

EnergiseHer!

Bright Minds, Brighter Energy for Malawi

Energising Development (EnDev) Malawi in partnership with Green Girls Platform implemented EnergiseHer! – an internship stipend fund aimed at creating internship opportunities for young, female Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics graduates in companies specialised in Productive Use of Energy.

EnergiseHer! was designed to empower young women in Malawi who face limited access to relevant professional development opportunities due to cultural and societal norms that discourage participation of women in technical fields. These limitations prevent young women from contributing to and benefitting from Malawi's transforming energy sector, crucial for economic development and poverty eradication.

Through one of EnDev's components – Putting Energy To Work!, co- financed by the European Union, Green Girls Platform was identified as an implementing partner. EnergiseHer! facilitated the placement of 10 young women as interns within 8 energy companies. The interns were identified through an online application, subsequent interviews and were given monthly stipends to cover living expenses for the duration of their 6 months internship.

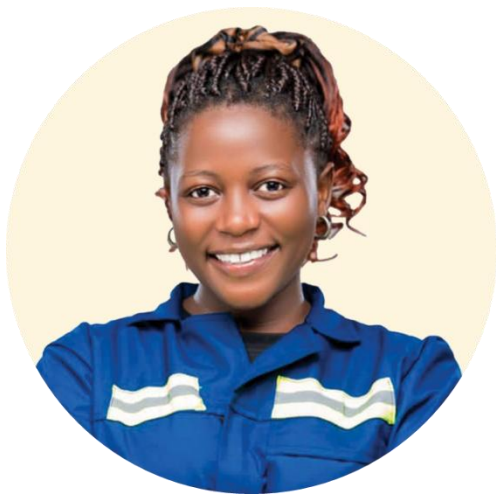
Next to a 5-day onboarding process, interns received professional development and mentorship during midterm and feedback sessions to strengthen their technical knowledge, leadership capacity, and career readiness. Each intern was paired with a mentor or supervisor within the host company, ensuring personalised support, guidance, and professional growth. The project also integrated strong safeguarding measures and continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure the safety and development of all participants.

- 10 Internships funded
- 3 Women offered permanent jobs at the same company
- 5 Women offered jobs at other companies (1 in energy, 4 in other sectors)
- 2 Women are looking for their next challenge, one of which created her own small business

By the end of the internships, the participants had made notable contributions to their host companies and built confidence and clarity around their career paths.



These are their stories



Getrude Ng'oma, a biomedical engineering graduate, completed her internship at Green Impact Technology, company focused on last-mile, solar PV-based energy access. From installing solar streetlights, fridges, and water pumps to writing proposals and representing the company at exhibitions, she gained practical experience and valuable technical, as well as business development skills. Getrude also expanded her professional network, liaised with another professional who agreed to be her coach, attended the Food Systems 2030, and exhibited solar products to the Ministry of Agriculture. Most importantly, it affirmed that the energy sector is where she belongs. Previously an energy officer with Green Impact Technology, Gertude continues to build a future powered by her skills, resilience, and determination with EnDev Malawi.

Mervis Banda, a graduate in food technology, completed her internship at Smart Energy Solutions, a company supplying solar-powered systems. She gained hands-on experience in the installation of off-grid solar irrigation systems, conducted frequent field visits, and developed her customer relations skills through interactions with local, smallholder farmers. This deepened her understanding of the link between energy and agricultural productivity further encouraging her interest in pursuing her career in the agriculture-energy nexus space. She also represented the company at a stakeholder engagement workshop for Productive Use of Energy. Mervis appreciated the respectful, team-oriented work environment, especially as the only woman on the technical team. Next to new technical skills, the internship boosted her confidence and expanded her network. Mervis is now actively looking for her new role in the energy sector.



Tinashe Msonthi, with a background in Forestry and Environmental Management, started her internship at Sunny Money eager to explore how her knowledge could contribute to the renewable energy sector. She was entrusted with meaningful responsibilities, including managing inventory, tracking cash flow, supporting data systems, and assisting with operational tasks that connected directly to the company's mission. Through this hands-on experience, she gained new skills in data management, organisational systems, and a deeper understanding of how PUE technologies are monitored and implemented. A highlight for her was the opportunity to hear real stories from women entrepreneurs – the company's clients - about how solar-powered appliances were transforming their businesses. Tinashe is now actively seeking opportunities to continue working towards the sustainable development of Malawian communities.



Beauty Kachere, with a background in water quality management systems did an internship at Growth Sense Technology, a distributor of Greentech energy products and cleaner cooking solutions. While some tasks - like managing the front desk and interacting with different types of customers - was out of her comfort zone, she pushed through and develop strong people skills. A proud moment for her was representing the company at a Malawi National Cookstove Steering Committee meeting where she confidently represented the company, displaying her strengths in public speaking and reporting. Next to gaining new skills in customer relations, she proactively participated in the installation of solar home system, directly witnessing the impact of energy access on the company's clients' lives. Beauty appreciated the supportive work environment and the overall experience. Right after the internship, Beauty accepted a volunteer position with CorpsAfrica Malawi.

