



barefoot college
INTERNATIONAL



Empowered To Dream

Barefoot College International
Annual Report 2023-2024



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2023-2024 Annual Report

Dear friends,

We're entering a new chapter at BCI having weathered the dramatic impact of Covid-19 and shifted confidently to a role of catalyst for global change. Our goal is to empower ground-up change for the creation of sustainable business and social development. With the application of modern technologies, investment and our proven culturally sensitive and effective training methodologies, we will continue to spread our work throughout rural regions badly in need of opportunity.

Today, Barefoot College International has footprints of success in 90+ countries with four sustainable regional training centers. We have improved more than six million lives, and see tremendous opportunities ahead. With increased solar potential, new technological innovation relevant in rural, third-world communities we can focus on scalability of what works, and more rapid success than has been possible in the past few decades.

It all starts with the power of the sun that shines on us all.

Regards,

Sue Stevenson

Director of Strategic Partnerships



Message from the Board

This Annual Report is a landmark in our shared journey towards a brighter, healthier, happier future for all. Together with our beneficiaries, our staff, and our trusted partners, we at Barefoot College International have expanded the reach of self-sufficient, self-owned solar energy to the most needful communities on the planet, transforming the lives of those trapped in poverty for generations. We have been able to bring not only bright, clean energy to these communities, but the skills and tools they need to leverage energy access into serious educational and economic growth for the long-term.

BCI is tremendously proud of the progress our mission to tackle rural poverty has seen since 2022. We have:

- grown the solar capacity of our beneficiaries through improvements to our curricula and with the support of a new solar equipment partner;
- improved our ENRICH educational and economic uplift modules to give our beneficiaries access to more varied livelihood skills and opportunities;
- taken our first steps towards enhanced solar capacity through the implementation of microgrid style, sub-commercial, community-controlled solar installations.
- renewed our partnerships with the Zanzibar and regional governments to support our BCI Regional Training Centers and their educational capacity;
- expanded our partnerships cross-sectorally, and in the private and corporate spaces.

BCI's beneficiaries have continued to reap the transformative effects of our work together. Children can study after dark, and adults, especially women, can move around safely. Households are not reliant on costly pollutant fuels for cooking and lighting. Communities locked in a subsistence mindset for generations have novel access to educational and vocational materials they need to transform their lives and fulfil their potential as dignified human beings.

Our mission is not complete. Energy access remains the defining feature trapping communities in poverty across the globe, and there is a greater need than ever for innovative, community-based, practical approaches to surmount this obstacle. The lessons we at BCI have learned point towards a future where affordable, clean energy is the solution to poverty, and where self-sufficiency and education are the tools communities need to achieve prosperity. BCI remains committed to helping our beneficiaries achieve this future, and with the help of our invaluable donors and partners, we will continue to build this brighter future together.



About BCI

- Barefoot College International (BCI) is a global NGO that equips rurally remote communities with the tools and knowledge they need to become self-sufficient in clean energy, educational and economic resource access.
- BCI does this by training women with the support of their communities as Solar Engineers, Educators and Entrepreneurs, and then equips them to fully solar electrify their communities, and to implement educational and economic uplift programs.
- Our solar solutions combat climate change. Women and children are most affected by the negative aspects of climate change, and communities living in rurally remote poverty are often prevented from taking control of their development by their reliance on costly, environmentally harmful fossil fuels that also impact human health.
- BCI's programs are delivered through Regional Training Centres and their staff, on both a local and regional scale, and operate in nearly 100 countries worldwide.
- At BCI we excel at transforming the lives of our beneficiaries for good, and our programs address 15 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- We have more than a decade of experience implementing our uniquely fast, innovative upskilling model.

What We Do

BCI's approach ensures communities gain not just electricity, but the skills, confidence, and agency to drive their own development.

