



SMART VILLAGES

New thinking for off-grid communities worldwide

Press Release

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Smart Villages Announces Nafa Naana as the Winner of the 2017 Off-grid Energy Challenge for West Africa

[Smart Villages](#) is pleased to announce Nafa Naana as the winner of the Off-grid Energy Challenge for West Africa. Nafa Naana is a social business that improves access to clean and efficient energy solutions through a microfranchised distribution network and microfinance services in Burkina Faso.

Nafa Naana develops marketing and financial solutions to strengthen distribution channels for clean cookstoves, LPG6 and solar lights, while stimulating demand through intensive promotion and raising-awareness campaigns. Products are distributed through three company-owned stores and more than a hundred distributors, including key accounts and individual retailers.

Building on the success of annual East African competitions in collaboration with the [Cambridge Development Initiative](#), this West African competition challenged entrepreneurs to tell us how they want to grow their existing businesses. Over a period of four months, finalists worked with consultant mentors through the Cambridge [Bridges for Enterprise](#) program to analyse and refine their businesses.

Bridges for Enterprise is a registered society at the University of Cambridge dedicated to supporting social entrepreneurs around the world. Since 2014, Bridges for Enterprise has been matching social businesses in East Africa and Asia with experts in business, finance and law to help those businesses become ready for commercial investment.

In collaboration with Bridges for Enterprise, The Smart Villages Off-grid Energy Challenge for West Africa is supported by the global [Smart Villages Initiative](#), which aims to provide advice to policy makers on the potential for off-grid energy to deliver sustainable growth in the developing world.

According to Project Co-Leaders Dr John Holmes and Dr Bernie Jones, entrepreneurship is leading the way in off-grid energy access. “We are continually impressed by the entrepreneurs we meet around the world. In our recent work in West Africa we have already come across incredible energy innovation in agriculture, healthcare and education, and we are pleased to name Nafa Naana as the winner of the 2017 Smart Villages Off-grid Energy Challenge for West Africa.”

Details of all finalists

Nafa Naana is a social business making clean and affordable energy products available to the poorest households of Burkina Faso. Nafa Naana implements an innovative business model, which combines a microfranchise approach to an adapted microcredit scheme: they develop marketing and financial solutions to strengthen distribution channels for clean and affordable cookstoves, LPG stoves and solar lamps and solar home systems, while stimulating demand. As of today, Nafa Naana has sold more than 30,000 energy-efficient products through a network of 65 micro-franchised retailers and more than 70 key accounts (community based women organizations, associations and federations).

Projet Production Solaire Togo aims to improve the living conditions in ten villages located far from Togo’s electric grid network by selling potable water extracted from borehole wells equipped with pumps powered by high-quality photovoltaic cells. These pumps are produced by Lorentz in Germany. The solar generator has a nominal power of 3 to 4 kilowatt-peak per unit of installation. From its establishment in 2012, the firm has installed more than 100 water-pumping systems following successful bids to major organisations and provides technical assistance as well.

Paygo Ventures believes all rural Africans should live in modern homes. They combine 1) best-in-class technology adapted to rural settings, 2) mobile-enabled consumer financing to make their products affordable, and 3) last-mile distribution to bring them right into the customers’ homes. Their mission starts with pay-as-you-go household solar products, and later extends to other modernising products such as cookstoves, water filters, digital appliances and financial services.

SunLight Energy Ventures seeks to alleviate the deplorable standard of living in rural communities of Northern Nigeria, as well as improve the primary health care system of these communities by providing access to clean, affordable, efficient and reliable electricity via its solar DC Micro-grids scheme. These community micro-grids are also inclusive of a water pumping system for domestic and agricultural uses; a ‘solar home system’ for use in the community healthcare center and street/security lights which illuminate these villages at night, further reducing insurgency attacks on these villages.

Ajima Farms Waste-to-Watt project was launched in 2015 shortly before securing a \$100,000 grant funding from USADF through the Power Africa Off-grid Energy Challenge. Waste-to-Watt deploys clean energy solutions for rural electrification in off-grid communities targeting households, agribusiness, schools, health care centres, farm clusters and other businesses. We have just installed a biogas minigrid system in Rije community and currently developing another system for Kuyizhi community. We are not just focused on energy generation but also energy efficiency and clean cooking

technology which we believe is a necessary combination to achieve gains in reducing energy poverty in rural communities.

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To access the Smart Villages image library please follow this link <http://bit.ly/1GxCuKE>

Notes for Editors

Smart Villages

The Smart Villages Initiative is a three year project evaluating ways of providing off-grid energy as a catalyst for development for rural villages and encouraging the transfer of knowledge and experience between different developing regions. Through a series of international workshops and follow-up activities in Africa, Asia and Latin America, our aim is to provide policy makers, donors, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders with new insights into the challenges of supplying village-level energy and how they might be overcome.

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Bridges for Enterprise

Bridges for Enterprise, a registered society at the University of Cambridge, supports Social Entrepreneurs, who employ “ground-up” sustainable solutions to tackle social issues. To date, Bridges for Enterprise has empowered social enterprise start-ups from countries including Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, India and Singapore. It has established partnerships with various stakeholders such as AsialIX, Centre for Global Equality, and has attracted with consultant mentors from McKinsey, BCG, Princeton University, NYU, Cambridge and LSE.

www.bridgesforenterprise.com