

Final Project Report

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Organisation Name: Oak Workshop and General Supplies



Produced by: Omari Ally Komba

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Final version	Omari Ally Komba	Jane Spencer and Anna Clements	Jane Spencer	March 2026

Contact Details:

Name: Omari Ally Komba

Company name and address: Oak Workshop and General Supplies, P.O. Box 752, Morogoro, Tanzania

***Telephone number, email and website: +255 788 666 993,
oakworkshop7@gmail.com***

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Executive Summary

This report documents the implementation, results, and lessons learned from Oak Workshop and General Supplies' participation in the *Jiko Fanisi La Umeme Seed Fund*, implemented under Workstream 6 (Supply Chain Support) of the UKID-funded Modern Energy Cooking Services (MECS) Tanzania eCooking Scale and Support Programme. The programme, implemented between 2024 and early 2026, aimed to support the National Clean Cooking Strategy 2024–2034 by addressing key barriers to the adoption and scaling of electric cooking (eCooking) solutions in Tanzania.

The *Jiko Fanisi La Umeme Seed Fund* was designed to strengthen and accelerate the development of a sustainable and inclusive eCooking supply chain by supporting both new market entrants and more established suppliers. Oak Workshop, distributing an established brand, was supported as a locally based supplier operating primarily in Morogoro region, where electrification progress and growing peri-urban populations coexist with persistent supply-side, affordability, and awareness barriers. Over a 12-month period, the Seed Fund provided targeted financial support to de-risk early market entry and scale-up, enabling Oak Workshop to pilot, refine, and validate its business model while building technical, organisational, and commercial capacity. A sales target of 500 appliances was set, with 291 units having been sold as of the reporting date, including 70 through on-credit arrangements.

Key findings from the project show that strengthening local supply chains can significantly improve access to eCooking appliances and stimulate demand, even in challenging market contexts. Through demonstrations, institutional engagement, agent-based sales models, and flexible payment arrangements, Oak Workshop expanded its reach beyond its initial local footprint to serve households, schools, SACCOS, universities, and other institutions within and beyond Morogoro region. Customer referrals accounted for a substantial share of sales, indicating high levels of user satisfaction and growing trust in eCooking technologies. Demand trends also evolved over the course of the project, with increasing preference for larger-capacity EPCs reflecting household needs and usage patterns.

The project also generated important organisational outcomes. Oak Workshop transitioned from a highly localised, informal operation into a more formalised and visible enterprise, with upgraded office infrastructure, improved administrative systems, formal company registration, and enhanced technical expertise in eCooking appliance repair and maintenance.

At the same time, the project highlighted several structural challenges. These include the high cost of market education in new regions, difficulties accessing formal public demonstration spaces, and risks associated with reliance on a single, subsidised supplier whose long-term pricing and availability remain uncertain.

Overall, the experience demonstrated that targeted supply chain support can translate national clean cooking policy ambitions into tangible market outcomes when implemented through capable local enterprises. The report concludes that continued investment in local suppliers, combined with diversified partnerships, sustained consumer education, and gradual product diversification, will be critical to scaling eCooking adoption in Tanzania. The lessons from Oak Workshop's experience provide practical insights for future eCooking programmes, funders, and market actors seeking to accelerate inclusive, market-led transitions to eCooking.

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1. Introduction

Project aims and objectives

The UKID-funded [Modern Energy Cooking Services \(MECS\)](#) programme had a dedicated [Tanzania eCooking Scale and Support Programme](#), run from 2024 until early 2026, to support the implementation of the [National Clean Cooking Strategy 2024-2034](#). The £3.5 million programme was designed to address key barriers to the widespread adoption of electric cooking (eCooking) and to accelerate market development through a set of interlinked objectives, operationalised across six workstreams, namely, the National eCooking Awareness Raising Campaign, the [TANESCO](#) eCooking Programme, eCooking in Schools, Repair and Maintenance, Quality and Standards, and Supply Chain Support.

Oak Workshop and General Supplies “Oak Workshop” was among the recipients supported under the sixth workstream, Supply Chain Support – nicknamed *Jiko Fanisi La Umeme Seed Fund* – which was designed specifically to strengthen and accelerate the development of a sustainable and inclusive eCooking supply chain.