Energy access is the root cause for health, education and community resilience. Communities that work with BCI achieve on average:

98%

Reduction in Carbon Emissions

90%

Reduction in Fossil Fuel Usage per Household

82%

Increase in Educational Attainment

78%

Increase in Overall Household Savings

70%

Reduction in Ocular and Respiratory Tract Infections

54%

Increase in Household Income

48%

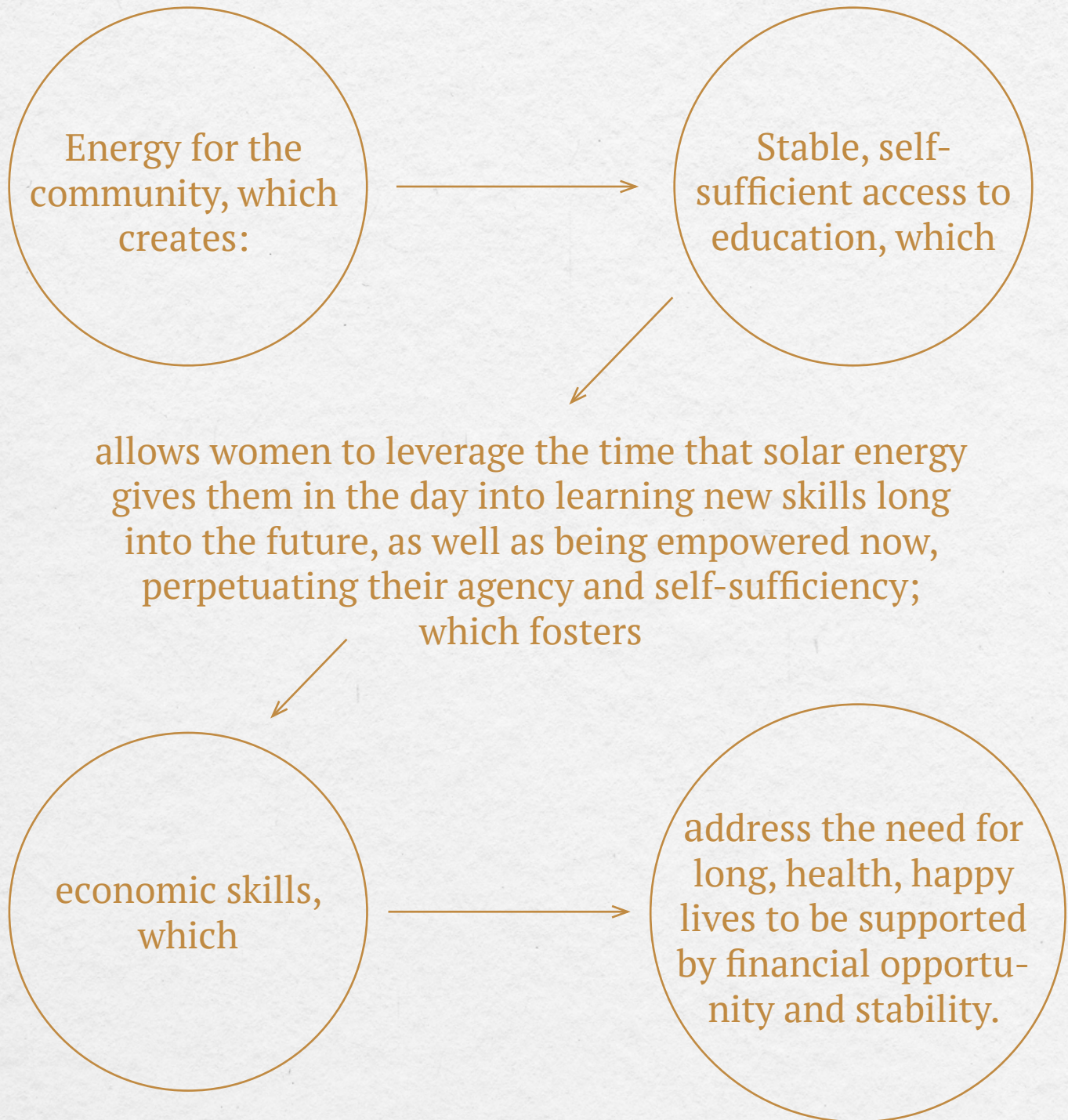
Increase in Women's Participation in Community Leadership Decisions

