Public Initiatives for Realizing Property Rights

Azerbaijan

Rasul Jafarov
Organization type: nonprofit/ngo/citizen sector
Budget: $10,000 - $50,000
Website: http://www.freeeconomy.az/

- Civil rights
- Community development
- Citizen sector
- Corruption
- Land rights
- Media
- Social work

Project Summary

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Idea based on the assistance to secure the property rights of people in area called Sovetski which remained unnoticed for 20 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union. We intend to insure this right through publicizing and advocating idea. Idea includes assistance in the prevention of a violation to take the property from them, protecting their right to use their properties and solving problems.

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

The major problem is that most people in this area are indifferent to the idea of officially registering their properties. People believe that they will face bureaucratic obstacles and will be asked to pay a bribe. Some people simply don’t know what to do to obtain these documents, where to turn to, or are not aware of procedures. The documents belonging to some people in this area are already outdated, because they were given when Azerbaijan was part of the Soviet Union. These documents need to be changed. However, the abovementioned two problems make this problem more difficult.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

First of all, the choice of this area - where we want to implement this project – indicates that our idea is unique. This project covers former Sovetsky area (This area is called Sovetskiy because Azerbaijan had been part of the Soviet Union until 1991), the poorest area in Baku. Approximately more than 40 thousand people live there, and most of these people don’t own documents regulating their property rights. No project to secure people’s property rights has ever been carried out in this area on behalf of the government or NGOs in the country. In addition, the methods considered to realize the project makes the idea exceptional: work will be carried out on three strategic directions during the project – advocacy, publicizing and legal assistance.

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

The primary social impact of our idea is that we will be able to assist large masses of population through assisting certain groups of people. For instance, a specific program (for example: ‘Protect Your Property Rights!’) dedicated to these issues will be broadcasted on online Objective TV with which we have close connections. The beneficiaries of our project, experts, and project implementers will be invited to this TV as guests. The Objective TV will also cover the court trials conducted on our lawsuits. Having relevant, proper documents regarding their property rights will prevent people from remaining homeless in the streets when they face the reality to sell their properties. The fact is that the property without proper documents is cheaper than the one with the proper documents. International conference dedicated to the property rights will be a different means of social impact. We will provide information concerning our work and existing problems. TV channels and press operating in the country are interested in covering international conferences. It will attract the attention of broader masses of population to these issues if at least one of the eight nationwide TV channels and several leading newspapers cover the conference.

About You

Organization:
Section 1: About You

First Name
Rasul

Last Name
Jafarov

Website
http://www.freeeconomy.az/

Country
BA

Section 2: About Your Organization

Is your initiative connected to an established organization?

Organization Name
Public Association for Assistance to Free Economy

Organization Phone
(+994 12) 4371820

Organization Address
J.Jabbarly str. 44, Caspian Plaza 3, 9th floor, Baku, Azerbaijan, AZ1065

Organization Country
BA

How long has this organization been operating?
15 years

Your idea

Country your work focuses on
BA

Innovation

Do you have a patent for this idea?

Impact

Actions
First, we will publicize the issue, to do this, special programs will be prepared on online Objective TV, and the TV crew will cover all the work implemented and events organized within the framework of the project. In addition, we will appeal to the TV channels broadcast via local frequencies to air our material. Second step considers the conduction of advocacy work. We will hold special trainings and meetings to make the people in this area aware of the issues. Hotlines will be established for this purpose, when the number of people calling the hotlines reaches twenty, we will organize trainings. During the trainings, important information will be given to people regarding their rights and the ways of doing their paper work. Third step affects the filing of lawsuits. This means a special expert group will be organized to investigate problems faced by people after they appeal to state organizations. The major obstacles are artificial impediments that are likely to be created by state organizations. However, the project envisages that state organs will be sued in case they create artificial obstacles, and the court trials will be followed to the end.

Results
The major result we expect during the first year is that broad masses of people will be involved in this issue and the involvement process will go on. During the first year we expect that trainings will be conducted, people will be involved to participate in the trainings, and people will turn to state organs after these trainings to register their properties. In addition, during the first year legal assistance will begin to be provided for people whose appeals were not fulfilled. During the second year we expect to continue publicizing our issue. Besides, we believe that during this period court trials will be at their latest stage; they will be ready to be sent to the ECHR. However, it is possible that some courts will fulfill several lawsuits. During the third year communication will be held on the appeals to be sent to the ECHR and to achieve the adoption of successful decisions.

