Changing compensation strategies to spur sales in Burkina Faso.

When something doesn’t work quite right, you have to change your strategy

In order to sell to people in Burkina Faso, you need to have a license from the government. iDE’s original implementation of the Farm Business Advisor model (called Conseiller de Business Agricole [CBAs] in Burkina Faso) paired CBAs with merchant retailers who had these licenses.

iDE provided a basic salary to the CBA, who could also earn a 13% commission on every order he or she brought to the merchant partner, who earned 12% on the wholesale price. The pair then worked together to fulfill the order and the CBA would install it.

What we discovered was that CBAs were not making enough money under this arrangement. After a program review, the iDE team in Burkina modified the model. We assisted CBAs in filing the paperwork to obtain their own government sales license (roughly $83 per year) and changed the compensation structure so that the CBA could receive a 25% commission for any sales they made by themselves. Retailers that made their own sales could still pay the CBA 13% to assist in the installing. This is where the Entrepreneur Conseiller de Business Agricole (ECBA) was created. This expands their role, merging the CBA and the merchant.

And this new model is starting to work. Sales are increasing with retailers focused on sales near urban centers while ECBAs focus on those customers further away from existing infrastructure, which we call the “last mile” client. This new potential has drawn support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, which provided funding in early 2017 for iDE to train an additional 250 ECBAs. Through this, iDE will be able to expand the program beyond selling irrigation kits to also include sales of improved seeds and solar pumps, as well as agricultural services.

Other aspects of the model include initially focusing on specific areas of the country—Centre (Ouagadougou), North (Ouahigouya), Centre-West (Koudougou)—rather than trying to work in all regions. iDE is also working on increasing options for rural farmers to grow throughout the year, diversify their crops, and connect them to urban markets to sell their harvests.

Photo Caption

This farmer first saw drip irrigation at an iDE demonstration farm over 18 months ago. It was in that moment she decided to buy a system for herself. She started working with one of iDE’s local Farm Business Advisors who helped her to set up her drip irrigation system, plant and harvest her zucchini crop, and find a buyer in the local market.
The Burkina Faso Context
Burkina Faso is an arid, land-locked country in West Africa. Rural communities in Burkina Faso face many challenges including a lack of access to water for production and poor access to improved sanitation facilities. Agriculture represents 32 percent of its gross domestic product and occupies 80 percent of the working population. The country experiences some of the most radical climatic variation in the world, ranging from severe flooding to extreme drought. Farm production is affected by years of deforestation, overgrazing of animals, and a population growth that is the sixth-highest in the world.

Burkina Faso ECBAs By the Numbers
- 166 clients per 1 ECBA
- More than 2,000 clients served to date
- Average ECBA annual income: $1800
- Each ECBA travels an average of 5-15 km per day

iDE
iDE creates income and livelihood opportunities for poor rural households across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. iDE builds markets in a range of sectors, including agriculture, water, sanitation, hygiene, and access to finance.

Contact Us
Phone: (+226) 25 47 32 00
E-mail: BurkinaFaso@ideglobal.org
ideglobal.org