Focused on building supply chains in parallel with growing demand for eCooking appliances, this workstream was structured into two funding windows: one targeting small-scale or new market entrants, and a larger Seed Fund aimed at more established suppliers and distributors seeking to achieve further scale. It supported these companies in gaining market traction through acquisition, distribution, and sale of eCooking appliances (namely, electric pressure cookers, induction hobs, and air fryers), contributing to the broader transition toward clean, modern, and affordable cooking solutions.

By participating, Oak Workshop sought to expand its operations by scaling the distribution and sale of electric pressure cookers (EPCs), setting a target of 500 units over the 12-month implementation period. The focus was primarily on urban and peri-urban middle-income households, organised customer groups, and selected institutions within Morogoro region and nearby districts – representing 70% of the targeted market – where electricity access has improved but appliance availability and after-sales services remain limited. Although initial attempts were made to penetrate more rural markets, demand proved lower due to affordability constraints and limited awareness, reinforcing the emphasis on urban and peri-urban segments.

Overall, a total of 291 6-litre EPCs were sold as of the reporting date. Larger 8-litre EPCs and air fryers were not included in the project targets; however, during the same implementation period, 23 units of 8-litre EPCs and 6 air fryers were sold. The 8-litre EPCs were introduced in the early stages of implementation, beginning with an initial procurement of two units and followed by smaller restocking orders as stock was depleted. Air fryers were introduced later in the implementation period.

The focus on EPCs was deliberate. While induction hobs were considered, Oak Workshop observed that many consumers perceived induction cooking as offering limited differentiation from conventional traditional cooking practices. In contrast, EPCs provided a distinct cooking experience,



generating stronger consumer interest and perceived value. Rather than developing a new EPC brand, Oak Workshop adopted a distribution-led model built on an established and quality-assured EPC brand. Prior experience with other brands had revealed challenges related to electricity consumption, inconsistent product quality, limited spare parts availability, and weak after-sales support. Through engagement in clean cooking programmes implemented by sector partners, Oak Workshop identified improved supply arrangements and product reliability, providing confidence to focus on distribution, customer engagement, and after-sales service rather than manufacturing.

The business model tested under the Seed Fund, therefore, combined targeted urban market expansion, distribution of a quality-assured established brand, and a predominantly cash-based sales approach focused on collecting payments upfront, while piloting limited on-credit arrangements for organised customer groups. Participation in the Seed Fund has enabled Oak Workshop to assess the commercial viability of this model while strengthening operational systems, supplier linkages, and technical capacity within the evolving Tanzanian eCooking market.

Clean cooking in Tanzania

The clean cooking sector in Tanzania is at a relatively early but rapidly evolving stage, shaped by a strong policy push over the past three years and growing attention from development partners, investors, and the private sector. Key milestones following the [Clean Cooking Conference 2022](#) – which catalysed coordinated action to mobilise financing, partnerships, and enabling policies – include the [National Clean Cooking Strategy \(NCCS\) 2024-2034](#), developed by the Task Force established after the Conference, and the subsequent [National Clean Cooking Communication Strategy 2024-2034](#), specifically developed to support the NCCS in driving public awareness toward its 80% clean cooking adoption target by 2034.

Following the launch and operationalisation of these strategies, the sector has recorded progress, particularly through the growing number of donor-supported programmes and blended finance initiatives aimed at accelerating market development and private sector participation, among other areas.

Despite this progress, the sector remains characterised by young and fast-growing companies operating in a challenging business environment. While improved cookstoves (ICS) and LPG businesses have been present for a bit longer – many of which still face persistent constraints related to scaling, profitability, distribution efficiency, and consumer affordability – eCooking companies, while highly promising from an energy transition and climate perspective, are the newest market entrants and face additional challenges related to limited consumer awareness, appliance standards, affordability, and financing.