How many people will your project serve annually?

1001 10,000

What is the average monthly household income in your target community, in US Dollars?

$100 1000

Does your project seek to have an impact on public policy?

Yes

No
The activities carried out within the framework of this type of projects, in any case affect the public policy. First of all, the number of persons applying for registration of property rights will go up. This, in its turn, will lead to acceleration of documentation procedure. Moreover, coverage of current problems on property rights in the aforementioned territory, will spark some reaction by the bodies, which are involved in this sphere. It is also not ruled out that there will be some positive changes in the operation of state agencies involved in registration of property rights. Namely, they will try to take action much more cautiously and to avoid illegal affairs.

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### Sustainability

What stage is your project in?
Operating for less than a year

Does your organization have a board of directors or an advisory board?
Yes

Does your organization have any non monetary partnerships with NGOs?
Yes

Does your organization have any non monetary partnerships with businesses?
Yes

Does your organization have any non monetary partnerships with government?
Yes

Please tell us more about how partnerships could be critical to the success of your innovation.

Most of our partners would be glad for our successes achieved in the framework of this project. However, the main criticism can be expected from the ruling authorities. Namely, the top-level authorities claim that there are no serious problems regarding property rights, but the reality is different. The ruling authorities can claim that we can damage the country's image by carrying out this project. Nonetheless, in our practices, we have already become used to this kind of criticism, while implementing different projects. Usually we hold discussion on this type of criticism during the events or with the help of press.

We would like to learn more about how your initiative is financially supported. Please explain your business plan/revenue model

We have been doing some activities on this idea for 2 months. These activities mainly included some monitoring activities in the aforementioned area, meetings with the residents in the courtyards. These activities were carried out at the expense of the internal reserves of the organization and its members. With the aim to enhance these activities, in the next phase we began to search for organizations financing this type of projects and found some information in the internet about the project you announced. In other words, one of the key aims is to apply to donors to finance this project and continue this work in a regular manner. So far we have not met announcements of donors who want to support this type of projects, but we are continuing our searches and in case we find such announcements we will apply and submit projects.

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### The Story

What was the defining moment that led you to this innovation?

People in the target area don’t know anything about their regular rights, not to mention property rights. This area remained out of attention of state organs and civil society, and these people need urgent assistance. Certain owners regularly raise initiatives to tear down houses in this area and we do not exclude that the government will support these initiatives. If this happens, hundreds of people will face the danger of simply being thrown into the streets because they have no supporting documents on the land or houses. Some people have documents, but they are old. These people do not know what to do. Some people have information about their own rights, but their work opportunities are limited. The parliamentarian elected during 2005 Parliamentary Elections renounced his mandate as a deputy. As a result, these people don’t have a representative in the Parliament. On the other hand, state organs and NGOs do not take the property rights of these people seriously. All these details make the conduction of a new project in this area unavoidable.

Tell us about the social innovator—the person—behind this idea.

The author of this idea is Rasul Jafarov, who was born and grew up in the area where the project is planned to be realized. He has university degrees in International Law and European Law and began to work at a journalist organization after he returned from military service in 2007. In addition, he is the Public Association for Assistance to Free Economy (PAAFE) consultant on the issues related to property rights. Jafarov began his work as human rights defender in 2005. He was the coordinator of “Magam” Civil Movement which was engaged in securing political rights. Jafarov provided legal assistance to citizens in the Law Clinics at his university. He was the winner of 2010 competition announced by the International Bridges to Justice (IBJ).

How did you first hear about Changemakers?

Web Search (e.g., Google or Yahoo)

If through another source, please provide the information.

Approximately 50 words left (400 characters).

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Additional

Which (if any) of the following strategies apply to your organization or company (check as many as apply)

Policy advocacy to strengthen property rights or increase security of tenure, Formalizing and documenting property rights (i.e. titling, leasing or certification), Legal education and awareness.

Please explain how your work furthers one or many of the above strategies (if you selected “other”, please explain your strategy)
The main activity directions of our organization were built on chosen strategies. In fact, we provide people with information about their property rights and how to strengthen them, hold different meetings, and convince them that they should have these rights. As a result of this, people appeal to related organizations to register their property rights officially and receive relevant documents.

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