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EMPOWERING WOMEN TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES

In South Asia, the transition towards sustainable energy is pivotal for advancing inclusive development. Women entrepreneurship stands as a catalyst poised to revolutionize the energy sector, offering innovative solutions to tackle the region’s energy challenges. United States Agency for International Development (USAID)’s South Asia Regional Energy Partnership (SAREP) program places a significant emphasis on gender equality and social inclusion as pivotal components cutting across its objectives in line with the U.S Government’s Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy.

In rural India, the dearth of access to clean energy solutions exacerbates poverty and limits economic opportunities for rural communities. Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP), a non-governmental organization based in Pune, in collaboration with social enterprises Rukart and Sistema.bio, are committed to transform this narrative. Through the SAREP Partnership Fund (SPF), SSP is working to scale up access to innovative clean energy solutions for rural populations. Under this project, SSP has engaged and trained 500+ women micro-entrepreneurs also known as “*Swayam Sakhi*” to scale the adoption and support the deployment of two clean energy solutions.



Prefabricated Biodigester- To generate clean cooking fuel and bio-slurry. The solution helps cut household energy dependency on LPG and wood-based cooking stoves and reduces cultivation costs



Subjee Cooler- Energy efficient storage solution for perishable farm produce for reducing harvest waste and boosting small-scale farmers’ income

Additionally, the project seeks to increase access to clean energy solutions for rural populations, thereby increasing their savings and improving the knowledge base for commercially scaling up these two solutions in rural markets.



“*It is sustainable because we are developing a business model that addresses environmental and social issues. The first purpose is the economic empowerment of women. They increase the adoption of clean energy products by women in rural communities.*”

Upmanyu Patil

Director Programs-Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) sharing about the organization’s journey at the South Asia Forum for Distributed Energy (SAFDE) 2023



Key Objectives of the Initiative



Product Training

Women micro-entrepreneurs from SSP's existing last-mile network receive training to promote and sell innovative products, enhancing rural customer acquisition.



Training and Awareness

Conducting awareness campaigns and training sessions to educate women entrepreneurs about clean energy projects and distribution.



Knowledge Consolidation

Consolidating insights to scale up two clean energy solutions effectively within rural markets.



Public Dissemination

Documenting project insights and lessons learned in a publicly accessible report.



Network Sustainability

SSP aims to sustain its network of women micro-entrepreneurs by recruiting and developing new members while establishing partnerships with social enterprises for ongoing support.



Social Enterprise Linkages

Developing strong linkages between social enterprises and SSP's women micro-entrepreneur network to ensure continued marketing, distribution, and after-sales services beyond the project's duration.



STORIES OF IMPACT

The household of Mrs. Avida Jambhale is a glaring testimony of how subjee cooler has helped in improving the income of a family of 8 members, especially during the pandemic in 2021. The first subjee cooler was a brick-and-mortar storage facility that helped her store up to 100 kg of vegetables for a week. She has now installed an additional and more advanced subjee cooler to further augment her savings in 2023. She narrated how she could purchase organic vegetables from cultivators, store it for a long time in the subjee cooler and then further sell it in the nearby market. Her savings have significantly improved and now she has gained benefits worth Rs. 100000 in the last 23 months.

