Energy insecurity exacerbates female poverty
When poor quality equipment is used for cooking and lighting the economic, health and environmental consequences are very damaging. People in the most deprived communities use up a large part of their budget in this way, whilst breathing in noxious fumes that claim as many victims each year as AIDS and malaria put together. Heavy reliance on biomass for cooking on such inefficient equipment also contributes to deforestation. Energy poverty particularly affects women: they are the ones who have to provide the wood and charcoal and who are also the most exposed to toxic fumes.

Improving access to modern, economic energy sources
Entrepreneurs du Monde created the MIVO Energie project (“We feel fulfilled” in the local Ewe language) in 2013 to make modern efficient equipment, such as solar lamps, gas stoves and improved fuel-saving cookstoves, accessible to Togolese households. This has an immediate impact on the user’s health and budget and also the environment. The improved cookstoves reduce both wood/charcoal consumption and the emission of noxious fumes. The gas stoves do away with both problems completely.

MIVO has selected a range of products and created a marketing pack. They recruit and train sellers as well as forming partnerships with major accounts in order to rapidly reach as many families as possible. Upstream, MIVO supports the stove producers. Downstream, it develops financial solutions for its clients and organises awareness-raising campaigns.

Entrepreneurs du Monde created MIVO in 2014 and since then has provided support for the project’s structuring and development on all fronts (legal, operational and financial). In 2018, a law firm provided support to MIVO to revise its articles of association. The team is a leading advocate for the creation of a status of social enterprise in Togo.
AN INCREASINGLY SOCIAL PROGRAMME

An improving social record
In 2015, MIVO Energie created a social charter that defines the values and social mission of the programme. In December 2018 an external consultant came to evaluate how well the social objectives had been met using the Social Business Scorecard developed by CERISE. The audit showed an improvement in the score: it had risen from 63 points out of 100 in 2016 to 70 two years later. This improvement is the logical outcome of the measures taken after the first audit: the inclusion of butane gas in the product range, the development of financial services for clients and the extension of services to outlying and rural areas.

Further challenges to meet
In spite of this welcome advance, the team still has to work on understanding the profile of their beneficiaries so that its services can be better adapted to their needs. A complaints management procedure also needs to be formalised to guarantee optimal protection for the clients. MIVO also needs to define an environmental policy, especially in relation to end of life recycling of products, to completely achieve all of the objectives listed in the social charter.

HIGHLIGHTS

MIVO has passed the milestone of 10,000 products sold!
Since 2014, MIVO Energie has distributed 12,510 products to households living with energy insecurity. To reach these vulnerable communities, its activities have been extended to 2 secondary towns: Kpalimé (120 km from Lomé) in 2016 then Kara (420 km from the capital) in 2018. The association is therefore now active in 3 regions. In Lomé, Kpalimé and Kara, MIVO Energie has set up a diverse distribution network, made up of microfranchised resellers and major account partners: associations, groups of women or producers, etc.

MIVO is committed to male-female equality
Several activities took place in 2018 to better take into account the question of gender in our approach. MIVO was also selected by ECOWAS’s centre for renewable energy and energy efficiency as a “Gender and Energy” focal point for the Togolese community.

OUTLOOK

New areas, new partnerships
Following on from Lomé, Kpalimé and Kara, MIVO Energie will establish itself in a fourth area, Atakpamé, in 2019. This is a major agricultural area producing crops such as cotton and soya. The team will build partnerships with groups of producers to rapidly equip a large number of households. They will also distribute their products via village savings and loans groups that are widespread throughout the area.

Extending the product range
3 new solar-powered lamps will be added to the product range. Beneficiaries will be helped also to acquire equipments for their income generating business which will work with solar power. MIVO will also do further research into gas technologies such as domestic biodigesters and pay-as-you-go (PAYG) systems.