

Green Girls Organisation



Green Girls

greengirlsorganisation.com



The Care Economy
Knowledge Hub

the-care-economy-knowledge-hub.org

Profiling Businesses in the Care Economy

The care economy consists of paid and unpaid labor and services that support caregiving in all its forms. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, women spend between three to five times as many hours on unpaid care and domestic work as men. This represents 80 percent of a household's total hours devoted to unpaid care work.

Care economy businesses can help recognize, redistribute, reduce and reward – also known as the 4 Rs – unpaid and paid care and domestic work in the following ways:



Recognize: Initiatives that increase visibility and recognition of paid and unpaid care and domestic activity as "productive" work that creates real value and contributes to economies and societies.



Redistribute: Services and initiatives that redistribute care work from individuals to public and private sector entities, and redistribute care and domestic work within the household.



Reduce: Products and initiatives that reduce the time spent on and burden of unpaid care and domestic work.



Reward: Products, services and initiatives that ensure that care and domestic workers are paid fairly and have professional growth potential. This provides them with financial reward and security.

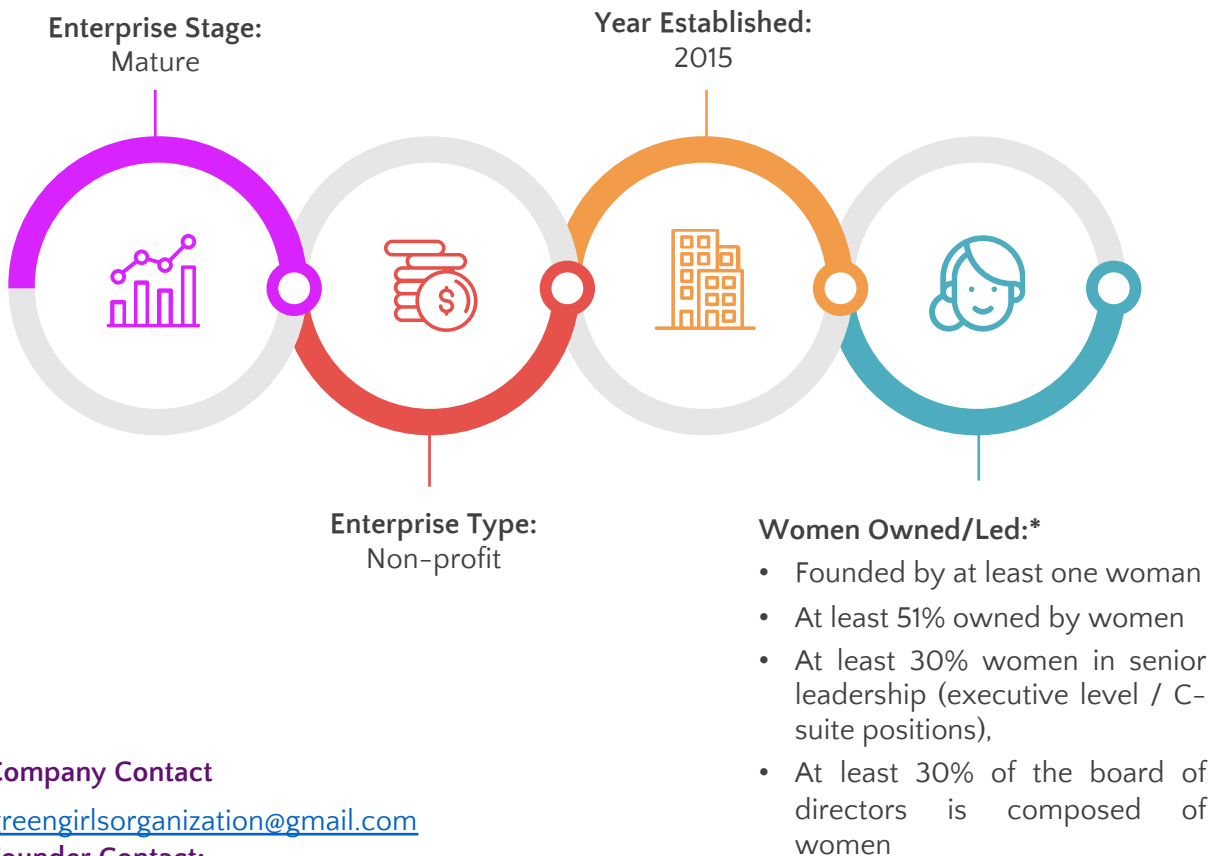
The Care Economy Knowledge Hub aims to address the knowledge gap around care businesses by showcasing various business models and creating a resource base for relevant stakeholders. It also aims to raise awareness and increase knowledge of the state of impact-driven care economy business models and attract a broad range of funders to invest in care economy solutions by showcasing opportunities. These business profiles are intended to showcase said potential investment opportunities. They have been created from information and data provided by the business itself.

