



Miller Center

for Social Entrepreneurship

Name of social enterprise: Solar Sister

Mission: Solar Sister envisions a brighter world powered by women entrepreneurs. In sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 600 million people have no access to electricity and over 700 million must rely on harmful fuels, it's women who bear the huge burden of this energy poverty and who disproportionately shoulder the harmful effects of climate change. Solar Sister believes women are a key part of the solution to the clean energy challenge.

Webpage: <http://www.solarsister.org>

GSBI (2011) business plan presentation:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fhxHWS4EveE> but see Solar Sister's

Youtube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/solarsistervideo>

Location(s) of research: Tanzania

The challenge: Solar Sister has entered into a three-year, multi-institutional innovative partnership to sell solar home system sales to (predominantly women) members of microfinance lending groups and to other rural communities in Tanzania. In 2019, fellows will initiate research activities to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of this innovation partnership.

Background: The Miller Center placed Global Social Benefit Fellows with Solar Sister in 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2016. The 2016 project was supervised by [Dr. Leslie Gray](#) of the Department of Environmental Studies and Sciences. She directed field research and was the lead author of "[Turning on the Lights: Transcending Energy Poverty through the Power of Women Entrepreneurs](#)" and "[The Power of Small-Scale Solar: Gender, Energy Poverty and Entrepreneurship in Tanzania](#)." Fellows were coauthors on these publications. Leslie Gray will continue her research with Solar Sister, and applicants for this writing-intensive GSBF research project should be prepared to submit prior examples of social science data analysis and a writing sample. This project is, relative to other projects, more research-intensive in nature, and will extend beyond the normal fellowship timeframe into early 2020. Extended activities will include data analysis, writing, and perhaps, an academic conference presentation.

Action research deliverables:

1. A baseline study of the target markets/potential customer communities for this innovative partnership.
2. An evaluation of the initial role-out of the partnership activities, targeting distinct customers.



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3. The establishment of an initial monitoring and evaluation framework and mechanisms to gather data using mobile technologies.

Student skills needed: social science data collection and analysis (quantitative and qualitative data), multicultural competencies, excellent writing skills.

Keywords: Gender and sustainable development, rural economic development, Tanzania culture and history, last mile distribution, distributed solar energy products, social impact assessment, monitoring and evaluation strategies.

