

*Guest Blog Post written by Natalie Cassedy for TBLI CONFERENCE™ NORDIC 2016. Views and opinions are that of the writer and are not the official views of TBLI CONFERENCE™.*

As global temperatures rise and the world's supply of non renewable energies are depleting, the demand for alternative, renewable energies is increasing. This has opened up a market for companies to engineer products that are efficient and have the capacity to provide energy to the largest number of people.

TBLI spoke with Mo (Mohamed) El-Fataty who is the CEO and founder of Masar, a smart energy company based in Amsterdam which focuses on deploying solar energy panels to remote parts of the world. At the moment, their presence is only in Africa, but their goal is to expand to other areas of the world.

### **What sets your company and product apart from the other entrepreneurs in the session?**

Mr El-Fataty discussed his upbringing in Finland and how going back to Egypt and experiencing the number of blackouts in that country inspired him to found Masar. He was astonished to see how a country that has 99% grid coverage could still have so many electrical problems. Almost everyone in Cairo has a backup, diesel generator.

This trip took place in 2014 and since then his company has already deployed a pilot project in Africa. This means that his project is already market ready, and some of the other technologies featured are still in the research and development stage. His company is able to spend less on R&D and really focus on access.

However, he also expressed the importance of unity in this market.

“If you look at some the other technologies that we have heard of, which are all very promising, I love renewables across the board, we are all playing on the same team against the conventional power market which is powered by fossil fuels.”

His company is able able to deploy anywhere in the world that has a port, and this product fulfills a real need. People in Northern Africa are unhappy with their diesel generators. They are constantly have to refuel and pay to have their generators fixed.

### **What do you want to see in the future in this industry?**

There are many different types of startups who have access to grants and small funding options, but they do not have access to large sources of funding. There is a problem in scaling, the startups are raising money, but they aren't able to get funding from the large private equity firms.

“We need programs or industrial players to step in the fill this capital gap.”

Unfortunately during the presentation there was not enough time for questions and answers, so Mr El-Fatary was not able to discuss one aspect of his vision. It is not just solar energy that his company is able to provide. Once the solar panels are installed in the remote location, they are able to deploy a wifi beam around the unit, which provides wireless connectivity to the area.

“This is a leapfrog, this is nothing like we have seen in the developing world before.”

The villages are getting electricity for their homes and then shortly thereafter, wireless connections. He emphasized the importance of this to local economies. Farmers will be able to search for the values of their goods.

His end goal is help countries across Africa transition from diesel energy to solar energy.

“It’s the sun continent, not the diesel continent.”