities to plant trees to help cool the environment and contribute to the reduction of global warming. Since the traditional stoves uses charcoal which is made from trees, we understood that large amount of trees are cut off for this purpose. Therefore this tree planting project will be helping to replace the trees that would be used to produce the charcoal. We chose the Moringa tree to be planted because of its multiple benefits. In addition to planting Moringa, other parts of Moringa trees such as its leaves are used as a food source.

INTRODUCTION OF THE PROJECT

The typical stoves used for cooking in many households in Ghana is not a huge improvement from a Stone Age campfire – it is poorly insulated, inefficiently burns a lot of wood and it spews disease-causing particulates into the air. In addition, the weekly cost for wood is an economic burden which keeps numerous families in poverty.

The solution is to provide the families with better, environmentally friendly cooking stoves. These stoves replace the traditional cooking stoves, and use less wood, thereby lower or even eliminate the need for logging forest trees. Further, it leads to reducing poverty in several ways, such as increased crop production and contributing to food security in the community.

Thus the Moringa project intends to provide fuel-efficient cooking stoves to impoverished families. In return, these families will plant trees and nurture them to grow either at their gardens, farms and other designated places to protect the environment and reduce global warming.

WHY THIS FUEL-EFFICIENT COOK STOVE PROJECT IS NECESSARY

Half the world's population—3 billion people—cook with wood, charcoal, dung, coal or agricultural residues on simple traditional stoves or open fires. Breathing in the smoke from these types of stoves causes a stunning variety of acute and chronic illnesses—pneumonia, emphysema, cataracts, lung cancer, bronchitis, cardiovascular disease, and lower birth weight—all contributing to an estimated 1.9 million premature deaths every year—more than double the global death toll of malaria, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) statistics. Indeed, WHO estimates harmful smoke from these cooking stoves to be the fourth worst overall health risk in developing countries. Fuel-efficient cooking stoves are the accepted solution.

- The fuel-efficient stoves use less wood and as such there would a reduction in the amount of trees cut for firewood.
- Typical stoves release clouds of toxic smoke inside the home as there is no chimney or exhaust tube. The fuel-efficient stoves drastically reduce particulates and will drastically improve the family's health.
- These stoves will allow the families to cook faster and spend less money on fuel. This would result in a direct decrease family expenditures.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND THE MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES

Moringa project shall purchase the stoves from dealers in Ghana and distribute said stoves to selected beneficiaries in exchange for their commitment to plant and nurture at least three Moringa trees.

Those families that might not be able to plant trees due to certain circumstances beyond their control will be awarded a small token amount. These funds would allow the families to purchase seeds and planting materials for other families to plant trees on their behalf. As the primary consumer for the Moringa products, ECO VITA funds the programs run by the Shape Lives Foundation. This NGO in turn purchased and distributed the stoves alongside Moringa seedlings. The beneficiaries are also scheduled to undertake a training program through which they would learn the benefits of using fuel-efficient stoves and the need to protect the environment.

Anti-Corruption Principles

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ECO VITA refuses to work in circumstances that compromises our ability to make decisions that go against our company's intent to spread goodwill, growth and development in all areas. This includes situations that might call for bribery or extortion and other such corrupt practices. We will refuse to do business with organizations that might be known to do so, utilizing monitoring agencies such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International and the like to guide our decisions.

Implementation

ECO VITA worked with a community leader (NGO leader of the Shape Lives Foundation) to monitor the working environment and write an annual report including how the fund has been allocated to the community to avoid bribery or extortion and other such corrupt practices.

Measurement of outcomes

ECO VITA confirmed the funds were used properly. We are given direct access to communicate with the employees through the use of video and email. Now, we regularly receive a report or update via video from the region. This video shows the [payment day ceremony](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6vmkUjJACg) (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-6vmkUjJACg>). The video shows that the employees are paid equally and all of the employees are involved in this process. This year, both the NGO leaders and the employees agreed to rehabilitate their processing center with the funds they received.