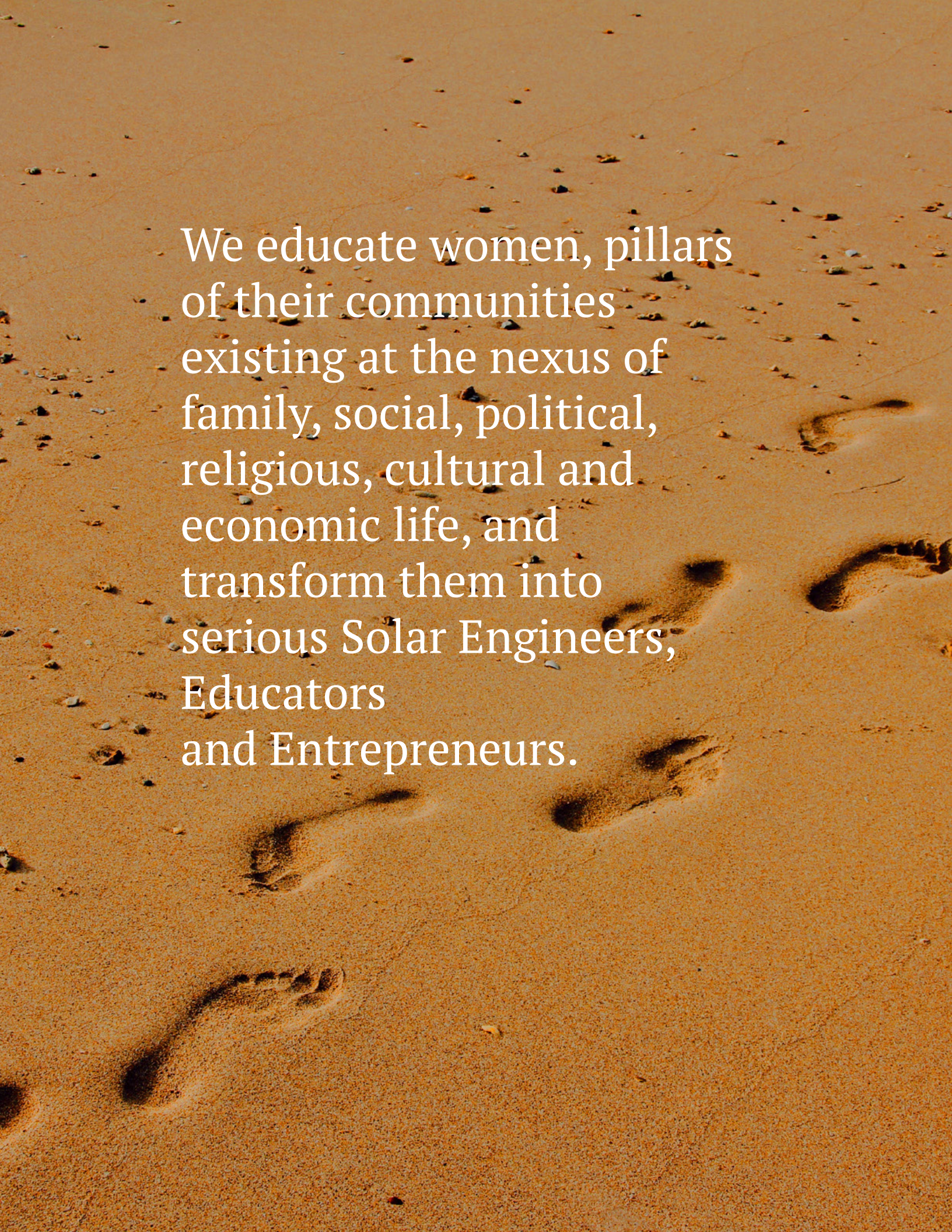
35%

Decrease in Energy Costs

Why it Works

BCI is special because we have a decade of experience in transforming lives for good, through a uniquely fast, innovative model of upskilling.





We educate women, pillars
of their communities
existing at the nexus of
family, social, political,
religious, cultural and
economic life, and
transform them into
serious Solar Engineers,
Educators
and Entrepreneurs.

Solar Engineering



Step 1: Selection

Women are selected for training with the full support of their communities. Each community is partnered with BCI based on their needs, willingness and with full support of the local and national authorities. Each project is supported by a local ground partner and one or more international partners. Vertical integration is incorporated into all aspects of a project from inception, connecting community buy-in with donor commitment.

Step 2: Training

Full Solar Engineering training takes place residentially for 3 months at the nearest BCI Regional Training Center. Women are trained through intensive practical learning in how to build, install and maintain solar home lighting systems and portable solar lanterns from scratch. ENRICH+ is taught parallel to Solar Engineering to equip women with concrete educational, economic and entrepreneurial knowledge and skills, so they can leverage clean energy into developmental growth.





