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Sustainable Entrepreneurship: A Case Study On Living Ground's "Creation Opportunity" Project

Living Ground is an innovative initiative driven by a grand vision to cultivate a sustainable and thriving community that harmonizes economic empowerment with ecological consciousness. At the heart of Living Ground is the commitment to creating a network of interconnected projects that bridge gaps between local agriculture, community skills, and market opportunities. Integral to this grander vision is the "Creation Opportunity," a key component focused on fostering entrepreneurship and sustainable development. Through vertical integration, this initiative spans from plant cultivation to the creation and sale of value-added products, ensuring both economic viability and environmental sustainability. The Creation Opportunity emphasizes knowledge transfer and skill development, equipping community members with the resources needed for successful and sustainable ventures.

As part of Living Ground's broader objectives, the Creation Opportunity contributes to the expansion into areas such as eco-tourism, flourishing market gardens, advanced soil laboratories, and ventures like a microbe café and natural health store. These initiatives create a holistic environment that enhances community engagement and well-being. Ultimately, Living Ground, through the Creation Opportunity and other projects, aims to transform lives, revitalize local economies, and demonstrate the powerful synergy between ecological health and community prosperity, laying the foundation for a sustainable future.

[The Grand Vision can be viewed HERE](#)

Creation Opportunity

Living Ground is proud to introduce the "Creation Opportunity" project, a transformative initiative designed to empower local men and women through the development of collaborative, self-run enterprises known as PODs. This project forms a cornerstone of our broader vision to foster sustainable communities by intertwining economic empowerment with ecological stewardship.

At the heart of the Creation Opportunity is the belief in enhancing community self-reliance and resilience. By sharing essential skills in product creation and business management, we aim to equip individuals with the knowledge and tools necessary to thrive as entrepreneurs. This initiative not only provides economic opportunities but also encourages sustainable agricultural practices that benefit both the environment and the community.

A key feature of the project is the establishment of a dedicated marketplace at the Living Ground Project Site, where products crafted by local PODs can be showcased and sold. These products will originate from our land and the lands of local farmers who have engaged in

ecological restoration following the [Soil Food Web science](#), symbolizing a full-circle approach to sustainability.

The Creation Opportunity is more than just a project; it's a movement toward building a vibrant, self-sustaining economy. By focusing on local resources and talents, the initiative seeks to create a resilient community model that can adapt to future challenges while safeguarding ecological integrity. Through this effort, Living Ground aspires to inspire collective action and establish a blueprint for communities aiming to integrate economic development with environmental responsibility.

Mission Statement Of “Creation Opportunity”

The “Creation Opportunity” project at Living Ground is designed to empower local men and women by fostering self-sustaining micro-enterprises, or PODs, within our Self Reliance Project. By offering comprehensive training in business, marketing, product creation from garden to product, essential oil production, and planting medicinal and culinary plants for use in products, we equip locals with the skills needed to establish and run successful enterprises under the umbrella of Living Ground. This initiative particularly focuses on empowering underprivileged individuals to achieve financial gain and independence, thereby contributing to economic growth and enhancing community resilience.

Vision Statement

The "Creation Opportunity" project is a key component of the grander vision of the Living Ground Project, which envisions a community where individuals are empowered to harness their skills and resources to build sustainable businesses that contribute to a vibrant local economy and rejuvenated soils, rooted in the principles of the soil food web. Through this initiative, we aim to cultivate a culture of innovation and self-reliance, equipping participants to transform their lives and communities using both ecological and economic principles. By integrating comprehensive training in business and product creation with the cultivation of medicinal and culinary plants, the Living Ground Project aspires to foster economic growth, community resilience, and ecological stewardship.

Project Leadership

Leisha, the founder of the Living Ground Project, leverages her extensive expertise as a Soil Food Web Consultant, Naturopath, Homeopath, Herbalist, and homesteader to empower local individuals with practical tools for health and sustainability. Her vision is to provide knowledge that enables participants to thrive, encompassing everything from soil health to gardens, food, and medicine. Emma McCabe, a dedicated local Dutch expat with a deep interest in gardening, food reliance, and natural products, volunteers her time and effort for the Creation Opportunity project, focusing on working closely with local men and women. Together, Leisha and Emma have already conducted workshops for locals, which have been recorded and detailed for ongoing and future training, enhancing the project's reach and effectiveness.

