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ECO-FUEL AFRICA WINS THE TITLE “EEP PROJECT OF THE YEAR 2015”

The Ugandan based Social Enterprise Eco-Fuel Africa won the prestigious title “Project of the Year 2015” at the annual Knowledge Exchange Forum (KEF) arranged by the Energy and Environment Partnership Programme of Southern and East Africa (EEP S&EA).

As part of its knowledge sharing mandate, the Energy & Environment Partnership programme has just concluded its yearly “Project of the Year Award” process. More than 20 applications were received for this prestigious award that aims at recognising the excellent work done and impressive development impact achieved by projects supported by EEP.

At the yearly Knowledge Exchange Forum the two finalists for this year’s award were asked to present their project: Mobisol’s off grid solar energy solution that combines affordable payment plans via mobile phone, comprehensive customer service and innovative remote monitoring technology and the Eco-fuel Africa in Uganda on affordable, clean fuel solutions to fight the energy problem in Uganda.

After both projects presented their respective project the jury came to the difficult task to announce the winner of this year’s award as both project have demonstrated substantial poverty reduction and developmental impacts. Eventually Eco-fuel Africa was awarded the title “EEP Project of the Year 2015”.

Sanga Moses, the Energy Innovator and CEO of Eco-fuel Africa, told the audience how he came about to fight the energy problem in Uganda. “On a day that I made a journey to meet my mother I met kid sister carrying wood and as she saw me she started crying. First I thought she was happy to see me but then I found out the she cried because she was tired to miss school at least twice a week to carry wood instead of attending school”. Seeing his younger sister crying and on the verge of losing the only opportunity she had to improve her life, inspired Sanga to think about an alternative source of fuel. To solve this problem Sanga quit his office job and with savings of just 500 USD he came up with an idea that he hopes that will fix part of the energy crises in Uganda.

He started Eco-fuel Africa, a Social Enterprise that works with the local communities in Uganda to convert locally sourced farm and municipal waste into clean cooking fuel briquettes that averts the use of wood-based fuels that depletes the forest. The users of the briquettes benefit from a product that burns longer, burns cleaner and is substantially cheaper than the charcoal that is regularly used.

Up till now Eco-Fuel Africa has created over 5,800 jobs for the people at the base of the pyramid by creating income sources for over 3,000 farmers and over 2,000 micro-retailers. The business model of Eco-Fuel Africa is simple. Farmers burn their farm waste, like coffee husk, sugarcane waste and corn waste, in basic kilns made out of used oil drums to create a char that can be turned into briquettes. These briquettes are then distributed by a network of micro-retailers that are exclusively single mothers as Sanga initial motivation for the business was to enable kids of



single parents to enrol and stay in school. The strength of the business idea behind Eco-fuel Africa is that it brings an added social value to the local community by its decentralised approach that keeps the profits among local farmers, briquette producers, retailers and consumers.

Thanks to the funds received by EEP, Eco-Fuel Africa has been able to drastically scale up and fast track its business and today they reach over 56,000 households on a daily basis, provides 5,800 jobs for people at the base of the pyramid and has enabled 20,000 kids to enrol and stay in school. But as Sanga points out, Eco-Fuel Africa is just in an early phase on its “mission to solve the energy crises in Uganda”.

As EEP “Project of the Year 2015” Eco-Fuel Africa did win the opportunity to present this extraordinary project at the African Utility Week conference in Cape Town from 17 – 19 May 2016.

Learn more about Eco-fuel Africa: <http://ecofuelafrika.co.ug/>

Learn more about the EEP S&EA: <http://eepafrica.org/>

Learn more about the African Utility Week conference: <http://www.african-utility-week.com/>

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About EEP S&EA:

The Energy and Environment Partnership (EEP) is a challenge fund that promotes renewable energy, energy efficiency and clean technology investments. The Programme supports projects which aim to provide sustainable energy services to the poor and combat the climate change. The EEP Programme in Southern and East Africa is jointly funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA), The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and the UK’s Department for International Development (DFID). EEP implementation started in March 2010. The Programme is active in 13 countries in southern and East Africa.