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Partnerships with PURPOSE

Focus on Notre Dame CE3 Project

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GABI: (on-camera)

For our project, it's a collaborative partnership with the University of Notre Dame Initiative for Global Development, Accenture and a series of non-profit organizations based in Uganda and South Africa.

So, the objective of the model, the CE3 model is basically to provide communities with a clean, reliable and affordable source of electricity.

What we try to do is build a model where we can use three pillars; electricity, internet connectivity and skilling to actually not only provide energy to these communities, but also to power up programs that provide people with the skills to start businesses, to create local jobs, to grow businesses that they already have. What that does is, it puts them in a position where they can actually afford the electricity or cover the operating expenses of the model and that helps to ensure the sustainability of the investment which is the microgrid.

We have implemented this model in two countries. In northern Uganda and in the eastern part of South Africa. One of the biggest social impacts that I've seen through this project is the ability to retain and preserve the social fabric of families that live in these communities.

Oftentimes in these rural areas, where there are no job prospects, part of the family, usually the father, has to travel to one of the cities and spend most of their time away from their family as a means and a way to earn money to support his family. Through this project, what we've seen is the creation of local job opportunities and local businesses. And also the retention of revenue inside that local economy. So what that's been able to do is keep families closer together.

I think the other piece that's been really impactful from a social point of view has also been the health implications. With a lot of these communities, if they don't have electricity, they're dependent on traditional biomass to basically burn to cook their food. They're dependent on dangerous gas and paraffin lamps, which are prone to fires and so providing this renewable energy source, provides that safety and that health benefit as well.

So the work that we've done is extremely, personally fulfilling. There is so much potential reach within the company that you don't have working with smaller organizations in the development sector. Working with Accenture Development Partnerships has been amazing in that sense, where we've had the opportunity to create a number of public/private partnerships that have enabled us to have even more impact than we would have had if we were just doing this as Accenture alone. And I feel very privileged to be a part of this company.

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