



Improving access to solar energy for the most poor

PHILIPPINES

- 107 million inhabitants
- 106th country out of 189 in the HDI*
- 22% of the population live below the poverty line

*Human Development Index
Source: hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/PHL



MILLENNIUM GOALS



BACKGROUND



Desperate fuel poverty

Many Filipino households are not connected to the electricity network. Some of these households are in the overcrowded, dark and insecure slums of Manila; some are in isolated island and mountain villages, where connecting to the standard network is almost impossible. Consequently, people use candles, kerosene lamps, car batteries, and generators to provide themselves with light and thereby reduce their feelings of uncertainty. Others illegally connect themselves up to a more fortunate neighbour's meter. But these plan Bs are inadequate, very costly, and very dangerous.

MISSION



An appropriate lighting solution

Entrepreneurs du Monde established ATE Co. in 2015, to give these families access to an individual, affordable solar kit which provides 3 points for lighting, as well as a telephone charging point. The team offers a hire-purchase service, Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG): a flexible, cost-effective and sustainable system that helps customers afford their equipment and then gradually buy it outright. In 2019, ATE Co. also began to equip remote villages with interconnected micro-grids providing solar power, thereby supplying their residents with power and offering a flexible payment system.

METHODOLOGY



A technician installs the PAYG kits and then collects payment for the equivalent of several days' energy consumption on a regular basis. This modest payment triggers the release of an activation code for the solar kit, sent via text message. Within a few months, the family will own its own kit and have access to a source of quality lighting which is free, unlimited and renewable from that point on. The micro-grids use the same payment model and enable energy consumption to be monitored from a distance. They produce a larger amount of energy, which can be switched between houses on the same network, according to the needs and financial capacities of each household.

SUPPORT



Since its creation, Entrepreneurs du Monde has supported ATE Co. with its structuring and development at every level: legally, operationally and financially. The programme manager, who is French for the moment, is closely supported by the Philippines Coordinator at Entrepreneurs du Monde, but also by the manager of Energy Programmes in Asia and Caribbean, by the Finance team and by the Social Performance Management team. By the end of 2021, ATE Co. will have become a social enterprise under local law, will have become both sustainable and long-term, and will be managed by a fully Filipino team.

WILLIE & REMEDIOS

A couple of entrepreneurs boosted by reliable and cost-effective lighting



Willie has a vulcanisation workshop and I have a "little eatery". Previously, we were using electricity generated by a large, polluting battery, which wasn't very powerful or reliable. ATE Co. helped us to get two solar kits which each fed 3 lamps, a radio and a telephone charging point.

Having strong, clean lighting has changed our lives - it attracts customers and saves each of us 100 pesos a day!

That's invaluable when you have 4 children to support!



70% OF DIRECT BENEFICIARIES ARE WOMEN

FOCUS

DEPLOYING FOR AND WITH MEMBERS OF VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES



Beneficiaries becoming ATE Co. service agents: a sure win!

Since 2018, to make sure that the service remains local, ATE Co. has been trialling supporting its beneficiaries to become technician/facilitators or collection/prospecting agents. Following their successful integration into the service, ATE Co. decided to involve its beneficiaries to a greater extent, making them representatives for their respective areas, so that a greater number of families can be equipped more quickly, while still assuring a high-quality, everyday service which was locally available. The technicians, trained to help with the installation of kits and to attend promptly to their maintenance, have themselves been recruited from among beneficiary families and trained by the team.



An inclusive, solar power micro-grid in isolated areas

In October 2019, ATE Co. launched a pilot of a micro-grid on Palasan Island, in the Quezon Province area. The island is only reachable from Manila by a journey of 24 hours, using 3 different modes of transport. Fortunately, the system is equipped with remote control software so that maintenance needs can be anticipated, and Jayson, the ATE Co. technician based on the island, is able to intervene at any moment. He ensures that the monthly collection takes place and that families who could potentially be connected to the network are identified. Three other island residents are also involved in the installation of the micro-grid and trained.



KEY FIGURES

| | No. of products sold | No. of families equipped | No. of new indirect beneficiaries | Turnover achieved |
|-----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| 2018 | 275 | 275 | 1,375 | € 20 |
| 2019 | 101 | 101 | 404 | € 32 |
| Objectives 2020 | 670 | 570 | 2,200 | € 145 |

HIGHLIGHTS



Expansion into new zones

ATE Co. initially offered its services exclusively in the shanty towns of Manila. In 2018, it extended its services to the neighbourhoods around the capital, into areas where people had settled after they had been evicted from the central slums. Since 2019, it has also been serving poor communities in the mountainous province of Rizal, close to Manila, on Palasan Island (Quezon Province) and in Northern Samar (Samar Island).



First families become owners

ATE Co. provided equipment to 91 families in 2019, bringing the number of equipped families since the social enterprise was established to 500. In 2019, from among those 500 families, 120 finished paying for their kits, and now own them outright. Social objectives for this programme were achieved since 70 % of these new owners are women.

OUTLOOK



Rural areas are poorly and sparsely fed by the electricity network and require access to energy in order to improve living conditions and boost the commercial activities of families living in extreme poverty. ATE Co. is therefore going to add appliances to its range which will enable revenue generating activities to be started or expanded: fridges, sewing machines, hair clippers, etc. The organisation will also continue to extend its work in Samar, one of the poorest islands in the country.



In addition, ATE Co. will soon extend its solar energy micro-grids, which is eagerly awaited. It will achieve this by partnering with OKRA, whose technology fits well with ATE Co.'s core strengths: training technicians and beneficiaries in solar energy and regular collection.

PARTNERS



CONTACTS

Programme Manager
> solene.gondrexon@entrepreneursdumonde.org
Philippines Coordinator
> khrstin.hunter@entrepreneursdumonde.org
Head of Energy Unit/Asia and Caribbean
> alexandre.borme@entrepreneursdumonde.org

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