Access constraints, on the other hand, are particularly pronounced in rural and peri-urban areas, where electricity connectivity exists but the availability of appropriate eCooking appliances, reliable distribution networks, and after-sales support remains limited. Although [electrification has expanded](#) – connecting thousands of villages and deepening grid presence – eCooking remains poorly adopted in many parts of the country, with only a small fraction of households using electricity for cooking even

where connections are present. Household survey data indicate that access to electricity is significantly higher than access to clean cooking fuels, especially in rural areas, with a stark rural-urban gap in clean cooking adoption driven by affordability, awareness, and structural barriers.

Rural and peri-urban communities often experience fragmented supply chains and higher logistics costs for modern energy appliances due to sparse populations, longer distances from distribution centres, and weaker commercial incentives for suppliers. Research shows that even when grid infrastructure reaches rural settlements, actual household connections and utilisation for productive uses, including cooking, can lag behind due to cost barriers and limited appliance availability. These constraints compound persistent reliance on traditional biomass fuels in many rural areas, where less than 3% of households use electricity as their primary cooking energy source, underscoring the challenges in translating electrification into clean cooking adoption.

Morogoro region reflects many of these dynamics. Although it has benefited from national electrification efforts and has growing peri-urban populations with rising interest in modern cooking solutions, households and small enterprises continue to face supply-side and affordability barriers. Weak market linkages, limited local service capacity, and higher transaction costs for acquiring, distributing, and maintaining eCooking appliances – weaken the market response even where policy support exists.

Against this backdrop, the MECS Tanzania eCooking Scale and Support Programme, specifically under Workstream 6, was designed to strengthen eCooking supply chains by supporting targeted interventions that build local capacity for the acquisition, distribution, and servicing of eCooking appliances, addressing structural market gaps faced by locally based suppliers such as Oak Workshop, and enabling policy ambition, electrification progress, and consumer demand to translate into sustained adoption at household and institutional levels.

2. Methodology

The methodology used was iterative and market-responsive, combining initial market scoping with adaptive sales and distribution testing to assess demand, feasibility, and appropriate supply-chain configurations. The approach was designed to identify locations with realistic sales potential, test different sales channels, and refine distribution strategies based on observed market conditions and customer responses during implementation.

At the proposal stage, we identified multiple districts within Morogoro and neighbouring areas as potential target markets based on anticipated demand for eCooking appliances. These districts included Kilosa, Mvomero, Morogoro Urban, Kilombero, Gairo, Malinyi, Mahenge, and Morogoro Rural, all of which were included in the original project proposal/ design.

Early implementation activities involved exploratory market engagement across these districts to assess demand potential, accessibility, and the feasibility of direct sales. This included informal market observations, engagement with community members, and initial sales attempts to understand purchasing power, customer interest, and logistical constraints.

As implementation progressed, evidence from engagement with customers indicated that the project was more viable in peri-urban and urban-adjacent locations, particularly Morogoro Urban, Morogoro Rural, and Gairo. In contrast, more remote interior areas of districts such as Kilombero proved challenging for direct business operations due to limited accessibility, dispersed settlements, and low feasibility for sustained commercial engagement.

Based on these findings, we adapted its sales methodology by shifting away from direct sales in hard-to-reach interior areas and instead concentrating efforts on locations where demand potential and operational feasibility were higher. This shift formed a core part of the project's learning-by-doing methodology, allowing sales approaches to be tested, refined, and restructured in response to real market conditions.

Given the limitations of direct sales across all target districts, the project adopted an agent-based distribution model tailored to local contexts. Agents were selected based on their presence within the community, existing social networks, and ability to reach potential customers:

- In Morogoro Urban and Mvomero districts, individual agents were identified and engaged to support sales and customer outreach;
- In Gairo district, a group-based arrangement was established, where a local group acted as agents by purchasing appliances directly and reselling them within their networks;
- In Morogoro Rural district, a schoolteacher was engaged to act as a sales agent, leveraging his fellow teachers and trust, and overall local community presence;
- In Kilombero district, a TANESCO accountant facilitated sales primarily to fellow employees, using workplace networks to reach potential buyers. Good that these employees already received the same training from TANESCO but appliances fell short of number and then an opportunity for Oak Workshop to sell.



