

**Global  
Distributors  
Collective**

# How to Sell Refrigerators for Productive Use

Webinar

March 4th 2025



Photo credit: Munyax Eco

**Practical  
ACTION**

**bop  
inc**

The GDC is hosted by Practical Action alongside strategic and implementing partner Bopinc

# About the Global Distributors Collective

- A collective of 200+ last mile distributors (LMDs) in 50 countries, selling a range of beneficial products, including solar lanterns, PUE appliances and clean cookstoves.
- We help LMDs improve their business performance and grow, while advocating on behalf of our members to raise the profile of last mile distribution.
- The GDC is hosted by Practical Action and implemented in partnership with Bopinc.



[www.globaldistributorscollective.org](http://www.globaldistributorscollective.org)

# Refrigeration at the last mile: Opportunity & challenges

- GDC members are increasingly selling PUE appliances, 61% in 2024 up from 35% in 2022.
- **Warning:** Refrigerators have not seen strong sales growth as SWPs: 4% as compared to 34% CAGR (source: ESMAP 2024). This is likely due to:
  - Slower technology advancement
  - Low consumer awareness
  - Higher product costs and lower perceived RoI
  - Underdeveloped business models
- LMDs are well positioned to bring PUE products to market but require access to best practices and support of manufacturers and funders.



# Why this project and publication?

- GDC and Efficiency for Access collaborated to provide a small grant and technical assistance to three GDC members that sell (solar powered) fridges and freezers.
- The GDC conducted a literature review and deepened our learnings with the three LMDs.
- The publication is a synthesis of our learnings which aims to help LMDs identify, test and adopt the business model adaptations required when adding refrigerators to their portfolio.



# Poll 1

## **Which statement best describes your current position as a GDC member?**

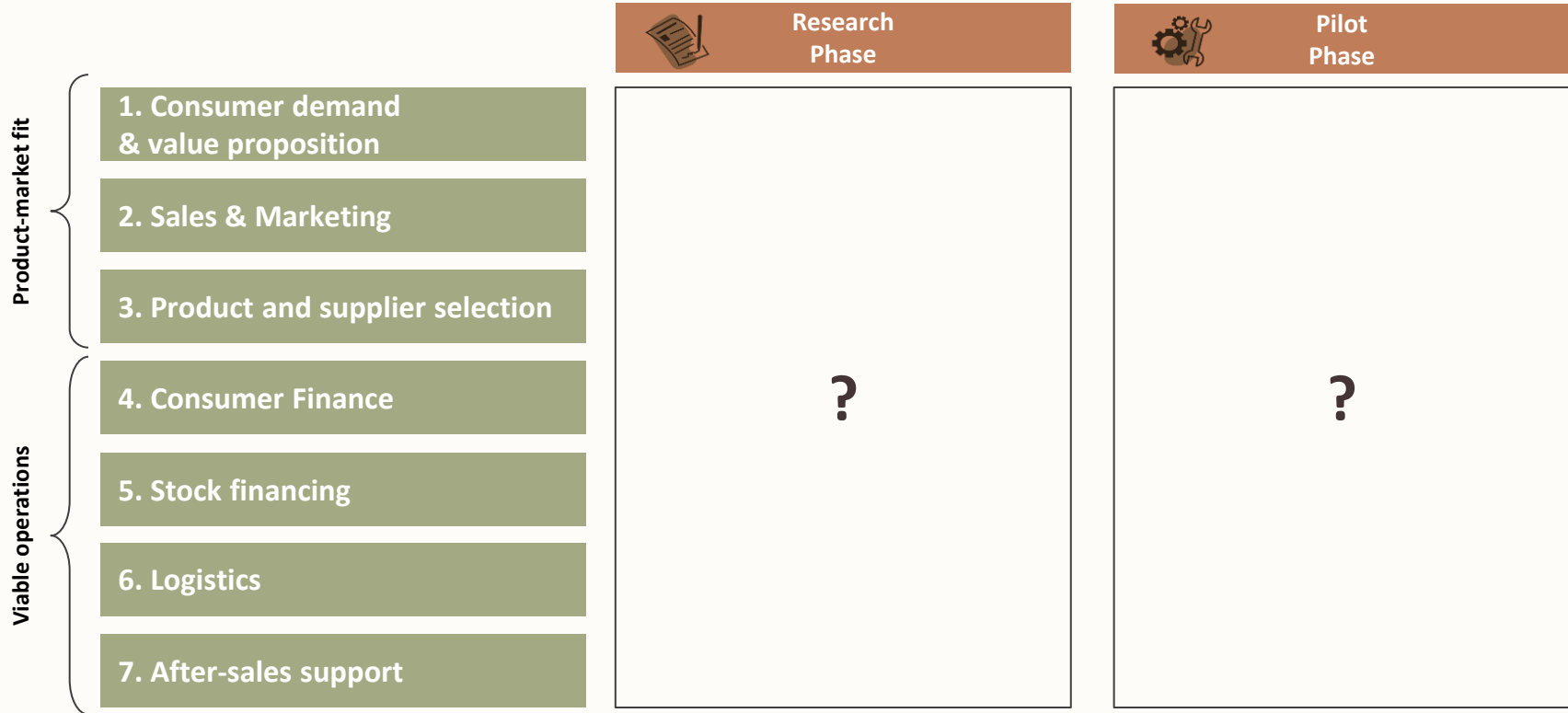
1. We're currently selling refrigerators for productive use as part of our product offering.
2. We're currently exploring refrigeration for productive use.
3. We're not actively considering offering refrigeration for productive use.

