

Renewable Energy Empowers Kenyan Women

Did you know the amount of solar energy reaching our planet is so great that, in one year, it doubles the amount that could ever be gained from all of the Earth's non-renewable resources of coal, oil, natural gas, and mined uranium combined? And there is even more potential solar energy available closer to the equator. This is a source of great hope for countries like Kenya where a mere 3-5% of the rural population has access to electricity. No one feels this hope more than Kenyan women.

The average woman living in rural Kenya wakes up each day knowing she will:

- Spend 3-5 hours gathering and carrying wood weighing about 65 lbs.
- Walk 5-15 miles to collect water often from an unclean source
- Work and raise crops in the fields if there is enough rain
- Tend the animals that have survived persistent drought conditions
- Raise her children often without the support of a husband
- Have little or no access to medical facilities
- Face the challenge of paying \$120/child for school fees and uniforms
- Live on less than \$1 US



For Kenyan women not only does solar energy offer hope for a life with less struggle for daily survival but also for one with new possibilities to generate income. In March 2012, New Vision Renewable Energy, a Christian community development nonprofit organization, introduced a Portable Solar Light and Energy Kit as well as a Portable Solar Cooker in three rural Kenyan villages. The light exposes broad smiles amidst brightly lit rooms and the solar cooker produces renewable joy each time it boils eggs or pops popcorn with clean energy from the sun - much to the children's delight!



Imagine the impact in the life of a woman empowered with a Portable Solar Light that can also charge cell phones and other electronic devices. Not only will her life and the lives of her children be improved by having better health, safety, and literacy but with many more light hours available in each day she can explore new ways to produce income through possible small business opportunities through micro-financing or other means.

Perhaps a Kenyan woman might open a mobile phone charging station to support her family. Kenya has one of the most vibrant cell phone markets in Africa with 1 in 3 adults carrying them. Most Kenyans pay businesses in large cities to charge their phones, which averages \$35/year and consumes a lot of time walking there and back 1-3 times each week. One thing is certain, Kenyan women are hardworking, resilient and strong and there is little doubt about the good they can do when resources become available.

New Vision Renewable Energy seeks to empower communities by helping leaders find ways to incorporate renewable energy solutions into the daily lives of their people. Life can become less burdensome to live while simultaneously stimulating economically challenged areas with practical training and sustainable solutions.

