

## Response to current IP theft accusations of Dominic Wanjihia of Flexi Biogas Solutions, Kenya



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The biogas backpack was developed between May and October 2010 by Katrin Puetz at the University of Hohenheim, Germany. During the development phase a number of different options for low tech biogas transport were assessed (including PVC and EPDM biogas bags and inner tire tubes). The shape and size of the biogas backpack was varied and changed several times with focus on meeting the following major requirements: material is durable, locally available in many countries, easily recycled, affordable, product can be produced locally, gas is released equally, size is sufficient for one day cooking, bag can be transported as backpack.

Following the development of the biogas backpack other biogas technologies were developed to supplement the concept of biogas as business with special focus on low income countries. These developments included different types of biogas digesters made of the same material as the biogas backpack, different biogas stoves, a biogas lamp and a biogas mitad (especially for Ethiopia). All these technologies were especially made to be combined with the biogas backpack.

During the ongoing research at University of Hohenheim and Addis Abeba University (Horn of Africa Regional Environment Centre) between 2011 and 2013 UN IFAD invited Katrin Puetz to test the existing and patented (pillow shaped) biogas backpack in a project in Nakuru, Kenya. The aim of the project was to make biogas portable. 3 backpacks were installed for households who had been given a flexi biogas system of Dominic Wanjihia. During this week in October 2012 Dominic Wanjihia did not mention his concerns about IP theft, neither to Katrin Puetz nor to UN IFAD. At this time he was selling biogas digesters and PVC storage bags for biogas which were hung up in trees. Both, the storage bag and the bag digester are technologies which were at this time already state of the art and commonly used in other countries, especially in Latin America.

Dominic Wanjihia applied for patent for his flexi biogas system after the IFAD project implementation with Katrin Puetz (in Nov. 2012). His current (August 2015) application status is A8. This is the first level of publication (document laid open for public inspection). After a patent is granted the ending of the patent code is B. Before the B-status is reached the applicant has no legal basis for claims like Dominic Wanjihia is currently expressing in public. The patent code for the biogas backpack is DE 102011114682 B4, priority date is 4.10.2011. This date lies before the first contact with UN IFAD or Dominic Wanjihia.

Katrin Puetz patented the biogas backpack only in Germany and only to protect the German manufacturer. She wishes her invention to be used by as many people as possible to develop an independent biogas sector and to change the energy situation of many people in the world. She generally disagrees with international patent applications for basic need technologies, because this prevents useful technologies from spreading and being used. Besides, she knows that not the pure existence of technical solutions, but the accessibility of these solutions is the major challenge in developing countries. Co-existence of different biogas companies is not only easily possible in this large market, but even desirable for the sake of reaching more people in a shorter time with this technology.

(B)energy is a social business with one aim: to provide as many people, who currently suffer from the numerous burdens of cooking with traditional fuels with access to biogas as cooking energy and business opportunities – as fast as possible, with shared responsibility and only with resources available in the particular target countries, thus without foreign aid. It is the opportunity for locals to tackle one of the most challenging problems of today's societies!