Step 3: Installation

Women graduate and return home, where BCI fully equips them with all tools and solar parts for electrification. This takes 1-2 months and accounts for 50 homes electrified per Solar Engineer. During the time women are training, BCI supports communities in setting up the Revolving Solar Fund, which uses money previously spent on fossil fuels to remunerate Solar Engineers, and to invest in community infrastructure. Funds are managed by a gender balanced Solar Committee. BCI arranges the Rural Electronic Workshop, where women store parts and that can be used as a classroom once electrification is complete.

Step 4: Growth

Solar Electrification means that women and their communities have access to safe lighting indoors and after dark, dramatically reducing fossil fuel usage, allowing safe work, travel and cooking, access to clean water, time for children to complete work after dark and for adults to train vocationally outside of daylight hours. Self-sufficient resource control means that BCI programs have an unparalleled long-term success rate.



Why it works



*Mamy Alphègine,
Kivalo, Morandova, Madagascar*

Why it Scales

BCI's work gives people who have no other recourse the opportunity to live healthy, happy lives, where they have access to the education they need to develop and achieve genuine agency and to live with dignity.

Our educational programs are rich and varied, and most importantly customized to each community we work with.

We focus on Solar Engineering along with Education and Economic Uplift because stable energy access is a basic prerequisite for human life to thrive, and for individuals to fulfil their true potential with dignity.

We give beneficiaries not just the tools they need, but the knowledge and skills required to own and grow their own long-term infrastructure.

This is not typical schooling; this is adult technology and skill transfer with serious depth and substance that completely transforms our beneficiaries, and their level of personal and community agency.

Our training trains pillars of a community, making them into serious engineers, educators and entrepreneurs; each project transfers the agency for their future into the hands of our beneficiaries, allowing them to scale and grow over time.

ENRICH

ENRICH is designed to empower marginalized individuals, especially women and youth by building the confidence, knowledge, and practical skills needed to unlock their potential, improve their lives, and lead positive change in their communities.

Marketable skills empower women to make decisions in personal, public and financial situations based on knowledge about how the world works, what their rights as women are, and the real-world resources they can leverage into growth.

ENRICH can be taught as a co-curriculum parallel to full Solar Engineering training, as it forms a key part of leveraging clean energy access into time and resource access educationally and economically, or it can be taught as ENRICH-only training.

ENRICH implements long-term educational and economic uplift by training women to use banking systems and online resources; equipping them to take charge of their health, especially reproductive health; to understand their rights and the rights of those around them; to view sustainability as the cornerstone to long-term healthy growth; and to focus time and energy on educational and vocational training for themselves and all those around them as the path to a better future.

Hugely successful livelihoods that have spread through BCI ENRICH communities and regions include honey production in Tanzania, luxury mushroom cultivation in Cameroon, water-resistant solar lantern production in Indonesia and coffee cultivation in Guatemala. All these livelihoods are run by rural women, and have achieved national and international fair trade supply chains and partnerships with hotels, supermarkets and restaurants.