Project Description

The primary objective of the “Creation Opportunity” is to create self-sustaining PODs that operate within Living Ground’s Self Reliance Project. Participants will learn to create and market various products, including ferments, herbal teas, spice blends, soaps, and more. They may also manage the health store or café, operate essential oil production, sprouting, mushroom cultivation, and create microbe-rich compost (inoculant).

The current team of men will offer consultancy services based on Dr. Elaine Ingham’s teachings, where Leisha obtained her advanced consultancy training. All the participants will also be taught business skills such as accounting, business operations, marketing, inventory control and cooperative sharing of government relations. We do intend to have an internal sharing program so the different POD leaders can exchange their wares through a credit system. Full overview of the [Living Ground Project](#)

Living Ground’s “Creation Opportunity” project is dedicated to fostering sustainable economic growth and community empowerment through the development and support of diverse PODs. Our strategic goals involve:

Network Development: We are building a network of PODs that emphasize vertical integration, covering everything from plant cultivation to product creation and sales. This comprehensive strategy ensures that every step of the process contributes to both economic success and sustainability.

Knowledge Transfer and Skill Development: By applying the microbial principles of Soil Food Web science, we enable the transfer of knowledge and skills to community members. This approach empowers individuals with the resources necessary for sustainable and thriving entrepreneurship.

Expansion and Innovation: We aim to grow our initiatives through eco-tourism, robust market gardens, a fully-equipped soil laboratory, and ventures such as a microbe café and natural health store. These projects foster a comprehensive environment that enhances community engagement and well-being.

We are currently active in sharing product making with local women



Operational Foundation and Impact:

Our operations start with the production of microbe-rich compost, forming a crucial foundation for regenerating and sustaining the land. This compost is integral to our initiatives, supporting both extensive market gardens and commercial kitchen operations. By emphasizing beneficial microbes for nutrient cycling, we ensure that maintaining soil health directly enhances human well-being. We are currently restoring local farms and lands, with the intention of incorporating their harvests into the Living Ground product-making process. This approach ensures a full-circle benefit, fostering a symbiotic relationship between land restoration and community economic development, and highlighting the connection between ecological stewardship and community prosperity.

Community Context And Impact

In the local community, many women have limited educational opportunities and are often underpaid, restricting their economic independence. Men predominantly work in agriculture, earning \$110 per week or \$440 per month, which can be challenging for supporting families.

The “Creation Opportunity” project seeks to provide community members, particularly women, with opportunities to diversify their income beyond traditional agricultural work. Through self-sustaining PODs, participants receive training and resources to create and market products such as essential oils, ferments, herbal teas, and more, while also offering consultancy services. This initiative allows participants to develop economically viable skills, promoting a more equitable and prosperous community.

With our training program already underway, held every Saturday at the Project Site, we equip locals with the skills needed to succeed in these new ventures, fostering self-reliance and economic resilience.

These weekly workshops are being video-ed and compiled for future students.

Creation Opportunity



Business Skills



Product Making



Interdependent Enterprise



Every Sat
Project Site
9-3
\$3
Bring Our
Lunch

Living Ground is launching a "creation opportunity" to empower locals through collaborative self-employment PODs under our Self Reliance Project. These PODs will teach business skills and product creation (ferments, teas, spice blends, soaps, salsas, and more). Participants can align their talents with roles in our business model, from sales in our Whole Food Natural Health Microbe Store to Microbe Cafe operations, sprouting, essential oil manufacturing, microbe composting, land consulting, rare plant cultivation, greenhouse management, and future eco-tourism hospitality.

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Training Opportunities

The "Creation Opportunity" project offers a variety of training-focused PODs, each presenting unique business opportunities aimed at empowering local men and women with practical skills for sustainable living:

1. Essential Oils: Participants learn essential oil production, from cultivation to marketing, across three active sites.
2. Herbal Teas and Culinary Spice Blends: With herb gardens and a drying station, participants produce health-focused teas and spices.
3. Soaps, Natural Cleaning Products and Cosmetics: Training in crafting natural personal care products using microbe-grown plants and herbs.
4. Ferments and Salsas: Guided by Leisha's online course, participants master making probiotic-rich foods.
5. Microbe-Rich Composting: Techniques vital for sustainable agriculture, with active team participation.
6. Market Gardens and Food Forests: Skills to manage eco-friendly gardens and food forests.
7. Mushroom Cultivation: Training in growing diverse mushroom varieties at our Mushroom Laboratory.
8. Sprouting Operation: Expertise in sprouting for the Microbe Café and public sale.

