



REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS: EMPOWERED ENTREPRENEUR TRAINING FUND

September 12th, 2017

Visionaria Network is now accepting applications for the **Empowered Entrepreneur Training Fund (EETF)**. EETF is a small grants fund designed to partially subsidize training programs for organizations working to sell cookstoves and other energy products in East Africa **to train their sales staff or entrepreneurs in critical business, empowerment and leadership training.**

This fund is made possible through support from the USAID-funded Developing a Sustainable Cookstove Sector (DSCS) Project, implemented by Winrock International. *The DSCS project's goal is to mitigate negative climate, health and other development impacts caused by the inefficient use of biomass fuels for cooking through the development of sustainable cookstove markets that will lead to widespread adoption of clean, efficient cooking solutions.* EETF funds will be used to hire certified trainers that have already been trained and certified by Winrock International ("Winrock") under the USAID-funded Developing a Sustainable Cookstove Sector (DSCS) project.

The EETF will support organizations in conducting trainings using the [Empowered Entrepreneur Training Handbook](#) for entrepreneurs and sales agents - particularly women - who sell or contribute to the improved cookstove value chain (manufacturing, sales, distribution, service, etc.). The Fund may also support organizations in conducting trainings using the Empowered Entrepreneur Training Handbook for youth, with the purpose of having youth participants participate in and build clean energy markets through the sale of fuel efficient cookstoves or cleaner/alternative fuels.

Background

There are 3 billion people – or 40% of the world population – who still rely on biomass¹ for cooking, lighting and heating. Exposure to household air pollution from traditional cooking practices alone is estimated to kill over 4 million people every year, while millions more suffer from cancer, pneumonia, heart and lung disease, blindness, and burns.² In regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, where the lack of access to clean energy solutions and electrification is particularly significant, nearly a third of the urban population and the majority of the rural poor are using biomass for cooking and heating in traditional open fires.³

Increased community engagement of local entrepreneurs or sales agents is considered to be crucial for scaling the distribution and adoption of cleaner cookstoves that can reduce the negative impacts of reliance on biomass and traditional cooking technologies. Local entrepreneurs can enhance the access of cleaner cooking technologies to consumers, while simultaneously increasing market access to such

¹ Biomass is fuel developed from organic material such as firewood or dung. Charcoal is usually produced by the heating of wood.

² World Health Organization. (2014). Household Air Pollution and Health. *World Health Organization*. Retrieved August 1, 2015 from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs292/en/>.

³ Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves. (2014). Igniting change: A strategy for universal adoption of clean cookstoves and Fuels. *Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves*. Retrieved from <http://www.cleancookstoves.org/resources/factsheets/igniting-change.pdf>.

consumers and communicating marketing messages more effectively. There is a particular focus on engaging women entrepreneurs as sales agents in the cookstove sector, because they are the traditional household managers of energy and the cooks. The literature review reveals that women can more effectively market and sell products to other users (women), thus enhancing adoption, while also being able to reach new consumer segments through their networks. In countries where gender disparity is high, women as sales agents is a good way to access untapped female markets because women can buy directly from other women in the community and do not need to venture to cities or marketplaces.⁴

The Empowered Entrepreneur Training Handbook

The [Empowered Entrepreneur Training Handbook](#) (Handbook) was developed by Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and Visionaria Network with financial support from the United Nations Foundation's Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves (Alliance). The Handbook builds key business, empowerment and leadership skills over 5-6 days of training. This unique curriculum focuses on agency-based empowerment, which enhances an individual's cognitive capacity to create and focus on her goals, and prepares him/her to effectively take advantage of opportunities when they arise. The Handbook was originally developed for women entrepreneurs / sales agents in the cookstove sector, but has applicability beyond the household energy sector and is also relevant for men.

A randomized controlled trial conducted by JHU, and implemented by ESVAK Kenya, found that women entrepreneurs who received the agency-based training sold nearly 3 times as many improved cookstoves as men generally; men and women getting the enhanced training were 2.7 times more likely to be high sellers; and women and men who received the agency-based empowerment training were twice as likely to pursue sales leads and continue their business activities when faced with challenges.⁵

A recent global trainer certification initiative using the EETH, as part of the USAID and Winrock DSCS program was also found to increase retention and improve the sales of entrepreneurs in participating organizations in East Africa.