Financial Literacy



Digital Skills



Health &
Wellbeing



Social Equity



Sustainable Living



Entrepreneurship
Skills



Leadership Skills

Global Beneficiaries Served

2023 and 2024

205,294

Overall Direct Beneficiaries

509,763

Overall Indirect Beneficiaries

ZANZIBAR, EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

60,775

Direct Beneficiaries

182,325

Indirect Beneficiaries

SENEGAL, WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA

49,100

Direct Beneficiaries

114,967

Indirect Beneficiaries

GUATEMALA & LATIN AMERICA

16,600

Direct Beneficiaries

60,800

Indirect Beneficiaries

MADAGASCAR

47,960

Direct Beneficiaries

104,288

Indirect Beneficiaries

GLOBAL SOUTH ISOLATED PROJECTS

30,859

Direct Beneficiaries

120,471

Indirect Beneficiaries



Global Update



East Africa Update

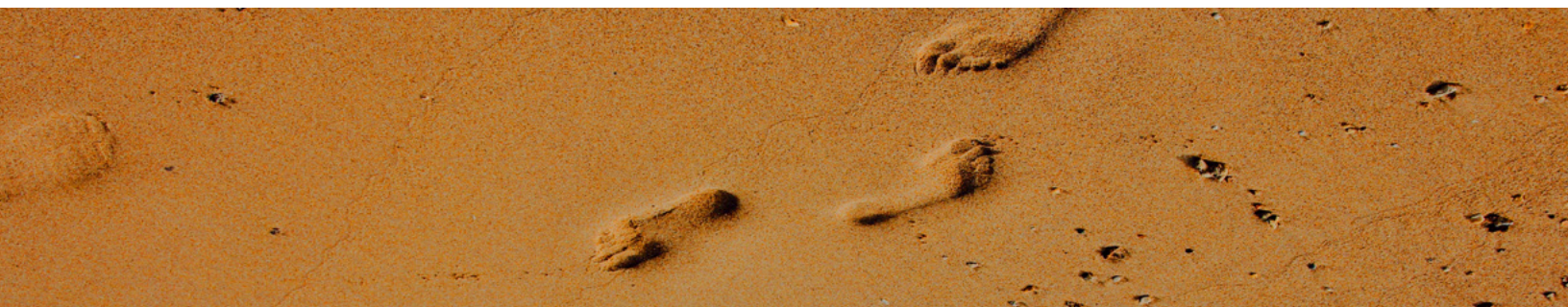
The BCI Regional Training Center in Zanzibar continues to innovate and grow, especially when it comes to livelihoods. Entrepreneurial Financial Training Courses for female business-owners and Feminine Hygiene classes for schoolgirls have both been added to the Center's courses.

In 2022-2024, BCI has secured multiple local and national partnerships for BCI livelihood-trained beekeepers and textiles entrepreneurs, supporting them in selling their wares at fair trade prices to reputable luxury hotels, restaurants and supermarkets.

BCI has renewed our partnership with the Zanzibarian Government, an extremely valued and enthusiastic supporter of clean energy initiatives in East Africa, and of BCI's programs.

Regenerative Agriculture initiatives have boomed in East Africa, with novel pilot projects now underway in Blue Economy sectors, building on the highly successful land-based agriculture that BCI communities are already engaged in.

BCI Zanzibar has successfully designed and released Alizeta and Kumbu, app-based learning platforms for practical Solar Engineering training that speed up learning and aid memory retention.





At Barefoot College Zanzibar, innovation fuels our impact. From training women as solar engineers to launching sustainable enterprises in sewing, beekeeping and regenerative agriculture we are creating income pathways and transforming rural communities. With support from the Apple Academy, we have introduced educational mobile apps expanding access to knowledge across East Africa. This past year has been a journey of purpose, progress and powerful partnerships.

*Brenda Geofrey, Country Director,
BCI-Zanzibar*





West Africa Update

BCI Senegal has doubled the solar capacity of its basic solar units through the application of novel connectivity technology and expanded solar equipment partnerships, hugely improving the level of energy that beneficiaries now have access to.

Livelihoods are booming, with female Solar Engineers seeking contract work through Senegalese solar organizations to supplement their income and build greater financial success.

The production of bio-charcoal, sustainable soap, and training in regenerative agriculture for personal and business purposes continue to be popular with communities in this region, resulting in stable income and seriously improved health outcomes for agricultural and household workers needing to keep their hands clean.

BCI Senegal is piloting Birthing Centers in West Africa to reduce infant mortality and augment reproductive healthcare in rurally remote, impoverished regions

"I am very thankful to Barefoot College International and DP World, and to everyone who made this possible for me. I am grateful that I can bring light to my village, especially for those houses who could not afford solar panels. I cannot express how happy and grateful I am."

*Mariatou, Solar Engineer,
Senegal*



Global South Update

Guatemalan women trained by BCI have founded the Mayan Mountain Coffee Cooperative, with the value of their product showing a 36% boost over NYSE coffee standards in 2024.

Guatemalan Ixil indigenous communities have turbo-charged regenerative agriculture yield using Sustainability Assessment of Food and Agriculture (SAFA) tools designed by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FOA), resulting in a 60% increase in fruit and vegetable production and a 20% increase in yield for staple goods such as corn.

In Madagascar, Solar Engineers now have access to enhanced Financial Management and Digital Record Keeping courses to further their economic aspirations.

