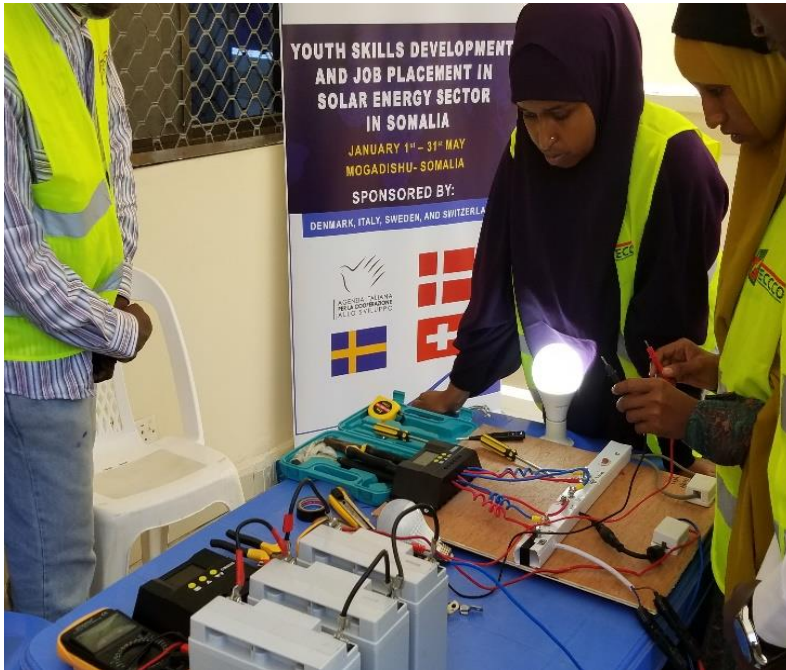


Young Somalis find Clean Energy - a Source of Job Creation and Livelihoods

For majority people in Somalia, electricity is luxury and they cannot afford, as the price of electricity is higher than most of the countries in the world. Limited or no access to electricity impacts the individual wellbeing and is hindrance to overall development. To turn this challenge to opportunity, hundreds of unemployed young people have engaged themselves in promoting solar energy for creating job opportunities and improving livelihoods.

At the final stage of the ongoing 3-month skills training on solar energy technology and business management,



400 young people (200 women) are being trained in the above areas in Mogadishu, Kismayo and Baidoa. The ongoing training has created an opportunity for the youth that have developed synergies with the existing solar energy companies for job placement. 50 trainees, after completing the training, will be placed in the established companies – that will enable them to apply their acquired skills in practical situations and generate incomes for an additional period of 6 months in their local markets. While some of them will receive start-up grants, all trainees will be provided with the toolkits for creating wage-employment. One of the woman-trainees, Ifrah, who is an unemployed professional medical trainer, expressed her feelings,

(Fig. 1 Skills training on solar technology is ongoing at training center, Mogadishu)

“Acquiring new Skills in solar technology will open up a window of new opportunity for me in labour market.”

And she added, *“Who says that women cannot do such technical work - I am now ready for repairing the electricity system at my own house and neighbor’s.”*

It is to note that, 48 young people (24 women) have already set up eighteen new micro-enterprises (SMEs) and have been self-employed in their local markets in Mogadishu and Kismayo. They have so far supplied solar electricity for domestic and official purposes, by providing the required products and installing solar panels in over ten households and public institutions. As a result, the young people, who were once



(Fig. 2: Entrepreneurs installing solar water pump in Kismayo)

Unemployed, are now generating incomes from their solar micro-enterprises, managed by themselves. Farowle solar enterprise in Mogadishu, for instance, had so far over US \$5,000 income in their business. Additionally, the



households/ institutions, where solar panels have been installed, are now using clean energy for lighting and refrigeration. As it is in demand, the youth have a plan to install solar-operated water pumps – the skills they have learned during the training programme. Although the SMEs are facing several challenges, mainly the households' affordability of products and limited knowledge on benefits of using solar technology, all the enterprises have been working together, to address these challenges to boost their earnings, with the support from the local

(Fig. 3 Installation of solar panel in progress by the trained youth in Kismayo)

business development services and government authorities. Yusuf, who is a youth with disability and owns a solar business with his other two partners at Dayah solar enterprise in Kismayo, said, *"I am now useful at my community and have earned much respect from my friends and increased self-confidence."*

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