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Excellence in Social & Community Investment

awards

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SPECIAL SECTION

Inspirational stories of work with:

- ▶ The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- ▶ Save the Children International
- ▶ The Joe Martin ALS Foundation
- ▶ Higher Achievement... and more

PLUS

Coverage of the Excellence in Social & Community Awards Gala

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Deloitte Consulting

Counterfeiting in African agricultural input sectors, including seed, fertilizer and crop protection products, is estimated to be an over \$1 billion industry, directly affecting one of the world's poorest populations: smallholder farmers in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Diluted, expired and substandard products, re-used and tampered packages and imitation brands are prolific across Sub-Saharan Africa. Farmers who use counterfeit agricultural inputs risk significant crop damage, driving down incomes and thus livelihoods.

As a result, trustworthy agro-dealers are forced out of the market when they can't compete with low-cost, counterfeit manufacturers—forcing some farmers to travel further for genuine inputs and causing others, who continue to buy fakes, to lose trust in inputs altogether. Furthermore, untested and dangerous crop protection products pose significant food safety, environmental and health risks.

And that's where the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation comes into the picture. With a mission guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty.

"I think the Foundation realized that this is more of a social issue, not just a business issue. They are acting as a catalyst for smallholder farmers in Africa and also playing a catalytic role in market development that improves the lives of the farmers and the business of agriculture in Africa—that's a win-win, says Jerry O'Dwyer, Principal, and Leader of Deloitte's Social Impact Service Line.

Deloitte has a long-standing relationship with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, O'Dwyer says.

Walter de Boef, Senior Program Officer Input Delivery at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, says Deloitte did a great job understanding the problem, as well as teaming with the Foundation and partners in Africa to bring clarity to a complex issue.

"We selected them based on their good insights and understanding on how these markets operate in Africa and they had people with a good background in technology," de Boef says.

Deloitte Consulting's Social Impact Service Line, which just launched in June, worked in collaboration with the Foundation's Global Development team to study this problem in Sub-Saharan Africa. Deloitte deployed in-country teams to conduct primary research and work closely with companies across the entire value chain: farmers, agro-dealers, distributors, manufacturers and government entities.

Initially a nine-week project, Deloitte conducted market research, specifically focusing on Ghana and Uganda, to better understand the types of counterfeiting that exist and its root causes. Most importantly, the team sought to understand what types of scalable solutions could be implemented to address this problem.

All together, O'Dwyer says it will end up being a six- to nine-month commitment with an overall impact of more than \$20 million to smallholder farmers in Uganda.

The solution? A coin-scratch verification code on bags of fertilizer that farmers can text to the manufacturer to verify, in essentially real time, that



Jerry O'Dwyer

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what they're buying is legitimate.

As far as the new Social Impact Service Line, O'Dwyer says Deloitte launched it as a way to codify work it was already doing and to provide a career path for our people that were interested in serving the non-profit sector. "We had a very proud history of serving both the private and public sector, but what we were missing before acquiring Monitor is the social sector," he says. "We see a real blurring of the lines of the private, public and social sector to tackle what I'll call the world's problems. So, we were thrilled to put together a service line where people could do great work, and quite frankly, get goose bumps doing it."