Female Solar Engineers from Somaliland have pioneered educational courses in Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to raise awareness of women's rights and the serious health risks to which the practice gives rise.





We took the time to truly listen to the women living around our training center: to observe their daily lives and understand their priorities. While continuing our mission to reach rural women in some of Madagascar's most remote areas, we strengthened our field presence. These encounters gave deeper meaning to our work: a mission built with the communities themselves, now guiding our next strategic directions.

*Ny Sanda, Executive Director,
BCI-Madagascar*



ENRICH Update

BCI's partnership with a novel solar equipment supplier means that we can now supply our beneficiaries with twice the solar capacity at the home electrification level as previously.

BCI's co-curriculum of ENRICH equips women and their communities with the educational and economic knowledge needed to leverage stable, self-sufficient clean energy access into long-term developmental control and growth.

ENRICH trains women in digital and financial literacy, agency and critical thinking, health and reproductive health, civil and human rights, sustainability, microenterprise and customized livelihood skills, as well as new specific modules on basic literacy and arithmetic for functional purposes, especially business; women and children's rights as an addition to civil and human rights; climate change and the environment as a partner module to sustainability; WASH as an addition to menstrual hygiene and reproductive health; and nutrition.

The curriculum was designed to meet rural needs based on the requests of communities, female Solar Engineers, and Master Trainers working in concert with educational experts and BCI staff.



When individuals feel safe, seen, and valued, they begin to unlock their true potential. My ambition for the Life Skills (ENRICH) program is to nurture that inner shift- to create spaces where mindset becomes the starting point for economic empowerment, climate consciousness, leadership, and social change that lasts for generations. To guide people from self-doubt to self-agency, from silence to Leadership.

*Manu Singh,
Global Lead, Life Skills
ENRICH*





Training Times, Monitoring and Evaluation

BCI has streamlined Solar Engineering courses over the past two years to achieve a training time of only 3 months, where it was once 6 months, and this has been a huge factor in the increased technical proficiency of Solar Engineers, as they now complete more hands-on training than ever.

This has led to higher numbers of electrified homes on average per woman, and homes that are electrified are equipped to a more rigorous level, requiring less repair time and allowing Solar Engineers more time to focus on teaching vocational and educational courses, and on developing their own businesses as well.

Monitoring and evaluation data is collected at baseline, and at 6, 12, and 18 months after a project begins. Recent improvements to M & E data collection have focused on comprehensive measures of quantitative and qualitative benefits to humans and the environment, and have significantly contributed to the design and roll out of ENRICH to meet community and ecosystem needs.

Recent data gathered using BCI's streamlined M & E has shown that over 98% of training materials are economically useful to trainees and their communities, and that over 85% of serious mechanical failures can be solved within communities by female Solar Engineers; over 87% of BCI community members of all genders and ages now apply ENRICH skills in their daily lives.



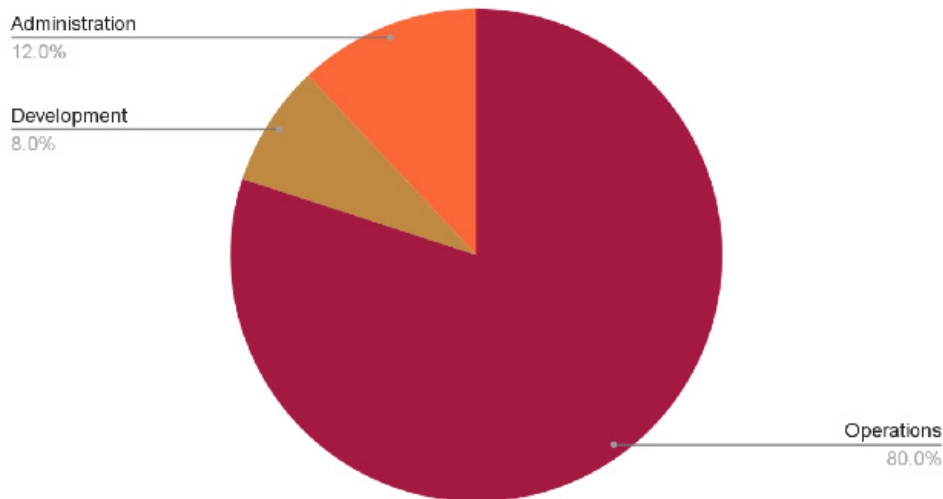
The Future of Barefoot College International

Finances

\$7.97 (USD) Cost per beneficiary; representing unparalleled value for money to beneficiaries and donors alike in transforming lives for good (inclusive of both direct and indirect beneficiaries):

EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

total income: \$5.7 million (USD)



BCI's decentralized, highly agile organizational structure allows us to ensure that all donor funds are handled with impeccable rigor in high-regulation jurisdictions in the UK, USA and Switzerland via registered charitable entities, which also therefore provide highly professional reporting to donors, and superb professional support in logistics, administration and fundraising to BCI's ground operations.