Chisomo Sendeza, a graduate in Renewable Energy Engineering, felt that the most rewarding aspect of her internships at two Malawian renewable energy companies - Community Energy Malawi and Recapo Solar Systems - was getting practical, hands-on experience on technical aspects of energy access. Having had limited exposure to practical examples during her academic journey, she appreciated the opportunity to apply classroom knowledge in real-world scenarios. Diving into more technical work for the first time required her to quickly adapt and grasp new concepts in a short time. Through extensive training on solar home systems installation during her time at Recapo Ltd and on the maintenance of mini-grid connections at Community Energy Malawi, she rounded up her profile laying a strong foundation for her future in the energy sector. After her internship Chisomo was hired as a graduate trainee at CHENTCHI investments, a company providing renewable energy consultancy and deployment services.



Hayless Guwende, a graduate in Physics, completed her internship with Zasolar Ltd. She started her work supporting the company's business development activities, including the writing of proposals and questionnaire development, which strengthened her attention to detail and enhanced her research and presentation skills. But quickly she also expressed her interest in supporting the technical department and gained more exposure to clients and projects in the field. One of her highlights was hiking up to Mulanje Mountain to support solar geyser and photovoltaic system installations. The internship gave her valuable and diverse new experiences and skills, which were conducive for her job search. After the internship, Hayless started working as a project assistant for climate action with Green Girls Platform.





Doreen Benson, a graduate in Biomedical Engineering, completed an internship with the Sitolo solar mini-grid operated under Community Energy Malawi, a licensed mini-grid developer and supplier of renewable energy technologies. During her time there, she gained a solid understanding of the processes behind renewable energy generation, distribution and customer engagement. She gained valuable technical skills in domestic electrical installation, wiring, solar home system setup, and effective communication. She travelled to remote, rural areas, tasked with monitoring system performance, checking inverter functionality, and supporting home connections. She then worked as an intern at Recapo Solar Systems supporting sales, acquiring quotations and helping to set up exhibitions at corporate events and market days. Doreen wrapped up her internships with a deeper appreciation of the sector and a desire to continue growing in it. She now works as Project Officer with Recapo Solar Systems.

Liness Makungwa, a graduate in Metallurgy and Mineral Processing Engineering, completed her internship as a District Sales Officer with Zuwa Energy, a solar technology supplier. She gained valuable technical skills, hands-on experience, and meaningful professional networks, all while contributing to expanding energy access in rural Malawi. She particularly enjoyed learning how to ride a motorbike for field visits and contributing to the Ngwe-Ngwe-Ngwe Fund supported by the World Bank. She also witnessed how productive use of energy solutions, like solar fridges, enable rural households and small businesses to thrive. With strong mentoring and a collaborative team environment, she was able to engage directly with customers, making sales of solar products, solving problems, and learning in a dynamic, field-based environment. Feeling empowered as a woman in a traditionally male-dominated space, she now is taking the next step in her career as a Junior Metallurgist with Lotus Africa Limited.



Ebbie Mwakabanga, a graduate in Social Science and Development Studies, completed her internship with Zasolar Ltd. This experience offered her more support, growth, and inclusion than she had initially anticipated. One of the most rewarding challenges was learning to write professional business proposals. She also made noticeable progress in public speaking, developing further new skills in pitching, social media management, content creation. Ebbie felt well-supported by her supervisor, actively included in day-to-day operations, and enjoyed working with others in a space where mutual learning was encouraged. With exposure to the energy sector, especially in customer service and social impact work, she successfully secured another exciting opportunity as a field officer with Malawi Epidemiology Intervention Research Unit.



Lusekero Kumwenda, a graduate in Agricultural extension, had the opportunity to rotate across multiple departments of Vitalite Malawi, including Customer Care, Risk Management, and Technical Services. This varied exposure allowed her to develop adaptability, cross-functional awareness, and a strong appreciation for teamwork, learning essential skills in customer service, business administration, and hands-on tasks like assembling boards and basic appliance repair. The supportive environment from the Vitalite Malawi team empowered her to grow both personally and professionally. Her experience also highlighted the importance of safeguarding, she felt safe and comfortable approaching the appropriate channels when needed and confidently addressed any concerns that arose. Inspired by her exposure to basic electronics, Lusekero started a small business assembling and selling breadboards for electrical projects.

Green Girls Platform piloted and executed this programme within a condensed eight-month timeframe. Through this collaboration, they expanded their networks within the Malawian renewable energy sector, strengthening their mission to empower young women and girls in climate action. These stories demonstrate that when women are given the space, support and confidence to apply their skills, they excel. Building on this, development partners, private companies, or learning institutions are encouraged to champion similar initiatives that expand opportunities for women in the energy sector.



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