Requirements

Trainings must run a minimum of 3 days and include the empowerment and leadership topics. If the organization has not conducted business trainings previously, they are heavily encouraged to include the business section and therefore will have a training of approximately 5 days. If the organization already has business training, then they can conduct just the 3-4 day version of the training.

Applying organizations must be able to organize and complete an Empowered Entrepreneur training program between **November 1, 2017, and March 15, 2018**. Organizations are required to cost-share part of the training: The EETF will cover the costs (**up to USD 5,000**) of certified trainers to lead the training and 50% of logistical costs of the training. Selected organizations will need to cover the other 50% of logistics costs to be eligible for this training opportunity.

Relevant Documents to Review prior to submission:

- [Empowered Entrepreneur Training: Handbook](#)
- [Empowered Entrepreneur Training: Participant Packet](#)
- [Empowered Entrepreneur Training: Human-Centered Design \(HCD\) Planning Guide](#)

⁴ Corporate Citizenship. 2012. "Women Mean Business: Empowerment in Developing Markets." Corporate Citizenship.

⁵ Shankar, A. Onyura, M and Alderman, A. Agency-based empowerment training enhances sales capacity of female cookstove entrepreneurs in Kenya. Journal of Health Communications 2015;20 Suppl 1:67-75.

Submission Instructions

To be eligible for training funds, all applicants must submit the following information via the EETF application, accessible here:

EETF Application Form

The application has 3 sections:

1. **Training Proposal and Organizational Summary**, including descriptions of:
 - The organization & organization's efforts to enhance clean cooking and clean energy markets, including how the organization engages entrepreneurs / sales agents
 - Why the organization is interested in conducting an Empowered Entrepreneur Training
 - The history of training efforts at the organization, including whether or not the organization has conducted trainings in topics of business or leadership
 - How the training will be implemented, including the number of days, number of expected participants, and topic areas of the Handbook (please refer to the HCD planning guide for examples and options for initial training format)
2. **Training Introduction**, including initial questions regarding the individuals you would like to train and their needs.
3. **Training Budget**, includes questions and prompts to enter your estimated training costs. Costs may include: venue, travel to/from venue for participants, accommodation for participants as needed, lunch for participants for each day of training, printing Participant Packets (30-page Word files provided by Visionaria Network with the Handbook) for each participant, writing utensils, flipchart and markers.

Applications are due by October 12th. We recommend applicants submit their applications 7-days before the deadline to allow Visionaria Network the chance to clarify any of your comments and questions. All applicants will receive a confirmation of their application upon submitting the application form (link provided above).

Applicants will be notified by October 28th regarding the acceptance of their application.

Selection Criteria for Fund Applicants

- Organizations must be actively supporting the sale and use of improved cookstove, including but not limited to the following aspects of the clean-cooking value chain: manufacturing, marketing, sales, distribution, maintenance, etc.
- Organizations must engage entrepreneurs or sales agents – preferably including women – in value chain activities; or be working with youth to market and sell cookstoves or other products in the clean energy value chain.
- Organizations must be based / working in the East Africa region.
- Organizations with cost-effective budgets will be prioritized.

Cost-sharing requirements

Applicants must commit to covering 50% of logistical costs of the training (**not including the costs of the certified trainers' time which will be fully covered by Visionaria Network in addition to the remaining 50% of logistical costs**).

Receipt Submission Criteria

Training costs will be **reimbursed** to the selected organizations following submittal of receipts for the logistical costs of the training after the training is completed. Receipts and an invoice (template will be provided) are **required** for reimbursements following the implementation of the training.

Visionaria Network reserves the right to request additional information from applicants to be used in the selection process. This RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of Visionaria Network, Winrock or USAID. Visionaria Network reserves the right to issue no grants, and/or request clarification or modification of individual applications submitted prior to selecting grantees.