Established agreements with 3 individual sellers (teachers) in different districts of Morogoro, as well as with Morogoro Walimu SACCOS, which is providing support by serving as a guarantor for customers (fellow teachers at schools) purchasing EPCs on credit.

Photo Credit: Oak Workshop

In addition, during community demonstrations and outreach activities, some previous customers who later relocated to other regions – such as Iringa – continued to act as informal agents. Similar arrangements were also established in Turiani and parts of Mvomero district, where selected individuals were supplied with appliances to sell within their local areas.

Participants (customers and agents) were therefore selected purposively rather than randomly, based on accessibility, demonstrated interest, social positioning within the community, and capacity to support appliance distribution and basic customer engagement.

Community-level eCooking demonstrations formed an important part of the methodology, particularly in areas where awareness of eCooking was limited. These demonstrations focused on educating potential users on appliance operation, benefits, and appropriate use, rather than direct sales alone.

In locations where we could not maintain a permanent presence, the role of the project team was primarily to provide user education, demonstrate appliance functionality, and clearly communicate the availability of after-sales support. Sales transactions in these cases were facilitated through local agents, ensuring continuity of service while reducing logistical burdens on the team.

Evaluation of Approach

Overall, the sales and outreach methodology performed well and continues to perform strongly. Sales progressed smoothly and, overtime, required significantly less effort to sustain. At the current stage,

intensive physical outreach is no longer necessary, as sales are largely driven through phone calls and direct delivery arrangements. This shift indicates that the initial market groundwork and awareness efforts were effective in establishing demand and trust.

Customer-driven referrals have been a major success factor. More than 30% of customers were introduced by existing customers, demonstrating strong word-of-mouth effects. In many cases, a customer would purchase an appliance in one week and return the following week with another prospective buyer. This referral-driven growth trajectory suggests a high level of customer satisfaction and provides a strong indication that the business model has good long-term sustainability potential.

Product performance has also contributed positively to the success of the methodology. The eCooking appliances, particularly the EPCs, have not presented technical challenges. No customer returned an appliance due to manufacturing faults or defects. The only issues reported were related to misuse, such as customers not understanding appliance behaviour during electricity outages. The absence of product failure has strengthened customer confidence and reduced after-sales burdens.

Although the project was initially designed to operate exclusively within Morogoro region, market response extended beyond the planned geographic scope. Sales were recorded in other regions, including Mbeya (2 units), Tabora (2 units), Mara (2 units), Dar es Salaam (more than 20 units), and Mkuranga in Pwani region. Part of these sales were primarily associated with our participation in national events conducted outside Morogoro, namely:

- Saba Saba exhibitions, the commemoration of the Dar es Salaam International Trade Fair from 01st to 07th July in Saba Saba grounds, Dar es Salaam. Throughout the event, we were hosted by the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) at their booth, where we demonstrated the use of EPCs to a wide range of visitors. As a result of these demonstrations, we sold 9 EPCs for cash during the exhibition.
- Nane Nane exhibition, held annually in the lead-up to Farmers' Day at the Uyole grounds in Mbeya from the 1st to 14th August. We successfully secured a booth where we demonstrated the use of EPCs to a wide range of visitors, resulting in the sale of 2 EPCs – all on cash.

Customers demonstrated high trust in the SESCO brand, and once they recognised the brand, the sales process became easier. This suggests that SESCO's brand reputation significantly supported market acceptance and reduced resistance among new customers.

However, some aspects of the methodology did not perform as originally planned. The project initially intended to conduct numerous demonstrations within institutions and public spaces. In practice, this approach faced substantial barriers. Many institutions imposed strict requirements, including formal permits and high fees for conducting demonstrations. For example, market authorities requested up to TZS 300,000 per day to allow demonstrations. Given that meaningful demonstrations would require more than one day, the associated costs exceeded the available budget, making this approach unviable. Similar challenges were encountered with institutions such as at the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA).

