

D.LIGHT DELIVERS ENERGY ACCESS AND EMPLOYMENT FOR WOMEN IN KENYA



d.light, a leading global distributed off-grid solar company, aims to deliver affordable solar home and power solutions for two billion people without access to reliable energy. In 2016 d.light completed a successful two-year EEP project in Central and Eastern Kenya, creating sustainable economic opportunities and empowering women and their households with access to solar-powered energy solutions. In targeted rural areas customers had previously been using mainly kerosene lamps for lighting.

The original plan was to sell solar lanterns, but since the customer preferences have been shifting more towards Solar Home Systems (SHS), d.light decided to launch its PayGo offering in Kenya in November 2015. This decision turned into a successful path.

Within the two year project period d.light sold more than 275,000 solar products, including solar home systems with a PayGo model to answer to a growing demand of larger solar solutions. The project also created more than 700 job opportunities in the value chain. Through replacing kerosene fueled lamps with solar powered lighting, almost 26,000 tons of CO₂ emissions reductions will be achieved annually.

What highlights the high quality of d.light's products is the fact that their customers recommend the products to their family and friends. The most selling product is S2, which is a small size bright solar light. This particular lamp is especially good for students, because they can increase their study time with better lighting, which has been shown to have a direct impact on their grades and performance in school. Additionally, small business owners have reported that bright lighting has led to increased business hours in the evenings, thus generating increased sales.

Because of the solar powered products, customers no longer use kerosene. This saves them approximately 80 to 100 Euros a year for each kerosene lamp that was previously used, has environmental benefits, as well as safety and health implications.

With the grant support from EEP, the project has been able to demonstrate the proof of concept and the business model in Kenya. The EEP grant has also been instrumental in raising further debt and equity capital for scaling the business. In 2016, d.light has raised \$40 million in equity, debt and grant funding. The leveraged funding will be utilized to scale up the Solar Home Systems distribution in selected target markets, including Kenya and the Eastern Africa region. As a result, d.light is expected to achieve a wider distribution of solar powered products and impact more lives in Kenya and beyond.