

Solar Sister Executive Summary

Energy poverty is an issue that heavily affects East Africa. It halts productivity and forces those without resources to resort to purchasing kerosene, an expensive and hazardous commodity. Solar Sister offers an empowering and sustainable solution to this issue by training local women to sell solar lanterns and clean cook stoves. It not only tackles the issue with an alternative energy source, but also addresses the issue of poverty by empowering their sales agents, Solar Sister Entrepreneurs, with jobs that lead to more financial agency.

When we created media on Solar Sister, we focused on an in-depth examination of Solar Sister's impact on its customers. and Solar Sister's efforts need global exposure and a platform to provide quality education about the issues associated with energy poverty, and the Solar Sister solution. We captured Solar Sister's achievements via comprehensive interviews with Solar Sister administration, Solar Sister Entrepreneurs, Solar Sister Sales Associates, and customers. This footage was used to create a series of short customer profile videos that will serve to promote the impact Solar Sister has on people who buy its products and will lead to impact investments that could further its mission. Additionally, we photo-documented our work and experience with Solar Sister employees and customers.

During the time we were in the field, the need for more information on Solar Sister customers—how they use their products and their demand for other products—emerged. The impact that Solar Sister is making on its beneficiaries is ever-present and positive. In addition to a dramatic rise in productivity at night, solar lanterns are also impact the social lives of customers. During interviews we found that many customers used their lanterns at night to host gatherings with families and friends that they had not been able to hold before. Solar Sister's customers are also finding more and more uses for their lamps including hanging smaller models upside-down to maximize the light as well as starting businesses at night and protecting livestock. This is information that could be important to Solar Sister to better inform its understanding of their customers and their understanding of present demand for various products.

The videos and photographs that we provide Solar Sister could be valuable in helping to show how Solar Sister is improving the lives of its customers. Additionally, they could be sent along with grant applications to better demonstrate their unique solution and attract more funding. For the future, we recommend that Solar Sister collect comprehensive data, especially visual data, to better quantify the impact it has on the community to contribute to decision-making regarding customer's needs for different products.