

## Millions 'lighting the way' to a brighter future

**SolarAid reveals that millions of people are switching to solar across Africa due to the benefits of solar light, as it launches its Light the Way campaign.**

SolarAid's Impact Report 2014, a result of over 13,500 research interactions, identified that for an African family living without electricity, a solar light\*:

- saves over £130
- enables children to study for around an extra 1,200 hours
- means less risk of lethal fires and accidents
- reduces toxic smoke that can cause chest infections and illness
- saves up to 1/2 tonne of CO<sub>2</sub>

The Light the Way campaign highlights that given the chance to buy a solar light, millions of people are switching from toxic kerosene lamps and candles. On average 90% of solar light customers interviewed by SolarAid recommend them to others; in Kenya, customers recommend solar lights to around 25 more people each. The charity's not-for-profit, SunnyMoney, has now enabled over eight million people to access solar lights.

All donations to the Light the Way campaign made by the British public until 5th February 2015 will be matched by the UK Government, enabling more lights to reach rural Africa and the impact of donations to be doubled.

**International Development Secretary Justine Greening** said: *"Millions of people across Africa do not have access to electricity, forcing them to use harmful and expensive alternatives such as kerosene lamps. By matching public donations to SolarAid's 'Light the Way' campaign we can help provide affordable solar lighting to almost a million people in Malawi and Rwanda. This clean and cost-effective solution to a lack of electricity will free up household income so families can spend more on food and school fees and invest in small businesses."*

As **SolarAid's CEO, Andrew Webb**, highlighted: *"Today we don't just get men on the moon, we 3D print from moon rock; yet 600 million people in Africa still live without electricity. SolarAid's 'Light the Way' campaign profiles how - given the opportunity - the world's poorest people are buying solar lights to improve their family's health, education and income. We need to get this life-changing solution to them now, so that another generation is not left in the dark."*

Today SolarAid also launches a new fundraising platform, 'Speed of Light'. This platform enables supporters to see on a map exactly where their donation gets a solar light. They are then able to share the link with friends to encourage their support and see the impact of all the donations in their network.

**SolarAid's Chief Fundraiser, Richard Turner**, explained: *"The Speed of Light is like the ice bucket challenge... minus the ice! You can see immediately where your donation gets a solar light, then by passing it to friends you can see their impact, and that of those they pass it to - eventually you see the full effect of what you started."*

*Peer to peer recommendation on the ground in Africa is what helps us get more lights to rural areas; we want to build on the incredible power of social networks through the Speed of Light platform."*

**Speed of Light:** [www.speedoflight.io/](http://www.speedoflight.io/)

SolarAid's 'Light the Way' campaign runs through the start of the **UNESCO International Year of Light 2015** and finishes on the 5th February.

### UK Aid Match

UK Aid Match was set up by the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID) to give a boost to public support for charities working in the developing world. It doubles public donations to appeals run by British international development charities, in recognition of both the public's generosity and the wide range of causes they support. For more information, see [www.gov.uk/uk-aid-match](http://www.gov.uk/uk-aid-match)

\*All data based on the impact of a solar light over three years; please find more details at: <http://www.solar-aid.org/impact/>

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### Notes for Editors:

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### Images

Images can be found at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/solaraid>

Or available via: [susie.wheeldon@solar-aid.org](mailto:susie.wheeldon@solar-aid.org)

### Quotes

"[Because of the solar light], my lifestyle has changed, my kids eat well, study well and we are a happy family now." Dickson Murumbi, SunnyMoney customer, Kenya

"Kerosene was expensive ...I did not allow [my daughter] to study at night ... [with a solar light] she is free to study any time" – HonorathaElipidi, SunnyMoney customer, Tanzania

### Key facts

- Nearly 600 million people in Africa have no access to electricity
- In sub-Saharan Africa, 91% of the rural population has no access to electricity
- Over 290 million people in Africa use kerosene as their main source of lighting
- More than one million people die every year from the effects of indoor air pollution
- In sub-Saharan Africa, indoor smoke causes around 400,000 deaths a year
- Inhaling the fumes from a kerosene lamp is the toxic equivalent to smoking 170 cigarettes a year
- A kerosene lamp emits over 2.5 kilograms of carbon dioxide per litre burned
- On average, \$10.5 billion is spent a year on kerosene lighting in Africa, by families and businesses
- Families in rural Africa spend around 15% of their income on lighting (including kerosene, batteries and candles)
- It takes 12 weeks for payback of the average solar light (from reduced kerosene spending)



- Solar lights sold by SunnyMoney are Lighting Africa approved, come with a guarantee and last between 3 - 5 years

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### **About SolarAid&SunnyMoney**

SolarAid is a London-based international charity that believes in business-based solutions to poverty and climate change. SolarAid was founded in 2006 by solar company Solarcentury to explore and create clean, safe, affordable energy for all. Solarcentury established SolarAid by making a long-term commitment of donating 5% of annual company profits.

In 2008 SolarAid created a social enterprise called SunnyMoney to run its on the ground operations in Africa. SunnyMoney currently operates in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Uganda and Senegal. In 2013, SolarAid won the Ashden Gold Award, the Business Green Award, the Google Global Impact Challenge and the Guardian Sustainable Business Award. SolarAid is working on solar light research with Google and Stanford University.

### **Business model:**

SolarAid covers the cost of getting solar lights to rural areas where they are then sold through its not-for-profit social enterprise, SunnyMoney. Selling lights creates sustainable markets and allows profits to be recycled, helping the organisation to get more lights to more people. Its work is supported by local community leaders who profile the benefits of solar lights through peer-to-peer networks. SunnyMoney is now the leading distributor of solar lights in Africa.

SunnyMoney:

1. Has sold over 1,395,000 solar lights
2. Brought safe, solar energy to over 8 million people
3. Is the largest distributor of solar lights in Africa, selling a solar light every 40 seconds

**Technology innovation:** The SunnyMoney Brains Innovation Unit also works to bring 'pay-as-you-go' solar lights to market; to bring safe, solar technology to hundreds of millions more.

**Global Alliance:** SolarAid aims to make the solar light as prolific as the mobile phone and is building an alliance of partners and donors to help eradicate the kerosene lamp by 2020. The charity will open source knowledge and offer training, capacity and programme development expertise to engage more NGOs, governments and donors in rural energy access.

For more information, visit [www.solar-aid.org](http://www.solar-aid.org)