We Improve Health for Poor Families

Dirt floors make kids sick. Billions of people live on unclean floors that harbor parasites, bacteria, and pathogens.

Our vision is for no one to have to live on a dirt floor.

We install floors that are 80% cheaper than concrete. They are made of compacted rocks, sand, and clay, and sealed with an oil that hardens when it dries.

The result is a healthy, clean, waterproof, durable floor that is affordable for the rural poor.

Replacing dirt with a clean floor has been shown to reduce diarrhea by 49% and parasitic infections by 78%.

It’s time to eliminate dirt floors.
Hello EarthEnablers!

I hear that every social enterprise has a “breakthrough” year, when the team weathered breaking points and navigates defining moments. Among all the pivots, ups, and downs, a vision becomes clear. 2016 was that year for EarthEnable. We piloted and tested new operations models, rebranded, built out a star senior management team, innovated sales strategies, developed critical partnerships, and shifted our headquarters from Kigali to Nyamata to be closer to our customers. In these achievements, I believe we built the foundation for our future (pun intended). I could not be more proud of our team for a year of major accomplishments.

In 2017, we are aiming to triple the number of customers we served in 2016: from over 800 to 2,500. We intend for this scale to be driven not by geographic expansion, but by market penetration. In service to our “north star” - eliminate dirt floors - we will focus this year on reaching an even lower income segment of rural Rwanda by financing floors over time. This will also be driven by scaling a new operational model that reduces our price for our customers by 50% and investing in professional systems that enable us to better track our impact and performance.

In driving towards our goals, we are constantly humbled by our core values. We developed these as a team at our 2016 strategy retreat, and I wanted to share them with you:

– Take pride in our impact on health. Work passionately to change the way people live.
– Set the bar for customer care. Exceed their expectations every step of the way.
– Work hard and work together to achieve our most ambitious goals and dreams.
– Be resourceful and responsible with money; our impact depends on it.
– Treat everyone with the fairness, empathy, and concern with which we expect to be treated. Celebrate diversity while building a culture of inclusivity.
– Trust each other to have the humility to support and the vulnerability to be supported.

Thank you for cheering us on in 2016. We will do all we can to make you and our customers proud in 2017.

Letter from Gaya

2016 highlights

January   Shift our office from Kigali to a rural town close to our operations
February   Cluster sites to improve operational efficiency
March      Rainy season slows sales
April      Genocide Memorial month in Rwanda
May        Harvest starts, contracts come pouring in!
June       High sales book us out through August
July       Enlightening learning trip to myAgro in Mali
August     Piloted new installation strategy
September  Customer service call center launches
October    First convening of our professional board
November   Brand splash to introduce new logo
December   EarthEnable annual strategy retreat
2016 in Brief

With EarthEnable’s first two years of proof and pilot successfully completed, in 2016 we refined our operations, setting the stage for our future impact.

We chose not to scale past our initial district of Bugesera, and instead focused on building out lower cost products and continuing to refine our business model as we developed a senior management team.

Team

After a thorough and extensive search, we hired a Director of Operations, a Sales Manager, a Finance Manager, and an Executive Associate, who bring significant experience and expertise in operational efficiency, team management, financial analysis and control, research, and design. Our team shares a commitment to transferring knowledge and skills in a collaborative manner.

Comprehensive Sales Strategy

In order to better follow up with leads and serve our customers, we launched a call center in September. This system has made field reps much more effective and brings huge visibility to customer feedback and outreach.

We have built up our sales team significantly and invested in training and development, led by our Sales Manager, Rogers. After a slow start in Q1 and Q2 due to a low harvest, we installed floors for over 800 families in 2016, compared to 300 in 2015.

Finances

Due to operational improvements and more efficient customer acquisition, we showed significantly healthier gross margins, and a much lower subsidy required per family served.

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Efficient Operations

Led by our new Director of Operations, our operations have been streamlined and costs substantially cut, with IT systems supporting these advancements. Mobile data collection is fueling dynamic dashboards where managers can track vehicles, inventory, and customers quickly and easily. More staff time is spent working with data and learning from it rather than curating and deciphering it.

Our many efficiency improvements include servicing customers in geographic clusters each day, achieving a greater balance and differentiation between skilled and unskilled labor uses on job sites, and expanding our fleet to include fuel-efficient three-wheelers.

Product Differentiation

In an effort to reach a lower-income segment of the population, we introduced Kwigira ("self-reliance"), a half-priced Do-It-Yourself option. Kwigira customers are trained to install their own floors instead of hiring masons.

We then found that customers were often hiring masons on the side to do the trainings and install the flooring for them. We thought this was brilliant, and turned it into a new product that we call Ishema ("pride"), which brings an "Angie’s List" concept to rural Rwanda.