Grassroots project implementation is conducted by local staff with deep knowledge of the people and cultures that BCI serves, aided by world class engineering, educational and economic expertise. BCI's ground operations are free to operate in total fiscal security, and are able to take the initiative to make swift decisions at the local, regional and national level for the good of beneficiaries and projects as necessary.

In practice, this means that BCI's projects prioritize beneficiary good and project implementation above all else, ensuring vertical integration and effectiveness are at the heart of our operations always.



Our New Model

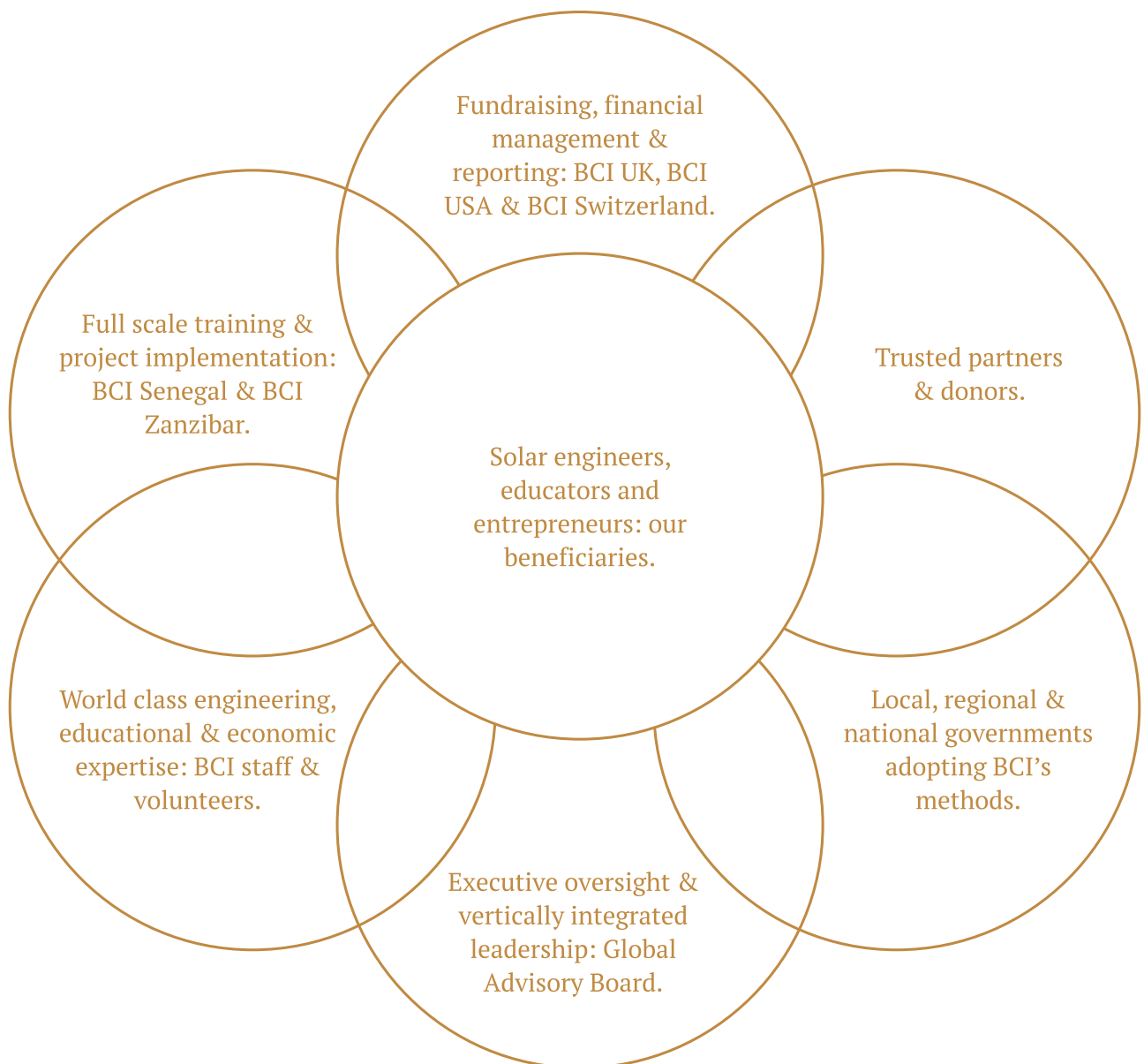
BCI's organizational structure relies on highly effective, decentralized and vertically integrated architecture.

