The benefits of solar for Base of the Pyramid populations (BOP) have been widely acknowledged: it offers ever cheaper energy access, opportunities for increasing productivity and alleviating poverty, environmental benefits, and there is a clear business case for selling solar (Hammond et al., 2007). The solar BOP market is thus to be seen as a successful example of a win-win scenario, or is it?

Different literatures provide partial insights. First, development and energy literature provides support for the impact of solar (Peters & Sievert, 2016), but has not yielded conclusive insight because of a tendency to treat all solar products as similarly beneficial for people, planet and profit. Second, international business literature acknowledges the variety in solar business concepts for the BOP market and identifies trade-offs, although the nature of these trade-offs remains unclear (Kolk et al., 2014, 2018). Third, literature on other BOP markets documents cases of substandard goods, cheap copies (Amsden, 1985) and (potentially harmful) fake products (e.g. fake drugs, phones) (Ssentongo, 2018). Similar phenomena may affect the solar market. In other words, a disaggregated approach to research is needed that should yield more realistic insights in the impact of solar.

This study systematically identifies products in the Ugandan solar market. The research draws on many different sources, including 85 interviews with market experts, households, international and local solar companies and vendors. This unique market overview allows us to identify different market segments based on price, size, quality, applications, and business model. We show that there is a much wider product variety than is currently described in the literature. Next to decent quality products, we find a huge “base of the market” (estimated to present 50-70% of the East African market) consisting of cheap, often poorly functioning, and even fake, solar products, without warranty nor repair services. It is thus crucial to consider variations in solar when evaluating the impact. Poorly functioning solar products not only fail to provide the aforementioned benefits; customers lose their money and trust in solar, and it generates toxic waste. We conclude with specific recommendations for coping with identified solar performance issues.

**Title:** From Fake Solar to Full Service: Do all Solar Products for the BOP Serve People, Planet & Profit?

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