Scaling Women’s Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Energy Access

Seminar on Ensuring Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All (SDG 7), Addis Ababa, June 30, 2016
Energy poverty IS a Gender Issue: Women as agents of change

Women KEY to build market trust to increase user adaptation
Women KEY to lower customer acquisition & servicing cost
Women KEY to reach “last inch” of the last mile
Solar Sister is eradicating energy poverty and mitigating climate change by empowering women with economic opportunity.
Solar Sister is strengthening the complete ecosystem for increasing women’s access to sustainable energy and opportunities.

MANUFACTURERS

...Produce durable, affordable lights and cookstoves, but need a way to get them to their customers in the last mile.

SOLAR SISTER TEAM

...Provides the backbone of the women’s enterprise by recruiting, training, and supporting clean energy entrepreneurs.

SOLAR SISTER ENTREPRENEURS

...Earn an income by building independent, clean energy businesses and bring energy access to their communities.

COMMUNITIES

...Benefit from solar lights and efficient cookstoves. This creates ripple benefits for home finances, education, health, and more!
SOLAR SISTER’S BUILDING BLOCK # 1:
STRONG UPSTREAM SUPPLY CHAIN - OFF-GRID SOLAR BASKET

MANUFACTURERS

Produce durable, affordable lights and cookstoves, but need a way to get them to their customers in the last mile.

sells products to Solar Sister

- Solar Sister is a Lighting Global Associate
- Diverse manufacturing partners
- Small/Medium/Large solar solutions for light, phone charging, home, business, education, healthcare solutions
A women led door-to-door provider of clean Energy for Africa’s last mile

Portable Solar Lamps

Portable Solar Lamps with phone charging capability

Small Home Systems/Mobile phone charging solutions

Clean Cook Stoves
Solar Sister’s Building Block # 1:
Strong Upstream Supply Chain - Clean Cookstoves Basket

Manufacturers

Produce durable, affordable lights and cookstoves, but need a way to get them to their customers in the last mile.

Sells products to Solar Sister

✓ Driven by Solar Sister entrepreneur & customer demand
✓ Compliments solar portfolio for meeting both electric and heating needs
SOLAR SISTER’S BUILDING BLOCK # 2:
GENDER INCLUSIVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Our Values: Sisterhood, Grit, Trust

- Advancing Women’s leadership at all levels – CEO, Board Chair, Staffing
- Recruit, Train & Support team for distributed operations: women form > 90% team
- Local green job creation and enterprise skills development for women
“Leadership is influence, finding your voice and helping others find theirs.” – Solar Sister Business Development Associate, Uganda

“Empowering is believing in oneself for change, no matter the circumstances.” – Solar Sister Business Development Associate, Uganda

Human Centered Design Principles & Agency Based Empowerment – Pilot Training of Trainers
SOLAR SISTER’S BUILDING BLOCK # 3:  
CONSISTENT & QUALITY SUPPORT TO SOLAR SISTER ENTREPRENEURS

SOLAR SISTER ENTREPRENEURS

Earn an income by building independent, clean energy businesses and bring energy access to their communities.

- Dedicated staff to Recruit-Train-Support Solar Sister Entrepreneurs
- Complete business in a bag and last mile stock delivery
- Business, leadership, technology and agency based empowerment training
**Solar Sister’s Building Block #4:**

**Local Community Partnerships**

**Communities**

Benefit from solar lights and efficient cook-stoves. This creates ripple benefits for home finances, education, health, and more!

☑ Community as partner, champion and customer – Over 655,145 beneficiaries
☑ Grassroots Partnerships with women’s groups, savings associations, education, health and conservation focused local organizations.
Source: HOW SOLAR SISTER BRINGS LIGHT, HOPE, AND OPPORTUNITY TO WOMEN IN AFRICA, A qualitative assessment by the International Center for Research on Women, 2016
3 countries, 2500 Solar Sister Entrepreneurs, > 655,000 end users
Locally run programs in: Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria
Hadija, like many of our Solar Sister entrepreneurs, lives in a rural community where most of her neighbors are farmers. She describes how the one-time cost of solar fits better with the seasonal sale of farm produce than the weekly cost of kerosene. And it means families can count on light all year round— for studying, businesses, and life.

“To progress, first you need light.”

