Women Entrepreneurs as Key Drivers in the DRE Sector: Best Practices & Innovative Business Models

David Lecoque
CEO, ARE
24 September 2020

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The **Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE)** is the largest international business association for the decentralised renewable energy (DRE) industry, activating markets for affordable energy services, and creating local jobs and inclusive economies.

**Who we ARE**

1. **170+** Global decentralised renewable energy association members
2. **50+** Countries
3. **3** Continents

For more details, see [ARE Matchmaking Platform](#)
ARE Member Services

ARE helps on sector coordination and development by:

1. Market Intelligence & Business Development
2. Policy & Advocacy
3. Communications & Marketing

Read more here
### Opening Remarks

14.00 – 14.10  •  David Lecoque, CEO, ARE

### Keynote speech/presentation

14.10 – 14.20  •  Georgios Grapsas, Team Leader in Sustainable Energy, European Commission, DG DEVCO, Unit Sustainable Energy & Climate Change

### Session I: Innovative approaches to promote gender equality in DRE projects

- **Moderator:** Rebecca Symington, Board Member, ARE

14.20 – 15.00  •  Speakers:
  - Sandra Winarsa, Program Development Manager - Green Energy, Hivos Southeast Asia
  - Bubacar Diallo, CEO, Benoo
  - Helene Demaegdt, Managing Partner, Gaia Impact Fund

### Session II: Promoting gender equality in DRE programmes - challenges and lessons learnt

- **Moderator:** Irene Calve Saborit, Board Member, ARE

15.00 – 15.40  •  Panelists:
  - Rana Ghoneim, Chief, Energy systems and Infrastructure Division, UNIDO
  - Remco van Stappershoef, Manager Women Economic Empowerment, ENERGIA
  - Marta Caradonna, Coordinator - Microgrid Academy, RES4Africa Foundation
  - Tracy Kimathi, Founder, Tree_sea.mals
• Energy and gender equality are key drivers for development and economic growth.

• The economic empowerment of women is one of the four pillars of the EU Gender Action Plan, explicitly stated as a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-5) and intrinsically linked to most of the other SDGs.

• ARE’s “Energy & Gender Campaign” aims to share evidence and lessons learnt from women-led companies and entrepreneurs to deliver clean, affordable and reliable power in emerging countries.
Activities in the short term:

**Activity 1**: Webinar “Women Entrepreneurs as Key Drivers in the DRE Sector: Best Practices & Innovative Business Models” | **(Today: 24 Sep 2020)**

**Activity 2**: Publication “Women entrepreneurs as key drivers to grow the DRE sector: best practices and innovative business models”
- Case studies from ARE Members around the world | **Timeline: By Nov 2020**

**Activity 3**: Launch of publication and session on women entrepreneurship at ESEF 2020” | **Timeline: 24-26 Nov 2020**
### Special offers for new incoming Members joining before 30th September 2020:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ARE Membership Packages</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Package 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;2020 Only</td>
<td>- 60% discount for 2020 Membership&lt;br&gt;- Free Newsletter Article (worth 520€) with a readership of more than 11k</td>
<td>None</td>
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<td><strong>Package 2</strong>&lt;br&gt;2020 + 2021</td>
<td>- 75% discount for 2020 Membership&lt;br&gt;- Free Newsletter Article (worth 520€) with a readership of more than 11k&lt;br&gt;- Company promotion on social media</td>
<td>Membership fees for 2020 + 2021 to be paid in one go</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Popular Choice!</strong>&lt;br&gt;Package 3&lt;br&gt;2020 + 2021 + 2022</td>
<td>- 100% discount for 2020 Membership&lt;br&gt;- Free Newsletter Article (worth 520€) with a readership of more than 11k&lt;br&gt;- Company promotion on social media&lt;br&gt;- 1 free ticket for <a href="#">EAIF</a> in 2021 (worth appx. 400€)</td>
<td>Membership fees for 2021 + 2022 to be paid in one go</td>
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Get in touch with ARE to help you grow in the sector!

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Georgios Grapsas
Team Leader in Sustainable Energy
European Commission, DG DEVCO
Unit Sustainable Energy & Climate Change
Session I

Innovative approaches to promote gender equality in DRE projects

Rebecca Symington
Board Member, ARE & Regional Head of Programmes
Energy 4 Impact

Sandra Winarsa
Program Development Manager
Green Energy
Hivos Southeast Asia

Bubacar Diallo
CEO
Benoo

Helene Demaegdt
Managing Partner
Gaia Impact Fund
Sandra Winarsa, Program Development Manager Green Energy, Hivos Southeast Asia – swinarsa@hivos.org

Hivos is an international development organization with humanist value active in 5 regions.
Solar kiosk charging stations

- Women are great managers
- Reliable business partners
- Improved women leadership, increased self-confident, respect and trust from others (incl finance institutions)
- Stimulates better supportive environment for the business to grow
Challenges

- Patriarchal tradition
- Require specific expertise to deliver it right
- Extra investment – not an instant result
- Lack of incentive mechanism
- Mostly acknowledged only by international actors but few national government, financiers and developers
Rendons l’énergie vertueuse

September 2020
Benoo supports the deployment of productive uses by digitizing the development process and operations “behind the meter”

**Rubize.io**

**Business Setup**
- Global energy demand modeling
- Productive demand analysis
- « Business Ops » platform unboarding

**Business Ops**
- Leasing management
- Offline mobile app for Sales & supplies
- Real time metrics and KPIs
3 solar kiosks pilots in Togo

- Djekloué
- Tététou
- Hahomegbe

4 entrepreneurs trained: 2 men and 2 women

+10,000 digital transactions
Akpéné

Women entrepreneur in Hahomegbe, Togo

Akpéné operates an offgrid kiosk delivering 24/7 solar power to a set of cold appliances, allowing to sell frozen products to rural customers.