This project is supported by Canada's International Development Research Center, in partnership with the Soros Economic Development Fund at the Open Society Foundations. Building on their track record and commitment to transforming the care economy and mobilizing finance for gender equality, they have jointly launched this action research program to help transform the care economy through impact business and investment.

Executive Summary

Reduce

Green Girls Organisation (GGO) provides clean energy solutions in lighting and cooking in remote and off-grid regions of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, and DR Congo. Green Girls creates a cadre of women trained to assemble and sell solar lanterns and biodigesters in rural areas. GGO also conducts climate change and clean energy awareness programs with adolescent girls. The organization has trained 4,500 women & adolescent girls across 68 villages since 2015. It has also constructed 3,060 biodigesters, installed 772 solar lamps, and created 3,500 micro-jobs for women. GGO has 20 full-time employees.



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*According to 2X "women entrepreneurship" and "women leadership" criteria: [2X Challenge Criteria](#)

1. About The Enterprise

1.1 Problem

In Cameroon, where GGO primarily operates, only 21% of the rural population has access to electricity and only 23% of the total population has access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking.¹ Rural women and adolescent girls are most impacted by this as they are most often responsible for firewood collection and cooking. They are also most affected by burning unclean fuel. In Cameroon, exposure to particulate matter (PM) from all sources of air pollution was the cause for an estimated 15,000 deaths and around 650,000 disability-adjusted life years lost in 2016.²

1.2 Solution

GGO addresses the lack of access to energy in rural communities by distributing clean energy products such as solar lamps and biodigesters. The enterprise provides multiple solutions:

Clean energy product: GGO distributes solar lamps, biodigesters, and fertilizers (a by-product of the biodigesters) in rural areas. GGO procures solar lamp components which are then assembled by women in villages, and develops biogas digester specifications that are constructed in rural homes. In villages where GGO operates, the company provides households with solar kits (containing six solar light bulbs), and constructs biodigesters connected to multiple houses.

Awareness-raising: GGO holds awareness-raising meetings in rural communities to disseminate information on clean energy products, sustainable development goals and climate change, with three target audiences. The first is training on climate change with adolescent girls. To do this, GGO organizes 'Green Girls Clubs' where girls act as peer educators to other adolescent girls and women. The second is a marketing exercise where GGO educates potential users about solar lights and bio-digesters. Lastly, GGO conducts awareness sessions on product usage and maintenance, including solar panels cleaning or sorting organic waste to be used in the biodigesters with those who procure the products.

¹ Central African republic. SEforALL Africa Hub. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.se4all-africa.org/seforall-in-africa/country-data/central-african-republic/>

² Kypridemos, C., Puzzolo, E., Aamaas, B., Hyseni, L., Shupler, M., Aunan, K., & Pope, D. (2020). Health and climate impacts of scaling adoption of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) for clean household cooking in Cameroon: a modeling study. *Environmental health perspectives*, 128(4), 047001.

Technical Training: GGO organizes technical training for women on how to construct biodigesters and assemble and install solar lanterns. Women are trained on the use of organic fertilizers, packaging, and solar lanterns sales. After the training, GGO helps them with market access and finding sales and distribution channels for solar lamps and biodigesters. GGO works with corporations on their Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives by selling solar lanterns and organic fertilizers for them to distribute to their employees and/or clients.

1.3 Customer Segment

Customer Segment	Product / Service Provided	Paid / Unpaid
<p>Women in rural areas (usually part of a credit union):</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of technical training: GGO holds technical training sessions on assembling solar lamps, installations, construction and maintenance of biodigesters and making and packaging organic fertilizers from biodigester slurry. • Market linkages for assembled products: GGO supports trained women to sell solar lanterns and organic fertilizers. The trained women are also supported with bulk orders, generally provided by GGO through corporate institutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpaid The training is free of charge. GGO uses grants to fund the training program. • Paid For market linkages, GGO has a revenue sharing model with the credit union, Bafut Credit Union, where all workers have a savings account. GGO keeps 30% of the revenue and the remaining 70% is distributed by Bafut to the women who assembled the product.
<p>Corporates</p>	<p>Clean energy products branded under a corporate logo. GGO sells solar lanterns and organic fertilizers made by rural women to corporations (with the option to label the product with the corporate logo). These are then distributed to their employees.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid GGO sells to the corporation and shares revenue with Bafut Credit Union as per above

Customer Segment	Product / Service Provided	Paid / Unpaid
Rural Households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness and installation of solar products and biodigesters. GGO creates awareness about climate change and sustainable products in rural regions and encourages communities to buy clean energy products. GGO installs these products and households are trained to maintain the installed solar lanterns and biodigesters. • Awareness on climate change: GGO creates Green Girls Clubs, composed of adolescent girls between 14 and 19 years old, and conducts climate change training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpaid Rural households are not charged for the product. GGO funds this through grants. • Unpaid Green Girls Clubs are not charged for the training program. It is funded through grants.

