

LAST MILE DISTRIBUTION OF CLEAN, RELIABLE & AFFORDABLE ENERGY SOLUTIONS

WIDENERGY AFRICA NEWSLETTER



2020, A YEAR OF RENEWABLE HOPE!

The COVID-19 pandemic has set in motion several challenges on economies globally causing damage to health, jobs, businesses, and education. The plight of Zambians has not been made any easier by continued power deficits which inherently also affect water supply. Whereas the partial lockdown has been seen as a safety measure in some countries, the story is different in Zambia. This situation has put a strain on the local economy of the nation which is already walking a tightrope to economic recovery.

At a time when most companies have frozen hiring or laid off workers, WidEnergy is resolute to share a story of impact and development. The support that we have received and continue to receive from our investors and funders has significantly helped our operations to proceed with renewed momentum and expansion. At WidEnergy, we are working tirelessly to deliver solar Home Systems to the off grid rural communities in alignment with Zambian government policies.

WidEnergy Africa is playing a key role in powering up rural Zambia with alternative sources of energy impacting communities positively by providing economical and high-quality off grid energy solutions.

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OUR SUCCESS STORIES

LIFE-SAVING SOLAR HOME SYSTEM

Meet Stella, a 37-year old woman and mother of five children living in Lundazi district, in the Eastern Province of Zambia. Her unique source of income to support her family is her small-scale farming venture.

“My 7-Year-old daughter once cheated death when she was bitten by a snake at night in her sleep. I was so devastated; I could not stand seeing my daughter in pain. At that moment, I made up my mind to save money to purchase a Solar Home System”, Stella Mwale narrated.

Stella recently purchased a d.Light D180 Solar Home System from WidEnergy.

“Ever since we started using the Solar Home System, our lives have significantly changed for the better,

my children’s rooms are well lit up and we have nothing to worry about at night”, Mwale said.

The Solar Home System brought proper lighting for the first time into their home.

Before acquiring WidEnergy equipment, Stella and her family heavily relied on candles and mobile phone torches to break the darkness of the room, but she fast realised that those solutions were not sustainable.

“Living without proper lighting in the home put our family in danger especially during the rain and cold season when snakes and other poisonous insects would crawl into our house in search of warmth”, Mwale stated.



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“Ever since we started using the Solar Home System, our lives have significantly changed for the better, my children’s rooms are well lit up and we have nothing to worry about at night”..



OUR SUCCESS STORIES FROM LOSSES TO PROFITS

"My poultry business thrives on the WidEnergy Solar Home System." says 51-year-old Samson Mvula, a businessman in Lundazi, Eastern Province.

Before acquiring a Solar Home System from WidEnergy, Samson's poultry business was suffering as he tended to lose a large number of his chickens as they would die due to lack of sufficient long-lasting lighting. The impact of these losses resulted in him failing to send his 5 children to school to get an education.

Since acquiring the Solar Home System, Mvula is now a renowned businessman in his local area mainly due to the fact that his chickens are big and healthy thanks to being provided with sufficient and long-lasting lighting. As a result, Mvula's business has grown and recorded an influx of customers whenever the chickens are ready for sale.

Mvula has also been able to send his 5 children back to school using the profits realised from his business.



"My poultry business thrives on WidEnergy Solar Home System."



WORDS FROM THE CEO

The invaluable support from our investors and funders to our mandate at WidEnergy cannot be emphasised enough. While we have been busy in the field with rolled up sleeves to deliver solar home systems to the last mile, the trust that we have received from our investors through financial support to scale and create more impact has been a motivation day-in, day-out.

Although COVID-19 has disrupted a number of promising initiatives, the team at WidEnergy has demonstrated resilience by increasing their momentum and expanding operations.

For instance, the grant from Rural Finance Expansion Programme (RUFEP) awarded to WidEnergy in December 2019 helped us to embark on a project aimed at

upscaling our business to 9 new service centres in 9 different regions.

Like many other companies, with uncertainty knocking on all of our doors, at WidEnergy we were determined to push through and not lay-off any of our employees. This was clearly the path less travelled and meant finding ways of generating revenue during this tough time.

We developed a prevention, wellness and business continuity plan which involved staff working both from home and the centres in an effort to ensure smooth business flow and maintain the best possible customer service for all our clients.

In order to combat COVID-19 and adhere to the government measures,



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all our service centres have been equipped with hand-washing stations and hand sanitizers. In addition, sales agents are regularly supplied with masks.

Furthermore, WidEnergy has actively participated in sending out COVID-19 awareness messages provided by the Ministry of Health using mobile phones.

What has been encouraging for our business during the pandemic is that the Zambian government classified solar energy as “essential business”, which has allowed us to keep our business and especially our call centres operational 7 days a week.

What lies ahead? With the current situation it is difficult to say, but I am

optimistic that we will end the year better than we started as we see the world slowly adjusting to learning how to live and work under the new ‘normal’.

What this means for us is a push to serve more of our clients, while paying attention to the impact of the pandemic and finding better ways of making our business profitable both for ourselves and our clients.

We are soon embarking on an exciting project with the support of Energy and Environmental Partnership Trust Fund (EEP Fund) as our funders. WidEnergy will launch a multipurpose women operated, solar-powered store called Women in Energy Hub (WeHub). It will serve as a distribution hub for our



products while also serving as a community microgrid in its location. WeHub's unique value proposition is 'Empowering women entrepreneurs with Energy'.

On behalf of WidEnergy, I would like to thank all our partners who have believed in us and supported our engagement to positively impact the lives of the rural communities since 2016.

We remain committed to our vision of becoming a regional strong women-led brand in household clean energy distribution.

Our goal to reach between 70,000 to 100,000 households, thus impacting more than 400,000 lives within the next five years is still valid –Today more than before.

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