To overcome these barriers, we adapted our own approach. Instead of conducting formal demonstrations within restricted venues, demonstrations were conducted openly and publicly when customers from those areas expressed interest. For example, in locations such as Msamvu Bus Terminal, where official demonstration fees were prohibitively high, appliances were delivered and handed over to customers in public view, allowing surrounding community members to observe the product without incurring institutional fees.



Handing over of an EPC to a customer at Msamvu Bus Terminal, Morogoro. The public handover served as an informal demonstration, enabling surrounding community members to observe the appliance.

Photo Credit: Oak Workshop

Additional challenges were encountered in schools, where administrative procedures also posed constraints. Rather than selling directly to institutions upfront, the approach shifted to engaging school leadership, particularly head teachers, by allowing them to use the appliances first without immediate payment. This allowed them to experience the benefits directly before committing financially. This strategy worked particularly well with the Small Industries Development Organisation (SIDO) and in Morogoro Rural, where, after initial use, staff members expressed interest and collectively purchased appliances through instalment payments.

The instalment model significantly increased sales by lowering the immediate affordability barrier. In most cases, customers were required to complete payment within a maximum period of one month. For salaried employees working in recognised institutions, appliances were sometimes provided without an upfront payment, based on employer verification and workplace traceability, with full repayment expected within one month. In other urban locations, customer details were carefully recorded – including phone numbers, residential information, and referees – to manage repayment risk, with repayment also required within one month.

For higher-risk customer segments, a down payment of 50% was required upfront, with the remaining balance to be cleared within one month. In selected cases, a smaller initial deposit (e.g., TZS 50,000) was accepted, followed by structured instalments starting from approximately TZS 20,000 and completed within a maximum of two months.

While this approach expanded market reach, it also increased operational costs related to credit follow-up and debt collection. To stimulate demand, no interest was charged on instalments, meaning that minor revenue losses and additional follow-up costs were absorbed as part of the market development strategy.



Conducted a demonstration session for the staff/ teachers of Kiroka Primary School in Morogoro Rural District, resulting in the sale of 5 EPCs on an instalment basis. The session also attracted participation from teachers' neighbours, who joined in the demonstration.

Photo Credit: Oak Workshop

At the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), engagement occurred at the faculty level, where we conducted a demonstration session for the Administration and Finance staff, resulting in the sale of 6 EPCs – paid in instalments. The approach initially started with selling to one faculty member, who, after using and being satisfied with the appliance, introduced colleagues then invited us for a demonstration and then also made purchases.

Unexpected opportunities also emerged through cross-project interactions. Customers who visited the office for reasons unrelated to eCooking were introduced to the appliances. For instance, four staff from SNV/ EnDev, who visited for training related to another ICS project, were informed about the eCooking activities and subsequently purchased four appliances in cash. Other opportunities were as below:



Conducted a demonstration session, preparing pilau rice with beef, for over 100 staff of Alliance One Tobacco Tanzania Ltd's SACCOS, Dimon Morogoro Workers SACCOS Ltd, resulting in the sale of four EPCs, paid in cash.

Photo Credit: Oak Workshop



Plugged-in a demonstration session on EnDev/ SNV ICS project workshop in Morena Hotel, Morogoro, where pilau-beef was prepared. Following the demonstration, 2 EPCs were sold on cash.

Photo Credit: Oak Workshop

Some market dynamics also highlighted areas for adjustment. While the project initially focused on supplying 6-litre EPCs, customer demand increasingly shifted toward 8-litre models. Several customers returned specifically requesting larger-capacity appliances. In addition, some customers purchased appliances, used them, and later returned to buy additional units for extended family members. At least three customers followed this pattern, indicating strong satisfaction and household-level scaling of adoption.

One key operational challenge identified was reliance on a single supplier. Dependence on one source created supply constraints, particularly when demand increased. For example, when the project required 20 units of 8-litre EPCs, only eight units were available at the time. Similar supply limitations were experienced with cooking pots.

3. Findings and Lessons Learned

Market exposure, visibility, and institutional trust

One of the most significant achievements of the project has been the exposure it created for Oak Workshop within and beyond Morogoro. Through participation in the programme, Oak Workshop has become known to a much wider range of customers and institutions than before, including SACCOS, public and private institutions, and organised employee groups. This increased visibility has translated into engagement not only with ordinary consumers but also with senior institutional actors. Currently, heads of departments from various institutions, as well as senior officers from disciplined forces such as the police and the military, are approaching us directly to purchase EPCs. This represents a major shift from our earlier position as a very local operation with limited reach and recognition.