1.4 Team And Governance Structure

There are 20 full-time employees at GGO that include a lawyer, an accountant, a treasurer, solar engineers, bio-gas engineers, and trainers. 70% of these employees are women and 30% are men. GGO offers opportunities to part-time volunteers from the communities they work in. These volunteers are familiar with the community environment, culture, and social norms and help GGO staff to convene community meetings. These volunteers include translators for communities where English and French are not commonly spoken.

Eight of GGO's ten board members are women.

1.5 Enterprise Policies

Policy	Yes / No
Overall HR Policy	No
Equal pay for equivalent work policy	No

Policy*	Yes / No
Non-discrimination / Equal employment opportunity / Diversity and inclusion policy (gender, LGBTQ, PWD, etc.)	No
Anti bullying and sexual harassment policy / Respectful workplaces	No
Whistleblower policy / Employee grievance mechanism	No
Maternity / Paternity leave policy	Yes
Safeguarding policies for vulnerable groups (children, elderly, PWDs)	No
Safeguarding policies for the environment or to reduce detrimental impact on the environment (covers reducing carbon footprint, reduced water consumption etc.)	Yes

2. Impact

2.1 Mission Statement

Success to GGO is to make sure that every woman and girl in an African rural community has access to clean and affordable energy. GGO is also on a mission to close the gender gap in STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics) where very few girls are involved, especially in the area of green technology.

2.2 Intended Impact

GGO's intended impact is directed towards women and adolescent girls through:

- **Reducing** the time women spend on sourcing unclean fuel for domestic work. Clean energy products reduce reliance on unclean & harmful fuels, reduce time spent on collecting fuel and enhance access to energy. These labor saving solutions reduce the time women and adolescent girls spend on domestic work.

2.3 Monitoring And Measurement

GGO monitors the following indicators monthly.

- Solar lanterns and fertilizer sales.
- Enthusiasm about work orders and challenges faced by workers to complete orders.
- Number of biodigesters constructed.

GGO also has focal points (affiliated with the village chief) set up in each village where they operate. These focal points send post-intervention feedback to GGO every month. This is discussed in meetings or conversations and includes inputs on:

- How and for what have the women used their earnings from product sales?
- How is the women's group? Is it united and working together?
- How are the lights and biodigesters benefiting the community?

2.4 Results To Date

- GGO has reached nearly 4,500 women and adolescent girls with clean energy skill development.
- GGO has worked in 68 villages across Cameroon, the Central African Republic and DR Congo.
- Through 68 Green Girls Clubs, GGO has increased climate change awareness and climate action among girls aged 14-19.
- 3,060 biodigesters have been constructed, 772 solar installations have been carried out and 3,500 micro-jobs have been created.

GGO's work is aligned with the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):



3. Financials

3.1 Financial Status

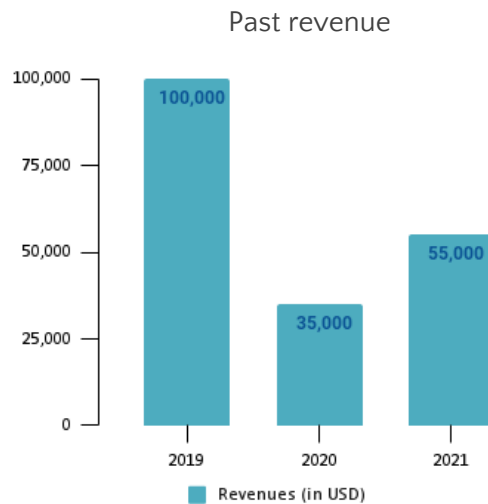
GGO is a not-for-profit and is currently financially sustainable.

(Amounts in US\$)	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021
Total Revenue	100,000	35,000	55,000

* GGO can be contacted directly for further information on surplus.

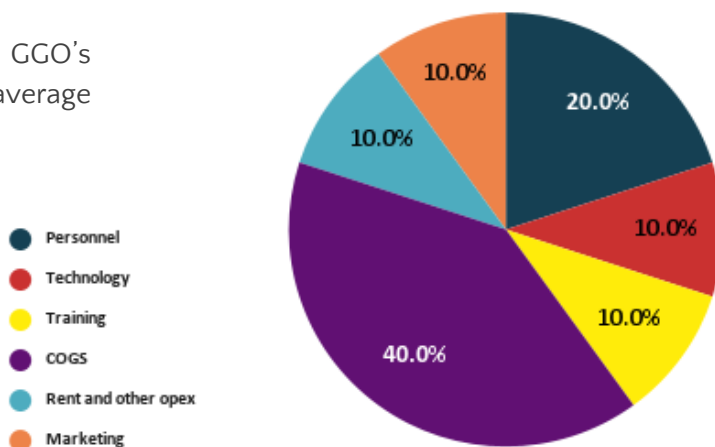
3.1.1 Revenue Streams

GGO earns its revenue from grants and sales. 20% of the total revenue comes from sales revenue that GGO receives from solar lanterns and organic fertilizers sales and 80% of the total revenue comes from grants.



