**Case Study**

Emerging leaders initiative

**What’s the issue?**

We need to do all we can secure supply in an increasingly competitive, resource-constrained world. We believe ‘sustainability’ can make us a natural customer of choice for suppliers around the world, if we demonstrate that investment in their workers, their workers’ families, local communities and environment, is good business, not simply good will.

This why we’ve launched our Global Community Programme, with a clear vision of driving growth and increased efficiency through partnerships along our supply chain. In plain terms, we aim to become a more resilient business by empowering people in our supply chains to build more resilient local communities.

**What are we doing about it?**

Over the past few years we have also identified several root cause issues that affect workers, but are difficult or impossible for employers to resolve in isolation. These include debt, poor health and sanitation, inadequate childcare and education, climate change, poor water stewardship and deforestation.

In 2013, an Oxfam report highlighted several of these issues in our supply chains in Kenya, where we with our suppliers have run numerous initiatives to improve workers’ conditions over 15 years. The report highlighted the communities where many workers lived had some significant challenges around sanitation, security, education and adequate childcare and made a number of recommendations - including setting up collectives to increase the bargaining power of small-scale growers and enable new growers to enter the market, providing better training and support for workers, particularly women, in and outside the workplace.

Our suppliers felt overwhelmed by scale of the issues and how to make a meaningful difference and it was clear to us that this wasn’t something we could ‘do for’ those affected. We needed to empower individuals in their communities to take the lead. We decided to work with Emerging Leaders, an NGO that provides MBA quality leadership training, packaged in a way that anyone can understand and benefit from. Typically, they run an intensive three-day training programme, Leadership for Hope, that takes participants on an incredible journey to a new mind-set and empowers them to take others on the same journey as leaders in their communities. We believed they would be the ideal partner for us.

**What have we achieved so far?**

Building a pilot programme in Kenya during 2012, around 3,500 supply chain workers in Kenya, east Africa and South Africa have now completed Emerging Leaders Leadership for Hope training, but the nature of the training means that their involvement has had a positive impact on the lives of many thousands more. And in just two years Emerging Leaders gone from having 2 qualified Emerging Leaders trainers to 30.

Third party assessment and monitoring, some of which uses mobile technology to track impact on participants over 12 months, shows that the programme is making a significant difference - for those who compete training, their co-workers, families, local communities and employers.

Almost 93% of those who complete the programme (which has 99% attendance and 0% drop-out rates) say they believe the training will impact their lives greatly, 100% leave the programme committed and equipped to running community & income generating projects, with 45% of them improving their livelihoods as a direct result (in Nyeri interim data shows up to 93% increase in income and 50% increase in household savings)- often by earning further income or saving more. We also know that every participant shares what they learn with an average of 20 people within the first month, with some sharing with up to 500 people. At present for every 100 people trained, there are at least 20 income generating programmes still running a year later - with 65% of all projects started by women.

These are pretty phenomenal statistics - so perhaps it’s no surprise that the programme...
What have we achieved so far? (cont’d)

has been awarded DFID and IDH funding to scale up operations over the next two years.

Workers and their communities clearly benefit from Emerging Leaders Leadership for Hope programme, but so do employers. Many tell us that the programme has led to improved productivity, better retention of high quality, motivated employees and less dependency on casual labour. And there’s little doubt that the programme is also helping us to build resilience and security in our supply chains, improving our relationships with suppliers and creating a story that resonates with our employees and customers.

What happens next?

We aim to roll out the programme across our whole foods supply chain - from Kenya through East Africa, into South Africa. Having completed successful pilots in Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone there is the potential to scale up in West Africa as well as Asia. By 2015, we should have 90 trainers, with the potential to train 100,000 leaders and spark 500,000 positive impacts which reaches significantly beyond the Marks and Spencer supply chain.

What lessons have we learnt?

Emerging Leaders has taught us some valuable lessons that we can replicate way beyond this specific programme.

Primarily that:

• We achieve much more if we ‘embed’ programmes into our contracts and relationships with suppliers Importance of using our partnership framework and investing time with partners to agree strategic objectives, timescales and success measures with them

• Key to collect qualitative and quantitative data to measuring Impact and that mobile technology can be very effective at doing this.

• Scaling up great ideas takes time and requires patience , we always expect progress to be quicker than it really is

• The content of Emerging Leaders and other programmes needs to be tailored to make sure it’s relevant to participants at a local level