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Short summary of the Integrated Solar Cooking Project Mbarara and Kampala Uganda by Mukasa Kawesa, Director Solar Connect Association, implementing NGO in Uganda

During the last 8 years we have, together with SCN and Wilde Ganzen, committed ourselves to giving women in Uganda a better life without the suffocating smoke in and around the cooking areas. SCA has considerably improved the standard of living of thousands of families in Uganda through the sale of energy-saving cooking appliances. In various parts of the country poverty has been reduced through the fostering of entrepreneurship among women in these regions. The marketing model ('cooking together' sessions, home visits) developed by SCA has set in motion a process of durable change.

Now, after 8 years, the results of our work speak for themselves: women save money by seriously reducing their charcoal and firewood expenses and smoke-related diseases have decreased. Our activities are concentrated in 2 districts in the Mbarara region and 3 districts around the capital Kampala. The purchase of two small pick-up trucks, made possible by SCN and Wilde Ganzen, is invaluable for the implementation of our ISC programme.

A number of women, carefully selected in their own community, are responsible for marketing the whole range of energy-saving cooking appliances. They also manage a modest credit fund to enable poor households to acquire these cooking appliances. It is estimated that the income of these women / marketers has increased by 50 to 120%. At present over 50,000 families have benefited from SCA's 'Renewable Energy for Cooking' programme. Pupils at schools in the region received extensive information from SCA about the advantages of the use of energy-saving cooking appliances.

The year 2013/2014 was a year of transition as far as project activities and relations with SCN and Wilde Ganzen were concerned. In 2013, SCA and SCN drew up a business plan and a strategic action plan. Execution of these plans started in October 2013 with the purchase of a piece of land in Biharwe close to Mbarara. Shortly thereafter the construction of a new Renewable Energy Centre was started. Unfortunately, the construction of the centre encountered some delays for various reasons, but in the autumn of 2015 it became operational.

Over the many years of cooperation with SCN, SCA has been very energetic and innovative. Sound knowledge and competences were transferred by SCN to SCA staff. This has also enabled us to be creative and to commit ourselves to reaching our objectives

Having said this, there are still enough challenges to be met. There is increasing popular demand for sustainable energy, in particular for the use of solar energy to generate electricity. Together with SCN and others we are trying to meet these challenges using the appropriate technologies that are at the same time feasible for larger groups of the population. Climate changes, in particular rainfall variability, increasingly take their toll. We are doing our utmost to integrate our work into the sustainable energy policy of the government. This policy aims to increase the use of sustainable energy sources in the country from its present 4% of the total national energy consumption to 61% in 2017.