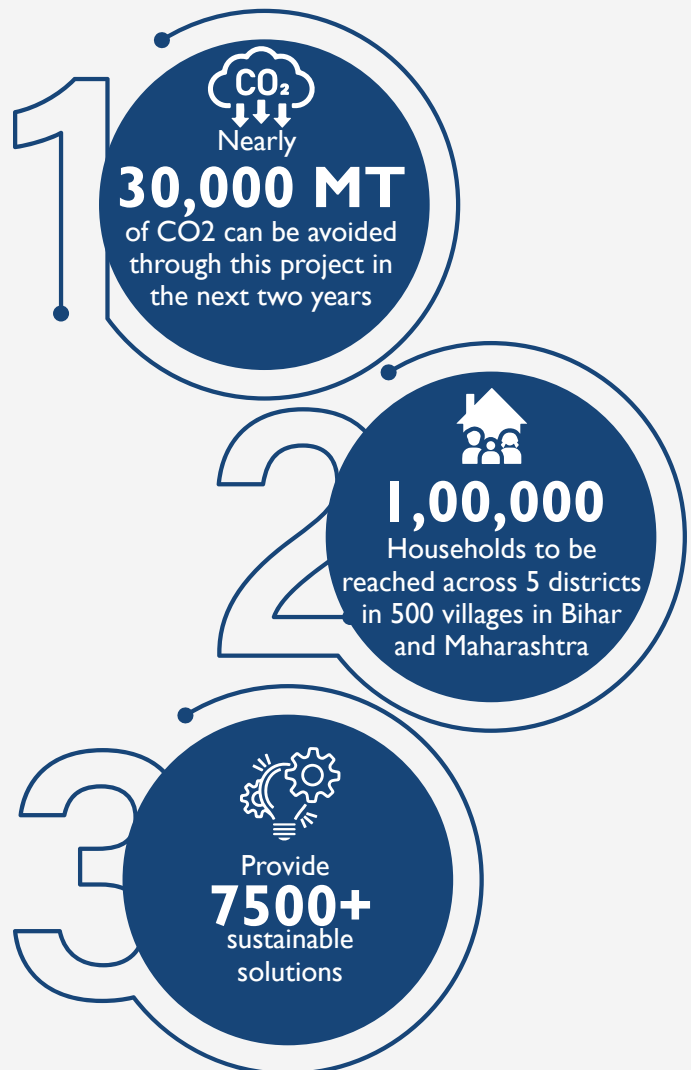
“

I feel I have been able to make a difference while trying to mobilize 100 more families for adopting subjee coolers.

Mrs. Avida Jambhale
Swayam Sakhi

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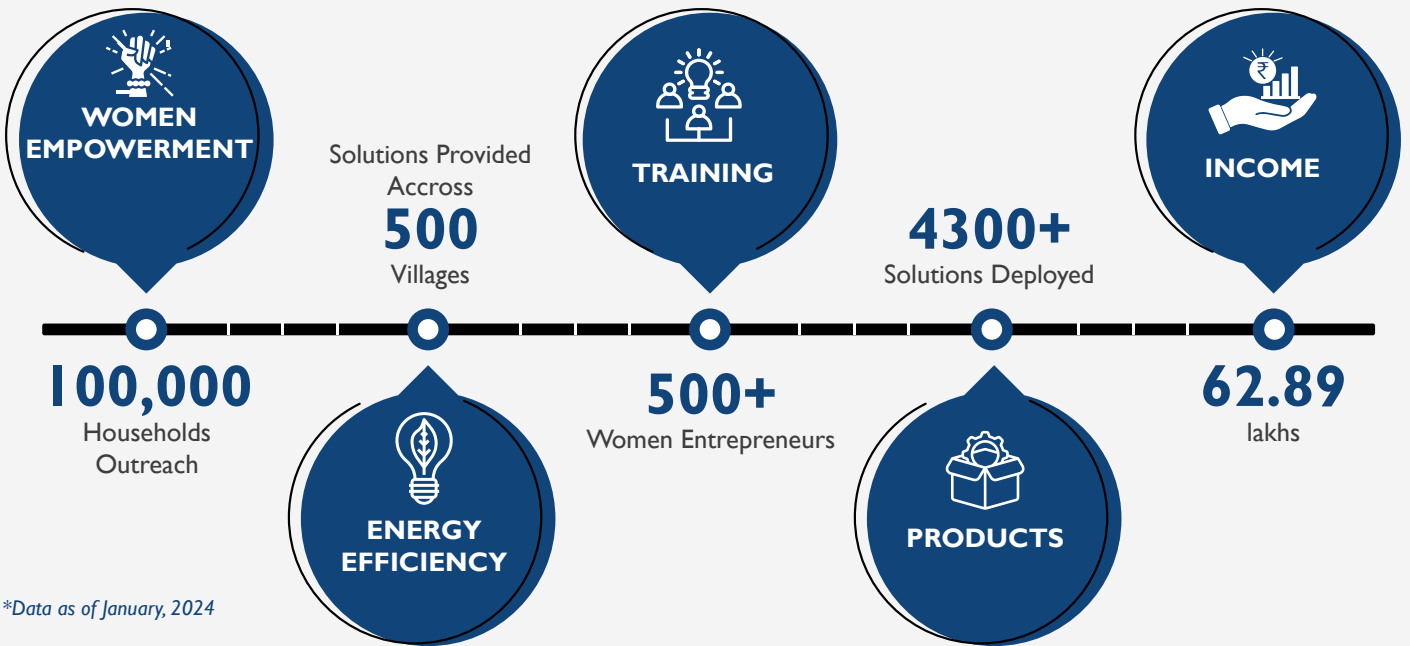
Overall Project Target



Expected Outcomes from the Initiative



Key Achievements So Far



Mrs. Anuradha Wadkar, a Swayam Sakhi presenting about her work at a roundtable discussion held in Delhi



Swayam Sakhis undergoing a training program



ABOUT SAREP PARTNERSHIP FUND

The SAREP Partnership Fund (SPF) supports market-based transformative solutions to enable the clean energy transition, particularly by engaging the private sector, local organizations, and new, underutilized partners. It also harnesses innovative business models, solutions, technologies, resources, experiences, and networks of relationships that exist across stakeholders. SPF aims to expand and maximize the impact of USAID resources innovatively and sustainably through activities designed, owned, and implemented by grantees under the SAREP Program. SAREP is USAID's bilateral initiative with the Government of India.

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