



Solar Sister : Uganda

A green energy revolution powered by women

Project description

Solar Sister empowers African women by providing them with clean energy and economic opportunities. The initiative aims to spread solar power across Africa with the help of a direct sales network. By providing access to electricity in rural areas, especially for women, it helps to close the gender technology gap.



Business model

Solar Sister trains women to become entrepreneurs, providing them with a "business in a bag". This consists of an initial stock of portable solar products, plus training and marketing materials. The female entrepreneurs then sell the products in rural areas, earning a commission on each sale.

Solar Sister works in partnership with grassroots women's groups, ensuring that the provision of clean energy forms a part of development programmes. The plan in the coming years is to scale up the initiative, currently operating in Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan, to cover five more sub-Saharan countries.

Scaling up activities in 2012

- Train another 200 Solar Sister entrepreneurs
- Establish 20 teams with local staff providing a high level of support and accountability
- Provide 75,000 people with clean solar light
- Replace kerosene lamps with solar lamps, reducing the amount of kerosene used by over 8 million litres

Immediate needs

- Additional staff and training
- Improved monitoring and evaluation systems
- Links to investors who can provide working capital
- Collaborative relationships for improving marketing skills and raising awareness





SEED Awards 2011

for entrepreneurship in sustainable development

WINNER

Partnership

- ❶ **The Mother's Union of Uganda** helps identify business opportunities, select potential entrepreneurs and carry out monitoring.
- ❷ **D.light** is one of Solar Sister's product partners and assists with capacity-building and marketing.
- ❸ **Barefoot Power** is a technology partner and helps with product promotion.
- ❹ **Nokero** is a product partner and also assists with marketing and product promotion.
- ❺ **The Uganda Carbon Bureau** acts as a knowledge resource on developments in carbon finance markets.



Social, environmental and economic impacts

Social impact: So far, Solar Sister has empowered around 130 female entrepreneurs in Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan, training them and offering them employment. The initiative closes the gender technology gap by providing lighting to women in rural areas. It now plans to scale up its start-up operation in Uganda and so extend its impact.

Environmental impact:

As the primary consumers of household energy, women are key players in the shift to clean energy. By including

women in the energy supply chain, Solar Sister effectively promotes clean energy provision to households. This then leads to improved air quality and lower CO₂ emissions.

Economic impact: On a community level, the primary economic impact of the initiative is to reduce considerably the amount of money spent on kerosene lighting – currently 30% of household income. Solar Sister provides electrification to rural areas, which further contributes to community development.

Contact

Evelyn Namara

Email: solarsister.org@gmail.com, www.solarsister.org

SEED Partners

SEED's founding partners are the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) and SEED is hosted by UNEP-WCMC. Other current partners are the governments of Germany, India, the Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, the United Kingdom and the United States of America; the European Union; Conservation International; and SEED's corporate partner, Hisense.



About the SEED Initiative

The SEED Initiative identifies and supports promising small scale social and environmental entrepreneurs around the globe, entrepreneurs that while working towards a greener economy also tackle poverty, marginalisation and social exclusion.

SEED provides these social entrepreneurs with know how and networks, taking the lessons learnt at local level up to decision-makers to promote evidence-based policy making.

More information: www.seedinit.org

SEED Secretariat

info@seedinit.org