



WINLPG

Women in LPG



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“WINLPG PROVIDES A PLATFORM TO BE INSPIRED BY AND INSPIRE OTHERS TO KNOW WHAT IS POSSIBLE.”

Jessica Alderman

Meet the Role Models

WINLPG Role Models introduce successful individuals in the LPG industry and gives an insight into their career path, their challenges and their advice to fellow WINLPG members.

My professional journey started in a small hut in northern Laos where I spent 5 days being nursed back to health after contracting Dengue Fever when I was 15. As a photographer I had been awarded my first grant to explore rural cultures in Laos, returning to find I had developed a drive to improve global public health systems. In college, I studied microbiology and worked in the university darkroom to grow my photography skills. I took a class in college called “women, politics, and healthcare” which inspired me to start my career working in healthcare policy advocating for uninsured populations.

With a goal to merge my two passions for photography and public health, I quit my job and worked as a freelance photographer to document health systems which took me to Kenya, Uganda, Israel and Palestine where I worked with an organization that trained midwives in conflict and disaster areas. From this experience I developed a passion for working with women and focused on maternal child health. A fellowship program took me to Nepal where I lived for two years and taught a class in Global Leadership while doing research on the intersection of maternal health and microfinance. I returned to complete a Master’s in Public Health at Johns Hopkins, focusing in behavior change communication. It was here where I made the connection between the women I had been working with who spent their lives cooking over a dirty open fire, and their resulting exposure to indoor air pollution. Focusing on this issue, I found Envirofit International which works to tackle indoor air pollution through the design, development and sale of clean cooking solutions.

At Envirofit I have been able to combine my passions for public health and communications and work to help a start-up grow to global company- in turn seeing the change it brings to families who now have access to clean cooking.

“ In the industry I work in, clean cooking, women are the primary beneficiaries of LPG. To truly be effective in what we do, we need to understand our customers and that can only be achieved with more women decision makers in the LPG value chain who are understanding, thinking and planning for customers.”

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SIX KEY QUESTIONS

What is your goal today?

Professionally my goal today is to be able to operate at the executive level and work to grow Envirofit's SmartGas LPG adoption. I also want to grow our marketing, distribution, and customer care models to make it easier for women to take on non-traditional roles in LPG in the countries we work.

Personally, I want to live in Germany to be closer to family in the area, and bike from Mongolia to the tip of India (someday).

Did you have a mentor and how did this help?

I haven't had the opportunity to be exposed to mentors in my life (but am open to it!) and learned the most about professional development from reading leadership books. I have always been inspired by my friends- other women working in different industries from teaching, to medicine, to business, to international development who have had to learn to speak up, ask, and stand for what they believe.

Describe your Pathway?

My path is a zigzag. I think people get stuck thinking about a bigger goal. I found if you think about what you are passionate about right now and do it- in doing it you discover more about yourself and may grow a passion for something else which you can then go and pursue.

What does leadership mean to you?

Leadership is about listening; Working to understand different angles of a problem before offering a solution; Making decisions no one else wants to make; Learning from failures. And, finally helping to empower others to be the best person they can be.

Did you face any specific challenges?

In my journey- so many. In fact, when I was younger I was diagnosed with dyslexia and ADHD. After failing out of the 4th grade I was told probably would not go to college. I think this actually helped me learn to persevere from a young age, and made the rest of the road blocks less daunting- Not necessarily less hard, just more faith in yourself to overcome them. Its amazing how many people along the way have a negative outlook or little trust in overcoming challenges. You just need to ignore those people and do it anyway.

What three pieces of advice would you give to someone embarking on their career with LPG?

There is more and more momentum around LPG on a global scale. It also represents an amazing opportunity to be a part of the growth of an industry. As women are the primary market for LPG cooking in emerging markets there is a great opportunity for women to offer their knowledge and expertise and bring exponential change to this industry. In fact I don't think it will happen without them.



#WINLPG

Women in LPG Global Network

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