9. The Project Site is currently being created to be a living example of Living Ground's Courses (www.livingground.net)
10. Eco-tourism and Hospitality: Skills in sustainable tourism and hospitality.
11. Craft Making: Using a Loom, participants learn to craft textiles like rugs and scarves.(a loom has already been acquired.
12. Wines, Vinegar, and Elixirs: Training in crafting fermented beverages, including wines and vinegar.

Most of these opportunities are designed for women's empowerment, though men are welcome to participate, fostering an inclusive environment for learning and enterprise. Through this project, Living Ground enhances community resilience and prosperity, supporting a vision of sustainable, holistic well-being. The current Living Ground Team (men) are fully trained in Dr Elaine's method for making microbe-rich compost and actively doing jobs.



Financial Needs

At the Project Site, we have identified approximately 115 m² of indoor space dedicated to the Natural Health Food Store and Microbe Café. Complementing this, our Commercial Kitchen has commenced basic renovations to establish a functioning workspace.

Adjacent to the commercial kitchen is a designated apothecary room for crafting products such as fermentations, elixirs, wines, and vinegars. While fully operationalizing this extensive area is ideal, we are implementing a phased approach.

In the initial phase, we plan to renovate a smaller, 15 m² area to kick-start the sales of locally made products and facilitate training programs. This preliminary setup allows us to immediately begin showcasing goods from our restored farms and lands, while providing a vital space for workshops and training sessions. As the project progresses and gains traction, we intend to expand the renovated area to support a wider array of activities and products, reinforcing our commitment to community empowerment and sustainable economic development.

Option 1: Initial Setup for a Small Store

Purpose: To get things going with a minimalistic setup focused on opening a small store.

Key Components: Shelving units, countertop, computer inventory system, display trays, tables for display, signage, fridge, interior paint, and basic products.

Cost: Approximately \$7,000 (see below)

Focus: Provides a foundational platform to begin sales and basic operations, allowing for immediate engagement with the community and showcasing of local products.

Option 2: Full Production Setup

Purpose: To establish a comprehensive facility inclusive of a store/café, commercial kitchen, and apothecary.

Key Components: Extensive shelving, kitchen equipment, seating, appliances, renovation work, lab and fermentation tools, and workstations across 115 m², supporting full-scale operations and diverse product creation.

Cost: Approximately \$41,060

Focus: Enables full production capabilities, offering a wide range of products and services, supporting community engagement, and facilitating larger scale economic development.

These options provide a phased approach to development, allowing the project to start small and scale up to full production as demand and resources permit.

To complete the 15m² area:

Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost	
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Shelving Units	5	\$50.00	\$250.00	
Countertop	1	\$400.00	\$400.00	
Computer Inventory System / Cash Register	1	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	
Display Trays	10	\$25.00	\$100.00	
Tables for Display	2	\$300.00	\$600.00	
Signage and Branding Materials		\$500.00	\$150.00	
Fridge for Product Storage	1	\$500.00	\$500.00	
Interior Paint and Basic Renovation	1	\$500.00	\$500.00	
Outdoor Garage or Farm Door	1	\$750.00	\$750.00	
Outdoor area for selling rare and unusual plants	1	\$900.00	\$900.00	
Electrical Set Up	1	\$400.00	\$400.00	
Base Supplies for Product Creation (bottles, labels, bags, etc)	1	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	
Estimated Labor Cost (\$150 per week/person)	1 week 3 persons	\$450.00	\$450.00	
				\$7,000.00

Here are the financial needs for the 115 m2 store/cafe, commercial kitchen and apothecary:

Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost	
Shelving Units	20	\$10.00	\$2,000.00	
Computer Inventory System / Cash Register	1	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	
Countertop	2	\$200.00	\$400.00	
Simple Kitchen Prep Area	1	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	
Serving Plates, Dishes, Utensils (with logo)	20	\$25.00	\$500.00	
Trays	20	\$10.00	\$200.00	
Tables and Chairs (Indoor)	5	\$300.00	\$1,500.00	
Tables and Chairs (Outdoor)	5	\$400.00	\$2,000.00	
Serving Utensils and Tools	20	\$5.00	\$100.00	
Salt, Pepper, Salsa Holders, Spice Holders	10	\$50.00	\$500.00	
Sink and Washing Area	2	\$500.00	\$1,000.00	

Outside Doors	3	\$120.00	\$360.00	
Garage Door	1	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	
Stove	1	\$500.00	\$500.00	
Fridges	2	\$400.00	\$800.00	
Freezer	2	\$400.00	\$800.00	
Stand Up Fridge to Sell Products	1	\$500.00	\$500.00	
Stand Up Freezer to Sell Products	1	\$750.00	\$750.00	
Pots and Pans	20	\$30.00	\$600.00	
Exterior Renovations (Garden Areas)	1	\$500.00	\$500.00	
Interior Renovations - Wall Removal, Paint	1	\$750.00	\$750.00	
Blenders and Food Processors	3	\$500.00	\$1,500.00	
Tile on Floor	1	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00	
Paint for Ceiling and Walls	1	\$500.00	\$500.00	
Raised Garden Beds and Landscaping	1	\$750.00	\$750.00	
Estimated Labor Cost (\$150 per week/person)	4 weeks, 4 individuals	\$500.00	\$2,000.00	
Subtotal				\$22,710.00
Commercial Kitchen				
Item	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost	
Storage Containers	20	\$20.00	\$400.00	
Pots, Pans, Bowls, Food Storage Containers	1	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	
Plates, Dishes, Cups (Logoed), Utensils for 50	50	\$30.00	\$1,500.00	
Bus Bins and Carts	4	\$200.00	\$800.00	
Lab and Apothecary Equipment	1	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	
Containers, Glass Jars for Mass Elixirs and Tonics	30	\$20.00	\$600.00	
Bottles for Products (Various Sizes)	1	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	
Freeze Dry Machine	1	\$3,000.00	\$3,000.00	
Fans	6	\$50.00	\$300.00	
Tubs and Utensils for Fermentation	10	\$50.00	\$500.00	
Shelving Units for 20 m (Ceiling to Floor)	1	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	

Working Tables/Stations	4	\$150.00	\$600.00	
Computer/Label Maker/Printers	1	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	
Califon Water Heater	1	\$250.00	\$250.00	
Cleaning Supplies and Towels	1	\$500.00	\$500.00	
Propane Tanks	5	\$60.00	\$300.00	
Estimated Labor Cost (\$150 per week/person)	2 weeks, 2 individuals	\$300.00	\$600.00	
Subtotal				\$18,350.00
Total Required for Complete Set up				\$41,060.00

Call To Action:

The Creation Opportunity project at Living Ground is already making significant strides in empowering local men and women by providing them with invaluable skills in product creation and entrepreneurship. With a focus on training participants in areas such as business, marketing, and the production of goods from garden to product, we are not only fostering economic growth but also enhancing community resilience.

We have begun engaging with community members in hands-on workshops and training sessions, equipping them with the practical knowledge needed for creating sustainable enterprises. As we move forward, the phased development of our facilities—starting with the initial 15 m² store—is set to further strengthen these efforts.

This initiative is part of a larger project that embodies a full-circle approach, connecting local farm restoration and rejuvenation to the production of healthy products. By revitalizing the land and transforming harvested produce into market-ready goods, we highlight the interconnectedness of ecological sustainability and community empowerment.

Our vision extends to establishing a full-scale operational hub, complete with a store/café, commercial kitchen, and apothecary, which will provide the community with a range of opportunities for growth and self-reliance. By integrating ecological principles with economic development, the Creation Opportunity project remains committed to transforming lives and revitalizing the local economy.

We invite you to support this innovative model for community empowerment and sustainability. Join us on this transformative journey to create a sustainable future for generations to come. Your involvement will be pivotal in helping us achieve these goals and foster a resilient, thriving community.

