Miller Center
for Social Entrepreneurship

Name of social enterprise: Solageo
Mission statement: Solageo empowers local entrepreneurs to expand solar energy and safe water access.
Webpage: www.solageo.com
GSBI 2017 business plan presentation: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1k1yzj4HRIg
Headquarters location: Hong Kong
Location(s) of research: East Africa or Southeast or South Asia

Background: Solageo distributes innovative solar energy and water purification technologies (manufactured in East Asia) to enterprises in South Asia and Africa. Its social franchise business model is based on "business to business" sales, and it seeks to enhance its impact with an integrated cloud-based resource center to support local enterprise partners. Solageo would draw on these local partners to collaborate with this research project.

The challenge: Solageo is introducing a unique DC UV Water Purifier called the Better Water Maker, or BWM. The BWM only consumes 16Wh, produces 1L of safe water per minute and has been successfully evaluated by the WHO and is listed on the WHO website. The BWM could be sold in a package with an individual solar home system, or several BWMs could be combined with a Solar Water Kiosk. Different technology packages require distinct business models, and Solageo seeks a robust market evaluation for each.

Action research products needed:
1. Describe target market characteristics where the BWM would be a viable safe water solution.
2. Assess the unmet demand for safe water in the local community and establish what that specific demand might be, i.e. 25L per household each day x 500 households.
3. Determine the most viable business model to provide safe water in a sustainable and inclusive manner.

Student skills needed: target market studies, market assessment, cross-cultural competencies, business development strategic thinking.

Keywords: clean water technologies, frugal technology, solar home systems, water kiosks, market studies, business model innovation.