3.1.2 Expenses

The chart below displays GGO's estimated breakdown of average percentage expenses in 2021



3.2 External Funding Sources (Past and Current)

- **2015 Grant from Ekona Treasury of US\$ 7,500** to kick-off their pilot phase project in South-West Cameroon.
- **2016 Grant from North-West Elites Association for US\$ 15,000** to build capacity and raise awareness of the SDGs, practical training on solar energy, and biogas. This also included a grant to build six biodigesters.
- **2016 Grant from Manjong Association for US\$ 15,000** to construct five medium size biodigesters and carry out capacity building in renewable energy and the SDGs.
- **2017 Subvention from the Ministry of Energy Cameroon for US\$ 12,000** for solar training and the solar electrification of 15 rural households with solar energy.
- **2017 Subvention from the Ministry of Secondary Education for US\$ 30,000** for capacity building, awareness raising on renewable energy and the SDGs, solar energy training, and solar electrification of 30 rural homes in the Wum community.
- **2018 Subvention from the Ministry of Tourism for US\$ 22,500 and a cash prize of US\$ 15,000** after being chosen as the 2017 Best Sustainable Development project in Cameroon.
- **2019-20 Grant from The Visa Foundation** to establish focal points across three regions in Cameroon (Center, East & Far North), to set up Green Girls Club, carry out solar/biogas training, and install solar/biogas.

3.3 Challenges Faced In Accessing Capital

- **Complex value proposition:** It can be difficult for investors to understand GGO's business model.
- **Accessibility:** Accessing bank credit is challenging for GGO, because of the extensive formalities requiring collateral, credit history, and background checks.

4. Path To Scalability

4.1 Potential Avenues For Growth

GGO has identified the following avenues for growth:

- **Geographical Expansion:** GGO wants to expand to eight additional African countries where the organization already has legal work authorization; Gambia, Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, Niger, Benin, Gabon, and Burkina Faso. The organization will carry out training and installations as well as work with cooperatives in these countries.
- **Product Expansion:**
 - GGO wants to use its partnership with the MFI, Bafut Credit Cooperative and others, to pilot and test a digital platform to onboard women saving group members information. Through this digital platform, GGO aims to collect more financial information on savings, loans and microfinance products. GGO will use this information to create more customized clean energy solutions.
 - Green Girls also wants to build a fintech-based app in collaboration with the MFIs. This app would be targeted at rural women working with Green Girls and would allow them to access various banking features which are available on more traditional online banking softwares, however, the app will be much more accessible, convenient, and easier for rural women to use.

4.2 Risks And Challenges

- **Financing Challenges:** Lack of awareness about GGO's business model makes it difficult to pitch to potential investors.
- **Operational Challenges:** There is limited access to energy and light in the rural regions where GGO operates, making setting up camps and training in these regions a challenge. There are also several language barriers when GGO staff have to interact and work with women across villages. The organization has to rely heavily on translators and local volunteers to build a connection with these people. Often there are limited amenities and unhygienic conditions where GGO operates, which makes the women and adolescent girls it engages with susceptible to health issues such as malaria; this affects training program participation.
- **Social Norms:** Sometimes male family-members are unhappy and try to stop female members from working with GGO because of a bias against working women. GGO aims to mitigate this by engaging the clan or village chiefs or leaders while working in rural communities.

4.3 COVID-19 Impact On The Enterprise

During COVID-19, most companies were shut down and so it was difficult to reach decision-makers to sell them products made by women at GGO. Multinationals also cut down on their CSR budgets affecting GGO's sales. There was restricted field movement because of lockdowns and given the GGO business model it was difficult to move across rural areas and work with women cooperatives. As a result, training was reduced.

4.4 Support Received To Date

Green Girls received support from the Ministry of Environment and National Energy Regulation Board in Cameroon in the form of site visits and advice from consultants and engineers to help improve the organization's technical capacity.

4.5 Inputs Required For Growth

- **Financial:** GGO is looking for financial support in the form of grants worth US\$ 500,000. These funds will help the organization expand its operations in three African countries in addition to setting up its web+mobile based app.
- **Non-financial:** Green Girls needs technical expertise support from developers (web and app developers) to set up its technology and help maintain GGO's IT department. GGO is also looking for support to set up all processes necessary to scale its operations, such as HR and finance.