Organisational growth and business upgrade to a full company

At the start of the project, Oak Workshop was operating under severe capacity constraints. The business was highly localised and lacked basic administrative infrastructure such as computers and printers. This limitation was evident during early engagements, including the initial bank verification meeting with Loughborough University, where most administrative tasks were conducted using mobile phones.

Through MECS support, we were able to establish a dedicated office for administration, in addition to its existing operations workshop. The office has since been upgraded, and the business has transitioned from a small business name registration to full company registration.



Company registration documents, Certificate of Incorporation and the Tax Identification Number (TIN)

The grant support also contributed to strengthening the company's capital base. As a result, Oak Workshop is now able to operate more independently. For example, when our supplier experiences stock shortages, customers seeking EPCs are directly referred to us for their purchases.

Technical expertise and service-based value addition

Beyond sales, the project enabled us to develop strong technical expertise in EPCs. When we initially began selling the appliances, technical challenges emerged, which led to our being connected with a SESCO technician for support. In addition, two members of our team are trained electricians by profession, providing a foundation for developing in-house repair capacity. Formal technical training was subsequently provided by the SESCO technician, equipping the team with the skills to diagnose faults, source and manage spare parts, and carry out repairs effectively.

The team is no longer limited to retailing appliances; we are now able to fully dismantle and reassemble EPCs to diagnose faults and undertake repairs. This capability has expanded beyond our supplier-branded EPCs to include other brands and appliances, such as Positive Cooker induction hobs brought in by customers for servicing. This has positioned us as a recognised technical point for eCooking appliances in Morogoro. Currently, when EPCs are discussed in the Morogoro market, we are widely known as a reference point for both sales and technical support.

Changing consumer preferences and expanding demand

Consumer demand patterns also shifted during the project. While initial sales focused on 6-litre EPCs, there has been a clear transition toward larger 8-litre EPCs, reflecting household size and cooking needs. Many customers who purchased a single EPC later returned to buy additional units for extended family members.

In the surrounding community, we have increasingly been recognised not only as a seller of appliances but as a source of trusted advice on modern cooking solutions. Some individuals visit the office purely for consultation, such as those planning to open restaurants or hotels. These advisory services – covering cooking equipment selection and energy-efficient cooking practices – have become an additional income-generating activity for the business.

Consumer satisfaction and energy transition outcomes

Many customers who previously relied on other energy sources have shifted away from them after experiencing the benefits of EPCs, particularly affordability and convenience. The perceived cost savings – such as cooking meals using approximately TZS 1,000 worth of electricity – have been a key driver of adoption. This was derived through practical demonstrations and customer comparisons. For example, customers reported spending approximately TZS 2,000 on charcoal (typically four small tins) to cook 2 kg of beans. Using EPCs, electricity consumption was measured during cooking demonstrations using SESCO energy meters, showing that similar quantities of food could be prepared at roughly half the cost.

Customer satisfaction has extended beyond cooking appliances. Some clients now inquire about other electrical products from the same supplier brands, including heaters and refrigerators which are not part of our supplier's product catalogue.

Human Interest Story 1: Changing deeply held cooking preferences through direct experience

One customer from Arusha was initially very resistant to the idea of eCooking. He is a Seventh-day Adventist and observes the Sabbath from Friday evening, during which no work—including cooking – is done on Saturday.

He was advised to try an EPC with the understanding that it would eliminate the need to cook using charcoal on Saturday. He strongly believed that eCooking could not meet his needs and preferred using charcoal. He was further encouraged and accepted to prepare food in advance on Friday evening using the EPC, allowing him to eat without cooking during the Sabbath.

The first EPC was sold to him despite his reluctance, largely to allow him to experience it firsthand. After using it, he returned a second time – not to complain, but to express surprise and appreciation, stating that *“you have been using these good things yourselves,”* and he requested to purchase an additional EPC to be delivered to him.