All fundraising and funds are handled by BCI USA (501c3), BCI UK (Registered Charity) and BCI Switzerland (Registered Swiss Association); this means that all donor funds and project funding allocation takes place in high regulation financial jurisdictions, with impeccable fiduciary compliance on the part of BCI, guaranteeing maximum tax efficiency for donors, and therefore maximum value for money to beneficiaries on the ground.

Ground operations and project implementation occur through the BCI Regional Training Centers run by BCI Senegal and BCI Zanzibar, who are free to operate with financial security thanks to the handling of funds in the aforementioned high regulation jurisdictions. These Training Centers act as hubs to train women from all over the world whom BCI travels to and from their communities so that they can learn.

Staff on the ground are primarily local and supported by world class experts and BCI's global staff in project implementation; this means that they can act with agility and through taking the initiative to meet beneficiary needs in real time, leading to highly effective and efficient project execution and accurate reporting. BCI's projects are supported in every instance by a local ground partner; a larger, sometimes international cross-sectoral partner; and local, regional and national governmental authorities, ensuring a path to scalability is encoded in every project.

Executive oversight is provided by the vertically integrated Global Advisory Board, drawn from all levels of the organization. This model has been developed specifically to ensure that the completion of projects on the ground, even in the case of logistically challenging situations, such as occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, are prioritized, placing beneficiaries at the heart of all organizational activities.



Looking Ahead

To keep up with the needs of our beneficiaries BCI is constantly seeking new, enhanced solar capacity to augment the clean energy access communities possess.

The next natural step in our growth is to equip our beneficiaries with sufficient solar capacity, through microgrid and microgrid adjacent installations, to access unlimited internet, and therefore first world standards of information and education access.

BCI is currently engineering pilots for 20kW, sub-commercial limit power installations; this means that female Solar Engineers retain full control of infrastructure, building, owning and maintaining these installations. This enhanced solar capacity will give communities access to not just educational, but serious vocational and professional training and qualification materials, as well as dramatically increasing clean energy output for the entire community, up to the level of supporting full business centers, clinics, and refrigerators.

Healthcare would also be hugely augmented by microgrid supported communications technology.

BCI's experience and excellence in our work gives us the strategic and logistical know-how to further transform the lives of our beneficiaries, giving people of most need the opportunity to live healthy, happy lives.

Emerging Projects



Zanzibar's Blue Economy: Zanzibar ranks as the fourth largest seaweed exporter. An estimated 24,000 Zanzibaris engage in seaweed farming, over 80% of whom are women. BCI is deploying solar-powered drying equipment run by its solar engineers to provide better wages for seaweed farmers.

Regenerative Agriculture: Each regional center is developing sustainable farming specific to the climate and culture unique to its location. We know have 48 trainees in Madagascar, 50 in Guatemala and 30 in Zanzibar.



Eco-Lodge at BC Madagascar: BC Mada built an eco-lodge right on campus — designed with sustainability at its core, with its architecture awarded for its environmentally friendly and sustainable design. The lodge holds immense potential to become a sustainable income source.



Contact

We are actively seeking new corporate and philanthropic partners to help us power up new initiatives for 2025 and 2026.

Please click here.

Contact: sue.stevenson@barefootcollege.org



It's been a lot of fun for me, and being with older women has taught me a lot. I now have ideas to open my own business because having my own money is important. I can charge other villages for charging their phones, just like our village used to do before we had solar.

*Mama Aissata, Solar Engineer
Senegal*