Esupati is a nurse and a Solar Sister entrepreneur. She remembers working during a cholera outbreak where her clinic ran out of kerosene, and couldn’t care for their patients at night. This, she says, is why she works so hard to bring solar light to her communities.

“I wish that every hospital-- if they don’t have electricity-- they must have solar.”

Beatrice is a head-teacher and Solar Sister entrepreneur. She is able to sell solar lights to the families of many of the students in her school, making it easier for those students to study at night. When she speaks of her students’s accomplishments, and what she hopes for their future, Beatrice glows with pride.

“You see those students who use solar, their progress is good.”
Solar Sister Julieth Molel, Tanzania
Solar Sister Julieth, Tanzania
Agness Daudi, 50 years old, purchased her clean cookstove from her neighbor and friend Solar Sister Julieth.
Solar Sister Julieth Mollel is paying her granddaughter Ritha’s school fees. Ritha wants to be a scientist.
Solar Sister Fatma Mziray, Tanzania
Solar Sister Fatma Mziray sees herself helping her community as she no longer sees the people that she has sold cookstoves have red eyes, coughing or sick like they used to be.
Power of Sisterhood

Solar Sister Sadia Abdallah started as a customer. She enjoys being a part of the sisterhood group and their friendship.

Solar Sister Grace Mbwambo heard of Solar Sister business through her savings group, and joined to increase her income.

Solar Sister Grace Kimaro has invested income to hire a tractor for her farm.

Solar Sister Mwunaidi Msuya’s children study longer with solar lights, and her income helps with school fees.
“What makes me wake up early every morning, take my cookstoves and go to my business is to be able to take my children to school as well as to get food and other family needs.” Solar Sister Fatma
Solar Sister Fatma is using solar light to protect her cows from hyenas
WHAT ARE THE SOLAR SISTER ENTREPRENEURS FAVORITE PARTS ABOUT WORKING WITH SOLAR SISTER?

- **47%** Income/Personal Benefits
- **19%** Quality of Products/Warranty
- **14%** Skill Development
- **10%** Helping the Community
- **7%** Networking/Sisterhood
- **3%** Other

Source: International Center for Research on Women’s Impact Assessment 2016
WHAT DO SOLAR SISTER ENTREPRENEURS SPEND THE MAJORITY OF THEIR EARNINGS ON?

- Basic Household Needs: 29%
- School Fees: 27%
- Savings: 22%
- Reinvestment in Other Business: 9%
- Reinvestment in Solar Sister Business: 5%
- Other: 8%

Source: International Center for Research on Women’s Impact Assessment 2016
Customers Matter

**AS A RESULT OF USING CLEAN COOKSTOVES CUSTOMERS REPORTED SAVING:**

- **1.6 HOURS** per week in time spent on fuel collection
- **$1.92** per week in reduced expenditure on wood
- **$2.41** per week in reduced expenditure on charcoal.

**AS A RESULT OF USING SOLAR LANTERNS CUSTOMERS REPORTED SAVING:**

- **1.5 HOURS** per week from switching to solar lighting
- **1.7 HOURS** per week from switching to solar mobile charging
- **$3.23** per week in reduced kerosene costs
- **$2.69** per week in reduced mobile charging costs

Source: International Center for Research on Women’s Impact Assessment 2016
WOMEN’S AUTONOMY & DECISION MAKING

Source: International Center for Research on Women’s Impact Assessment 2016
Growing Solar Sister’s Impact

2010
1 COUNTRY
10 ENTREPRENEURS
2K PEOPLE REACHED

2015
3 COUNTRIES
2K ENTREPRENEURS
250K PEOPLE REACHED

2020
5 COUNTRIES
5K ENTREPRENEURS
5M PEOPLE REACHED
Vision 2025: Solar Sister Growth Horizon

- **Business Model Validation**
  - 2010-2016
- **Operational Excellence**: 10x customers/impact, >2X Revenue
  - 2020
- **Key Partnerships Piloted**
  - Health, Ag, Environment
- **Solar Sister School of Entrepreneurship**
  - 2025
- **African Expansion**: 10 countries
- **Pilot Franchises**: Incubator in Asia & Latin America
- **Dedicated Impact Initiatives** – Health, Education, Agriculture, Environment, Livelihoods, Humanitarian

- Source: McKinsey Growth Horizons
Thank You