

E+Co Energy Entrepreneur Learning Platform
Draft Executive Summary
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One quarter of the Earth's population, almost two billion people, do not have access to modern energy. This means that 400,000 households around the planet do not have electricity to light their homes, gas to cook their food, or fuel to run their machines. Imagine if you didn't have access to modern energy, how that would affect your life. For these people, life is very different, and much more difficult.

Without modern energy, women typically to use open fires to cook their food, and suffer from significantly increased lung diseases as a result. Men can't power a tractor, water pump or other machines, and have to work that much harder just to make a living. Children have to use kerosene lamps and candles to do their homework, and that is not good for their eyes or their ability to learn. The families and communities that experience this world-wide situation are living in what is increasingly referred to as "energy poverty."

This reality does not exist because of a lack of energy technologies. Nor does it exist because of a lack of desire to disseminate those technologies. Rather, this energy poverty exists because either people do not have access to existing supplies of energy, or they cannot afford those supplies. For the most part, people experiencing energy poverty either live in rural areas without access to an electric grid, or they cannot afford the electricity or gas offered in more urban areas. For the most part, the issue comes down to a lack of access to affordable energy.

The growing understanding that access to energy plays a critical role in meeting the many needs of the world's poorest (as outlined in the Millennium Development Goals) has brought the issue of energy poverty into sharper focus for the international development community. To be sure, numerous government agencies, multilateral institutions, non-government organizations, entrepreneurial businesses, philanthropic foundations and others are actively developing new strategies and campaigns to addressing the plight of energy poverty. Most of these strategies involve increasing the distribution of affordable energy technologies - such as solar photovoltaic, biogas, wind, micro-hydroelectric, clean cookstoves and other cleaner energy systems - to households, communities and institutions through a network of local entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises.

This new strategy has many benefits. Most obvious and immediate, it meets the need for both affordable energy and economic opportunities in the developing world. What makes this overarching strategy more exciting is that it is being married to another emerging world-wide trend, that of triple bottom line accounting. By distributing clean energy technologies through small and growing enterprises to people living in energy poverty, both the clean energy enterprises themselves, and those institutions providing the financial and capacity building support, are able to realize a positive triple bottom line of economic, ecological and social benefits.

For the past seventeen years, E+Co has been a pioneer and leader in this sector. E+Co's philosophy is that there is a demand for clean and affordable energy in developing countries, and this demand can be satisfied by local entrepreneurs. E+Co has met this demand by provided financial and capacity building support to small and growing clean energy enterprises across Africa, Asia and Latin America. Our approach is simple, and effective. We find great entrepreneurs. We help them establish clean energy businesses. Then we invest in them.

Our trail-blazing efforts have resulted in 6.2 million people gaining access to modern energy from YYY number of small and growing businesses having sold ZZZ amount of clean energy technologies. Value added benefits include the \$40 million we have invested, the \$220 million of additional investment capital, and the 4.6 million tons of offset carbon. Our successful approach has been recognized by the United Nations, Clinton Global Initiative, Newsweek, Financial Times, Ashden Awards and many others, and has served as a model for countless similar efforts.

Yet for all of our immediate success and indirect influence, energy poverty is still widespread. The historical need for energy access in the developing world, along with the emerging need to mitigate the impacts of global climate change, remains daunting. Thus, E+Co has asked ourselves, “What should we do differently to meet this need?” Our conclusion is that we do not need to fundamentally change our strategy. Rather, we need to expand its scale, or “bring it to scale” in today’s parlance.

E+Co believes that, in order to do this in the developing world, we need more people. We need more entrepreneurs, who will establish more clean energy businesses. That is why E+Co is developing a new energy entrepreneur training program, in the form of an online learning platform. Given that the United Nations General Assembly recently declared 2012 “The Year of Sustainable Energy for All,” the timing for our new training program is great.

Our Energy Entrepreneur Learning Platform will use state-of-the-art web technology to offer online, interactive courses, forums and mentoring, complemented by regional in-person workshops and apprenticeships led by established consultants and enterprises located in-country or in-region. The core curriculum will be structured into a progressive and logical series of learning paths, based on the entrepreneurs’ needs and ambitions. This curriculum will be delivered via multiple media (online and in-person), and include a range of delivery methods that cater to multiple learning styles: concrete and theoretical, audio and visual, experiential and observational. The end result will be similar to E+Co’s present program: each entrepreneur will have developed a “ready-to-invest” clean energy business and investment plan for launching a new enterprise, or expand an existing one.

Meanwhile, this program will reflect the triple bottom line philosophy E+Co will instill through the learning platform. It will be more economically efficient, in that we will not need to significantly increase our human resources in order to reach significantly more entrepreneurs (as compared to our traditional face-to-face support system). It will be more environmentally sound, in that we will not need to significantly increase our travel-related carbon footprint to train this larger army of entrepreneurs. And it will reap greater social rewards by empowering more people with energy needs and business opportunities.

Ultimately, we have done the math, and it all adds up to more local businesses providing more energy to more people. Through an associated aggressive marketing and outreach effort, the Energy Entrepreneur Learning Platform, E+Co will prepare 4,000 entrepreneurs to launch new enterprises per year. Based on E+Co’s sixteen year track record, each new enterprise will, on average, distribute clean energy products to 5,000 households (or 25,000 people) per year. Thus, our aggressive, but realistic, goal for the Energy Entrepreneur Learning Platform is to provide clean energy to 80 million of more people per year.

Using our experience to date, coupled with our resulting in-house and associated expertise, we believe the Energy Entrepreneur Learning Platform will provide the level of “scaling up” that is needed to efficiently and effectively address the world-wide problem of energy poverty. We are now seeking a level of funding that will match the existing need and the emerging opportunity. Thus, we seek support from the XXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX Foundation to enable E+Co to build out the distance learning platform, hire new staff, and procure the requisite equipment and technology, establish necessary partnerships to recruit interested entrepreneurs, and formally launch the program in WHEN.

Full funding from the the XXXXXXXXXXXX XXXXXXXXXXXX Foundation would provide much/most/all of the start-up financing, or capital investment, E+Co needs to fully launch our new entrepreneur-training enterprise: the Energy Entrepreneur Learning Platform.