

Abstract

Status:

Ongoing

In honor of “Gender Day” at the annual United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP-19), the United States is highlighting its actions to harness the potential of women and women’s networks to increase the use of clean energy technologies, which in turn helps reduce climate change. The Department of State launched the Partnership on Women’s Entrepreneurship in Renewables (“wPOWER”) in January 2013. wPOWER aims to empower more than 8,000 women clean energy entrepreneurs across East Africa, Nigeria and India who will deliver clean energy access to more than 3.5 million people over the next three years.

To reach this goal, the Department of State and USAID have teamed up with the MacArthur Foundation, the Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, CARE International, Solar Sister, Swayam Shikshan Prayog and the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace & Environmental Studies.

Globally, more than 1.3 billion people lack access to electricity, and at least 2.7 billion people lack access to clean cookstoves and fuels. While not the primary source of climate pollution, inefficient lighting and cooking contribute to climate change and the degradation of natural resources. In off-grid communities, women are the primary users of clean technologies like solar lamps and clean cookstoves and are at the forefront of adopting the use of new technologies. wPOWER is working to unlock this largely untapped potential of women and women's groups to help fill the “last mile” gap in the supply chain to reach areas lacking energy access.

Recent wPOWER accomplishments include:

- **Launch of wPOWER Hub at Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace & Environmental Studies (WMI):** The Department of State, together with parallel support from the MacArthur Foundation, has created a wPOWER Hub at the WMI, founded by the late Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai, at the University of Nairobi in Kenya. The new wPOWER Hub will build the evidence base on women, energy access and climate solutions; hold train the trainer workshops; facilitate African and Indian women entrepreneur and leadership exchanges to build a network of women climate leaders, and build public awareness.

New Strategic Partners:

- **Women for Women International (WfWI):** WfWI provides women survivors of war, civil strife and other conflicts with the tools and resources to move from crisis and poverty to stability and self-sufficiency. WfWI will work with wPOWER partners to begin offering a clean energy entrepreneurship vocational track to the women who are part of its program in Nigeria.

- **Green Belt Movement-Kenya (GBM):** Professor Wangari Maathai's GBM pioneered a community-based tree-planting approach that put women at the forefront of environmental stewardship. By partnering with some of GBM's 4,000 community groups, we will expand wPOWER networks of women clean energy entrepreneurs and introduce new livelihood opportunities to GBM's grassroots women leaders.

Collaborators:

US State Department

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Start Month:

August

Start Year:

2013

End Month:

July

End Year:

2016