

# Angaza Boma bringing solar TVs to rural Kenya

 By [Tom Jackson](#)

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Kennedy Lamwenya has a long history in selling solar lamps and micro-grids. What he learned from this experience is that people wanted more. "I received so many inquiries from customers requesting me to link them with any company where they could buy a solar-powered TV system," he tells Disrupt Africa.



Image by 123RF

"They told me that the solar lanterns I was selling them weren't providing enough value. They needed to watch the news, and access information, entertainment and education for their children."

Lamwenya started looking for companies in Kenya that distributed solar-powered TVs, with no luck. [Angaza Boma](#) was born from this realisation, and formally launched in January of last year.

The startup has developed a 19-inch LED digital solar-powered TV that provides off-grid households with television services as well as access to clean solar lighting via the two solar bulbs included with the system. They can also recharge their mobile phones.

According to the Kenya Audience Research Foundation, TV only reaches 31% of the country's adult population on a daily basis.

“This leaves 69% of adults in the dark, either lacking access to power or simply unable to afford a normal TV set,” Lamwenya says.

“Traditionally, people living off-grid have had to walk long distances to the nearest shopping centres to watch TV, at a cost. This has hindered the majority of the population, especially women and children, from accessing information first hand.”

Angaza Boma has the potential to offer thousands of families in rural Kenya access to clean, reliable energy without the need to incur large grid power connection costs.

“Each family that owns our solar TV systems is able to save US\$200 annually in kerosene expenses. School children in rural Kenya now have access to three more study hours every night,” says Lamwenya.

He started the business with his own funds, and though he has since received some backing from the Tony Elumelu Entrepreneurship Programme (TEEP) since, Angaza Boma remains self-funded.

Nevertheless, it has seen sufficient uptake to forecast a bright future. It has sold 1,220 units and generated almost US\$100,000 in revenues. It is currently operating in the western part of Kenya, where it has set up three sales centres.

“We are currently on the lookout for a strategic investor to enable us expand to the coastal and southern parts of Kenya, which also harbour many of our target customers,” Lamwenya says.

“In the next five years, after achieving 40% market share of the off-grid solar market in Kenya, we plan to expand to Tanzania and Uganda.”

The solar-powered TV system costs US\$300, with Angaza Boma also GOtv and DStv set-top boxes. “For the past year, we have exclusively selling our product via a direct-to-village model,” says Lamwenya. “We have since realised that most of our customers belong to savings groups, where they obtain soft loans which enable them purchase household assets.”

Angaza Boma, therefore, is now pursuing a partnership model with such savings groups, enabling those that purchase the TV systems to pay over time for them via various payment methods.

“This has worked very positively,” says Lamwenya. “Additionally, we are planning to roll out aggressive marketing campaigns targeting tea, flower and coffee farms, setting up sales centres on the farms where staff can buy via a check-off payment system that we shall negotiate with the management. Under these models, we are targeting 15,000 units in sales in eight months.”

## ABOUT TOM JACKSON

Co-founder @DisruptAfrica. Tech and business journalist in Africa. Passionate about the vibrant tech startups scene in Africa, Tom can usually be found sniffing out the continent's most exciting new companies and entrepreneurs, funding rounds and any other developments within the growing ecosystem.

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