

2017 Women in Energy Challenge in Uganda winners announced

The US African Development Foundation (USADF), in collaboration with partners Power Africa and GE, recently announced the winners of the 2017 Women in Energy Challenge in Uganda, where only 20% of the population is connected to electricity.



US Ambassador Deborah Malac, Power Africa coordinator Andrew Herscowitz, and Irene Muloni, minister of energy and mineral development, award CEO of CODE Uganda.

Joint Energy and Environments Projects (JEEP) and Conservation and Development Uganda Limited (CODE) will each be awarded a grant of \$100,000 to expand their renewable energy enterprises to reach women beneficiaries. Dr Maria Bawabya Senkezi, JEEP's chairwoman, says investing in women entrepreneurs is critical because "women invest money back into the community".

The Women in Energy Challenge, part of the Off-Grid Energy Challenge, was launched in 2016 by USADF and GE to identify and accelerate enterprises either led by women or benefiting women, and help African entrepreneurs compete in the global economy. The Off-Grid Energy Challenge is a part of Power Africa's Beyond the Grid initiative, which aims to drive private investment in off-grid and small-scale renewable energy solutions.

Solar-powered cold storage facilities

Joint Energy and Environments Projects (JEEP) is a 100% women-owned enterprise in central Uganda. With a \$100,000 grant, it will install six green power units in Kalangala district, a remote island district in Lake Victoria. Fishing is the main industry in the island district but commercial ice to preserve fish is both expensive and limited. As a result, a significant amount of fish is lost before it can be sold in the market. The green power units will each have solar-powered cold storage facilities for preservation, phone charging and solar home systems for sale, and each will be run by a women's group trained in bookkeeping. The green power units will each repay a portion of their profits to JEEP to be used to replicate the model throughout the region. This will not only provide local jobs, but will increase incomes for local women.

Alternative, safer fuel sources

Conservation and Development Uganda Limited (CODE) is a majority-women owned enterprise in western Uganda where surrounding national parks limit the amount of available firewood, and as a result, women bear the brunt of energy poverty,

walking long distances in search of firewood and cooking fuel. Through the grant, CODE will sell an initial 350 Agro-Eco kits using a flexible repayment financing model, which will provide alternative and safer fuel sources. Using a low-cost distribution system using Village Savings and Loan Associations, CODE will collect revenues and expand their business to impact more and more households in the region.

“We launched this Women in Energy Challenge to find the best and the brightest female entrepreneurs that are making a difference in bringing electricity to rural communities. We are very pleased to see that these women-led enterprises are showing promise in finding alternative solutions to Uganda’s energy crisis,” says C.D. Glin, USADF president and CEO.

“Providing energy access to Africa’s population is a priority for us,” says Jay Ireland, president and CEO of GE Africa. “The Women in Energy Challenge is one of our commitments towards supporting local entrepreneurs and we are delighted that African women-owned enterprises are solving local challenges.”

For more info about the USADF Off-Grid Energy Challenge, go to www.USADF.gov/off-grid.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>