## Poll 2



**Which of these business model components have you found/do you anticipate are most challenging when selling refrigeration for productive use?**

1. Consumer demand and value proposition
2. Sales and marketing
3. Product and supplier selection
4. Consumer finance
5. Stock financing
6. Logistics
7. After-sales support

# LMDs can adopt a semi-structured approach and validate business model assumptions through experimentation and learning



# LMDs can adopt a semi-structured approach and validate business model assumptions through experimentation and learning

		 Research Phase	 Pilot Phase
Product-market fit	1. Consumer demand & value proposition	What customer segment present the best and safest opportunity?	Have you tested the product with a sample of customers and collected their feedback?
	2. Sales & Marketing	What training would your sales team require? Have you tested different marketing media and messages?	<b>What training and incentives do your sales agents require?</b>
	3. Product and supplier selection	<b>Have you compared multiple brands/models based on performance, price and support?</b>	Have you established a mutually beneficial relationship with the supplier and agreed upon terms?
Viable operations	4. Consumer Finance	<b>Can customers make enough money from the asset or service to pay you?</b>	Have you monitored repayment rates and adjusted financing terms if needed?
	5. Stock financing	Have you calculated the working capital requirements to ensure viable cash flow? Have you explored options like (repayable) grants?	Have you been able to attract external finance? Can you buy stock on credit with the supplier?
	6. Logistics	Have you identified potential logistical challenges for storage and last mile delivery given the size of the product?	Have you improved cost-efficiency of transport and reduced the number of damaged goods?
	7. After-sales support	How will you handle customer care? What new capabilities, tools and spares would you require? Is there any no-cost support your supplier can make available?	<b>Have you identified common faults and can you address these with your suppliers?</b>



# Meet the 3 LMDs that participated in our program



**Claudine Uwineza**  
Sales and Marketing  
Coordinator



**Timothy Musaazi**  
Business Development  
Manager



**Safiya Aliyu**  
General Manager



# Breakout sessions

## Challenges

1. Which business model adaptations do you consider most difficult for this product category?

## Solutions

2a. How could these challenges be addressed?

2b. What support would LMDs require from manufacturers, funders and other stakeholders?



Breakout 1:  
LMDs that are new to the  
technology



Breakout 2:  
LMDs that are piloting or  
scaling the technology



# Breakout 1: How to Sell Refrigerators for Productive Use

LMDs that are new to the technology

## 1. Challenges

The demand for PUE products is not that strong in Nyanza- Kenya.

Finding manufacturers to work with them given logistics is a challenge.