- 1500 € monthly T/O
- 3X more revenue vs Togo entrepreneur
- 5 kWh / energy consumption
- 90% load factor
- 3,25 € gross margin /KWh
- LCOE 1,2 € / KWh
Contact us :

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INVESTMENT STRATEGY & PORTFOLIO

- Small scale power systems & productive uses
  - upowa
  - easy solar
  - CLLU
  - Solaris Offgrid
  - HYBRID SOCIAL SOLUTIONS

- Solar assets for C&I customers
  - candi.
  - CANOPY POWER

- Minigrids for communities
  - nuru

- Solar Tech
  - Mascal
  - PaygOps

EARLY STAGE EQUITY (SEED to SERIES A) + FOLLOW ON SERIES B
€ 150K - 1M

- Local footprint
- Ongoing developments
WHAT GENDER MEANS FOR GAIA IMPACT FUND

Entrepreneurship
51% women ownership or the business is founded by a woman

Leadership
20% in senior leadership

Employment
30% share of women in the workforce

Share of women in senior management
11% 20% target

Share of women in the workforce
26% 30% target

➢ A gender lens to inform our investment decisions to reach gender off-grid companies that promote diversity
➢ drive the monitoring of the Portfolio, to advance gender progress in our Investees

Alignment with 2X Challenge Criteria to measure KPI across our Portfolio

Encouraging female role models is essential: the lack of women as role models and champions can have effects in the talent pipeline.

Gender diversity brings better customer experience, increased ideas exchanges and innovation, improved corporate performance,...
Gender from the perspective of one of our investees: the case of Oolu

Entrepreneurship

- Women as co-founders: 50% (51% target)

Leadership

- Share of women in senior management: 20% target (50%)

Employment

- Share of women in the workforce: 17% (30% target)
- Share of women in the workforce... excl. field agents: 34% (30% target)

Gender Action Plan – ongoing implementation

Some examples:

- Recruit internally Gender Champions to popularize the Gender Action Plan across staff.
- Ensure internal policies promote gender equality: parental leave, remote working for managers policy, childcare plan.
- Create a more gender-inclusive workplace culture: training to management on gender-inclusive good practices, company-wide training on sexual harassment, clean & private space for breastfeeding,…
- Increase female applications for technical roles through an internship program every 3-6 months in underrepresented professions (e.g. technical - data, IT, software development - and accounting - accounting, audit, control).
- Increase the sales of productive-use systems to enable women to earn more money.
Session II

Promoting gender equality in DRE programmes - challenges and lessons learnt

Irene Calvé Saborit
Board Member, ARE & Co-Founder and CBDO
Sunkofa Energy

Rana Ghoneim
Chief - Energy systems and Infrastructure Division
UNIDO

Remco van Stappershoef
Manager - Women Economic Empowerment
ENERGIA

Marta Caradonna
Coordinator
Micro-Grid Academy
RES4Africa Foundation

Tracy Kimathi
Founder
Tree_sea.mals
Empowering Women

5. Gender Equality
6. Affordable & Clean Energy for All

Equal Access to and Control Over Sustainable Energy Services

Engendering Energy - Theory of Change

Women at the Heart of Energy Access

Universal Access to Sustainable Energy by 2030

Outcome Areas

- Women's Economic Empowerment
- Enabling Environment
- Thought Leadership
- Networking

Interventions

- Women Entrepreneurs
- Access to Finance & Markets
- Multistakeholder Dialogue to Engage Private Sector
- Female Leaders
- Knowledge Management
- Communications
- Innovation
- Joined Strategies and Actions
- Strategic Alliances
- Partnerships

EnergyA
International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy
MICRO-GRID ACADEMY

Renewable Energy
for Capacity Building
The Micro-Grid Academy is a vocational capacity building programme that aims at building new generations of young professionals to develop and maintain RE systems and speed up the ongoing renewable energy transition.

- Enhance access to energy in Africa
- Deploy renewable energy solutions in the East-Africa region and beyond
- Create skilled and conscious workforce through knowledge transfer and by training young African people
Micro-Grid Academy
Components

Educating new generations of young professionals (200 per year)

Empowering the local job market with a focus on women empowerment and entrepreneurship

Exploring and Support innovative experimental activities to enhance access to energy

- 13 training editions in 5 countries
- over 500 students and 30 local trainers
- from more than 15 countries

- 38% of women participants
- Partnership with woman sectorial entities (Aweef, EWiEn...)
- Women are key players in the Rural Energy value chain

The Young Talents of the Year 2020 Award to reward the best 3 MGA alumni projects and innovative ideas.
African Women & Youth in the D.R.E Sector
EXPERIENCE & INFORMATION

- EDUCATION PROGRAMS
- Example: Micro-grid Academy

FINANCING

- ALUMNI PROGRAMS
- Example: MGA Talent of the Year Award

SOCIAL MISCONCEPTIONS

- INCUBATOR PROGRAMS
- Example: Africa Prize, MIT Solve

POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

- POLICY PROGRAMS
- Example: AWEEF / UNEP
  n/b: Only 4 countries globally chair Women as Energy Ministers