We continue to sell our original product, now called Damarara ("treat yourself"), which is our full-service option. For these customers, we do the last-mile delivery of materials, and send out a team of our full-time masons to do the installation.

Focused Marketing & Branding

fuseproject generously donated time and energy to rebrand EarthEnable and help define the local brand (Tübe Heza - "live beautifully"). They developed stunning assets, which have greatly enhanced our presence, from billboards and painted shops to brochures and posters.
**Outlook for 2017**

**Serving the market**

After successfully developing business models for the three products above, in 2017 we plan to further refine our product mix and sales strategy, so that every customer has access to the product that best suits his needs and budget.

**Scaling for impact**

During 2016 we strengthened our management team to ensure that we are prepared to scale our organization and impact. In the early months of 2017 we will prepare operations to handle sales and floor builds in four new districts in Rwanda. Meanwhile, we will pilot operations in Uganda after extensive market research there.

**Key Metrics and Growth Figures**

- **Total Customers Served**
- **Customers Served in 2016**: 853
- **Customers Served in 2015**: 303

- **853 homes floored and 22,318 square meters constructed**
- **3,951 people directly impacted**
- **109 full-time employees**
Driving affordability

We are aiming to make our products more affordable so that even the poorest customers will be able to own a clean, beautiful floor. In the next year we will pilot several payment models to increase affordability of our products:

- Partnerships with microfinance institutions and savings clubs
- Layaway schemes that will help customers who can afford small installments over time, but not large one-time payments
- Bundling with solar pay-as-you-go systems and other products that can give our customers access to more home improvement opportunities at lower prices
- Partnerships with NGOs and governments to help subsidize prices for our poorest clients

Getting technical

We are developing a CRM to ensure accurate tracking of our goals and achievements. In addition, in 2017 we will launch mobile apps that our sales representatives and masons will use to better serve our customers and gather data in the field.

Providing the best product

We have continued to refine our product and believe that we have achieved the best quality floor at the lowest cost for our customer base. We are currently developing a performance standard in collaboration with the Rwanda Bureau of Standards to ensure that all EarthEnable floors are uniformly beautiful and effective.

However, we still believe there is room for improvement in the tools used to build the floor, and we have engaged a Stanford Design for Extreme Affordability team of students (the same class that EarthEnable emerged from!) to work specifically on this. We have also heard from our customers that they are interested in wall-plastering services, so we plan to do pilots and assess the viability of new products that would facilitate the purchase of a floor.
Stories from Rwanda

A Customer’s Perspective

Dominic Nsabimana is a farmer, father, and leader of his village in Eastern Rwanda. After seeing a friend’s EarthEnable floor in a neighboring village, he decided to buy one right away. “Despite everything in the house always being dirty, from the clothes dropping in my room to the dust when we sweep the dirt floor, the biggest reason was my last born four-year-old daughter,” Dominic told us. “She kept getting sick from the dirt environment, and visiting the doctor was not helping. But since I got a Tube Heza floor she is happy and healthy. Plus the house looks beautiful, people come visit me more often and want to sit in the house.” Dominic loves his floor so much that he has helped seven other families EarthEnable their homes.
Stories from Rwanda

A Mason’s Perspective

Ndayambaje decided to become a mason because he saw the impact that EarthEnable floors were having in his village and the increasing demand for them. EarthEnable’s training equipped him with business and sales skills as well as the knowledge of how to build our floors. He immediately embraced his triple role as mason, salesperson, and small business owner. Before long he was receiving so much interest in his floors that he had to hire other masons. His hard work did not go unnoticed, and after about six months as an Ishema mason he was promoted to “floorman,” managing all of the Ishema masons in one of our regions. Ndayambaje has used the income that he earns as a mason to pay for his children’s school fees, make home improvements, and provide consistent and healthy food for his family.

Financials

We continued to earn revenue from customers, and also to raise grants and donations. We aim to eventually draw all of our revenue from sales. For the time being, grants and donations allow us to serve the poorest Rwandans and to scale up quickly as we work towards profitability. Our aim in 2016 was to reach poorer people who live in smaller houses. As a result, we served three times as many customers, while growing our revenue by 45%.

Total 2016 Revenue
$342,879

Total 2016 Expenses
$313,750
Supporters

Anonymous
Agora for Good Impact Charitable Trust
Aine Henry
Amit Patel
Anant Gupta
Anil Navkal
Aslihan Manisali
Bridget Madigan-Sharp
Camilla Read
Carol Copperud
Carolyn Wintner
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Michaela Gallagher
Patrick Rainsberry
Penelope Clute
Peter Brandt
Philip Wilson
Richard Zuzow
Rukmini Rednan
Russ and Beth Siegelman
Saritha Komatireddy
Srikant and Swati Datar
Thomas Carroll

Volunteer EarthEnablers

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