Human Interest Story 2: Demonstrating speed and reliability of eCooking in real-life conditions

A formally employed customer believed that eCooking was slower than cooking with gas (LPG) and therefore unsuitable for working households with limited time in the morning.

One day, at 12:00 p.m., while preparing to leave for work by 02:00 p.m., he called his wife from the office and instructed her to cook beans using gas (LPG) so that the food would be ready quickly. He was advised instead to use an EPC and was assured that the beans would be ready in time for him to eat before leaving for work.

While he was at the office, he was given an EPC to go and try without immediate payment. He took it home and began cooking. At exactly 02:00 p.m., he was called and confirmed that he had already eaten rice and beans and had arrived at work on time. Following this experience, he returned and paid for the EPC he had been given on a trial basis.

Human Interest Story 3: Productivity and cost savings for small food vendors through eCooking



A small-scale food vendor (*mama lishe*) provided her testimonial highlighting the practical benefits she has experienced since adopting eCooking. Initially, she held the common perception that cooking with electricity would be expensive and unreliable for small businesses. Her experience, however, proved otherwise.

She reported that cooking times for key meals such as beans and meat have been significantly reduced, while electricity costs have remained affordable and lower than she had anticipated. Prior to using an EPC, she typically woke up at 5:00 a.m. to begin cooking beans using gas (LPG) and, at times, traditional fuels, a process that was both time-consuming and physically demanding.

Since switching to eCooking, she now wakes up at 7:00 a.m. and is still able to prepare all required dishes before customers begin arriving. This shift has reduced early-morning labour, improved time management, and allowed her to operate her business more efficiently, demonstrating the potential of eCooking to enhance productivity and livelihoods among small food vendors.



Geographic expansion beyond initial scope

The project evolved beyond its original geographic scope. While initially conceived as a Morogoro-focused initiative, our activities expanded to other regions, including Mbeya, Dar es Salaam, Mkuranga

(Pwani), Tabora, and Musoma. Demand has also been identified in high-potential regions such as Njombe, Iringa, and Katavi.

The main constraint to expansion in these areas is not demand but the cost of delivering consumer education. Unlike Morogoro urban areas – where awareness of eCooking is already established – many distant, rural regions still require intensive sensitisation, which is resource-intensive.

Emerging risks and lessons learned on supply sustainability

A key lesson from the project concerns supplier dependency. Oak Workshop currently relies heavily on one supplier only. Supplier's EPCs are subsidised under development programmes, allowing them to retail EPCs at approximately TZS 150,000 with two pots – prices that Oak Workshop cannot match when purchasing stock without subsidy.

This price disparity has already created tension, particularly when customers referred by our supplier expect us to sell at subsidised prices. Questions remain around whether our supplier will be able to maintain supply volumes, import timelines, and low retail prices once project support ends.

As we depend on this supply chain, these uncertainties pose a potential risk to business continuity and price stability.

4. Next Steps

The results will be used to strengthen and expand our ongoing engagement in the eCooking market, building on the operational, commercial, and institutional capacities developed through the MECS-supported work. Lessons generated from market segmentation, agent-based distribution, institutional demonstrations, and instalment-based sales models will inform future sales strategies, particularly in peri-urban and emerging markets where demand exists but requires targeted awareness and flexible delivery mechanisms.

The results have also provided evidence of demand trends, including a clear shift toward larger-capacity EPCs (8L) driven by household size and usage patterns. This will guide future procurement decisions, product diversification, and customer engagement approaches. In addition, the experience gained in after-sales support, repairs, and appliance servicing will continue to be applied to strengthen customer trust.

The results are directly useful to multiple stakeholder groups. These include households and institutions seeking reliable and affordable modern cooking solutions; local agents and teachers engaged in distribution and credit facilitation; and suppliers and programme partners interested in scalable eCooking delivery models. They are also relevant to development partners, financiers, and clean cooking programmes seeking practical evidence of how supply chains can be strengthened at the grassroot level.