Lack of after-sales support and warranty management

Consumer financing

Delays in getting stock from suppliers

The pricing is another challenge making the refrigerators a bit expensive

Reasonable repayment period

## 2. Solutions

Exploring the opportunity for the customers to pay on installment.

Max of 12 months for repayment

Partner with org that work in communities to promote the business

Partnership with MFIs in the financing sector

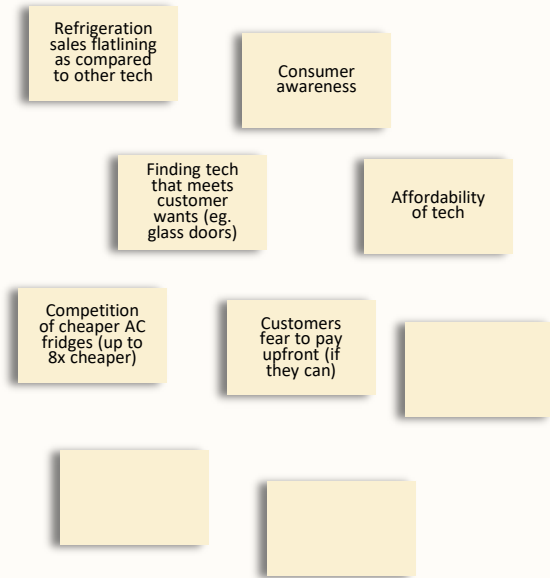
## 3. External support

Add

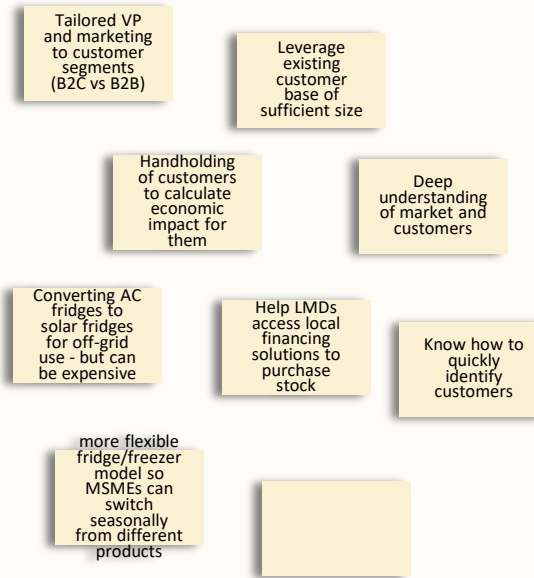
# Breakout 2: How to Sell Refrigerators for Productive Use

LMDs that are piloting or scaling the technology

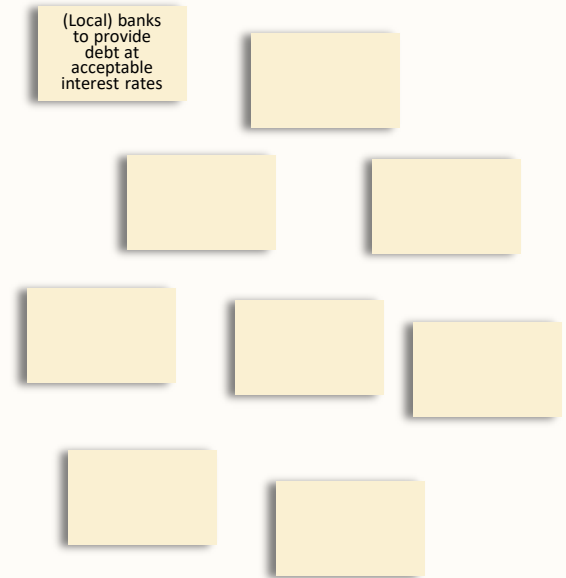
## 1. Challenges



## 2. Solutions



## 3. External support



# Global Distributors Collective

## Thank you!

Find the full publication in our  
Knowledge Hub on the GDC website



Photo credit: POPO

**Practical  
ACTION**

**bop  
inc**

The GDC is hosted by Practical Action  
alongside strategic and implementing  
partner Bopinc