



Martina Castro

Host organization: Meds & Food for Kids (MFK)

ICats role: Finance and Business Development Officer

ICats duration: Feb – Dec 2014 (full-time)

Degree: Masters in International Affairs (Switzerland)

Professional experience: 5 years of professional experience in philanthropy and impact investing

Summary

Martina applied her previous experience in strategy consulting for the social sector to help MFK developing a more sustainable and profitable business model. Throughout the year at MFK, Martina worked with the Executive Director and the Board to assess the current strategy, design a new business plan and venture in new markets.

The problem MFK aims to tackle

- One in ten children in Haiti is acutely malnourished and one in five is underweight.
- 60% of the population lives on less than 2 dollars a day, and 80% does not have a formal job.



MFK's solution

- Locally produce a highly effective treatment for malnutrition (RUTF) using as many Haitian inputs as possible.
- Works with local farmers to improve their farming techniques and to grow more and better peanuts. MFK also provides training and work to over 40 Haitian employees.

MFKs challenges

This high capital intensive, low profit margin operation is particularly vulnerable to volatile demand from key customers (UNICEF, WFP) and poses a challenge to the overall sustainability of the mission.



Opportunity for an ICats Fellow

Vision and determination was needed to design and implement a new strategy that would minimize the risks inherent to the existing business model and help the organization diversify products and markets.

“The specific setting of Haiti and of working in a very resource-limited organization made the fellowship all the more challenging and maximized my opportunity for growth. This was exactly what I was looking for.”

“This year opened my eyes to the reality of social enterprises and even more appreciative of the impact that is achieved every day on the ground.”

Martina

Martina's achievements ...



- Designed a new strategy and business model that will guarantee greater financial sustainability for the entire organization
- Spearheaded new product development, including, market research, product design, supply chain development, financial modeling and distribution strategy development
- Implemented new accounting and financial tools and empowering local staff to manage these processes
- Successfully won the support of the Government for MFK's new business venture

Martina's next challenge

Martina will stay on as a full time consultant to continue supporting and advising MFK's Board and Management and acting as a *liaison* with the Government

...contributing to MFK's impact



- Further establish local leadership for national procurement, expanding customer base to over 50 national and international customers in Haiti
- Global expansion to Africa and Central America and recognized global supplier for UNICEF and the WFP: exported 125MT of product worth over \$500,000
- Bought over 30 MT of local peanuts and committed to increase purchase to 50MT in 2015

“We feel very fortunate to have had Martina as an ICats Fellow. We are grateful to her for her hard work and admirable personal characteristics and to LGT VP for the ICats Program who found her and referred her to MFK.”
Dr. Patricia Wolff, Founder and Executive Director of Meds & Food for Kids