Results are shared primarily through ongoing market engagement, demonstrations, consultations with customers, and direct interactions with institutions and partners. In addition, visibility gained through MECS has increased our credibility among external stakeholders (e.g., [Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund \(AECF\)](#)), enabling project experiences and outcomes to be communicated organically through due diligence processes, partner enquiries, and referrals linked to other programmes and funding opportunities.

At the current stage, the project has reached a point where activities can continue independently to a large extent. However, additional funding opportunities are being actively pursued to accelerate growth and scale impact. Through MECS, we have built a credible track record that has already attracted interest from other funders.

For example, representatives from the AECF have engaged us, collected organisational and financial details, and undertaken due diligence, including reviewing bank statements. During this process, they specifically referenced the MECS project as evidence of Oak Workshop's ability to manage grant funding and implement a programme aligned with their objectives as well. Based on this experience, AECF has expressed interest in providing further support amounting to USD 50,000 to support ICS with a contract signed on 30th January 2026. The MECS project has therefore positioned us as a trusted and capable partner for future funding opportunities.

- Will you be looking for new partners to take this further?



Yes, Oak Workshop will continue to seek and establish new partnerships to strengthen and diversify its supply chain. While the company currently sources EPCs from a single supplier, there is a strategic interest in exploring direct partnerships with manufacturers, including potential suppliers in China. Establishing such partnerships would enable us to brand our EPCs directly, reduce dependency on a single supplier, and improve long-term sustainability and price stability.

Potential partners include appliance manufacturers and distributors, both locally and internationally, particularly those involved in EPCs and induction hobs. Existing relationships with our supplier will continue, while discussions will be explored with other technology providers such as Positive Cooker. In addition, financial and programme partners such as AECF represent key potential collaborators for scaling operations, expanding geographic reach, and strengthening working capital.

Institutional partners including SACCOS, schools, and universities also remain important actors in facilitating instalment-based access and peer-driven adoption models, which have proven effective during the project.

In the immediate term, we will continue sourcing EPCs from our current supplier and maintaining active sales within Morogoro and beyond. Product offerings will be expanded to include additional eCooking technologies, particularly induction hobs, in response to observed customer demand and prior servicing experience.

We have previously provided repair services for induction cookers manufactured by Positive Cooker and has an established relationship with the company. As a next step, we plan to engage Positive Cooker formally to explore becoming their authorised agent in Morogoro, where they currently do not have representation.

5. Conclusions

The MECS-supported *Jiko Fanisi La Umeme Seed Fund* has played a catalytic role in strengthening our capacity to participate meaningfully in Tanzania's emerging eCooking market. Through targeted financial support and structured engagement under Workstream 6 of the Tanzania eCooking Scale and Support Programme, the project enabled Oak Workshop to transition from a highly localised, informal operation into a recognised and trusted supplier of eCooking appliances and related services. This transformation encompassed improvements in organisational systems, formal business registration, office infrastructure, technical expertise, and market credibility.

The project demonstrated that, even within a challenging operating environment, locally based enterprises can successfully stimulate demand, build effective distribution and agent networks, and deliver after-sales support when supply-side barriers are deliberately addressed. Practical experience from Morogoro and beyond showed that consumer resistance to eCooking can be overcome through demonstrations, peer-to-peer referrals, and real-life use cases that clearly communicate affordability, convenience, and reliability. The emergence of demand for larger-capacity EPCs, repeat purchases, and customer-driven referrals further underscores the commercial potential of eCooking when supported by responsive supply chains.

At the same time, the project has highlighted structural risks that remain within the sector, particularly reliance on subsidised suppliers and the uncertainty surrounding long-term price sustainability once donor support diminishes. These lessons point to the importance of diversified sourcing, stronger local partnerships, and continued capacity building to ensure resilience and scalability of eCooking enterprises.

Overall, the experience of Oak Workshop under the MECS programme illustrates how targeted seed funding, combined with an enabling policy environment, can translate national clean cooking ambitions into tangible market outcomes. The project has laid a foundation not only for the continued growth of Oak Workshop but also for informing future interventions aimed at accelerating inclusive, market-led adoption of eCooking solutions in Tanzania.