

LIGHT LIBRARIES

MAY 2022



ABOUT SOLARAID



A LITTLE BIT ABOUT OUR ORGANISATION

SolarAid is an international charity set up to fight poverty and climate change. Our vision is of a world where everyone has access to clean, renewable, energy.

578 million people across Africa live without access to electricity. Without electricity, families, communities and businesses are limited. Millions rely on expensive and dangerous alternatives, such as candles and kerosene for basic lighting each night.

Solar lights and systems can transform rural communities overnight, providing much needed safe, clean and reliable light and power in homes, schools and health facilities.

Through its social enterprise, SunnyMoney, and partner organisations, SolarAid helps create access to solar power and lighting by catalysing solar markets and continually innovating to help ensure that no one is left in the dark.

Our mission is to light up every home, school and clinic in Africa by the end of the decade - using safe, clean solar power.

THE PROBLEM



Over 578 million people in sub-Saharan Africa have no access to electricity. This means whole communities descend into darkness when the sun goes down each evening.

Without access to safe, affordable light at school or at home, millions of children risk their lives to study by open flames or hazardous kerosene. These alternatives cause countless tragic accidents and contribute to deadly indoor air pollution.

Solar lights offer a clean, safe and affordable solution to these problems. But for some families, the cost of buying a solar light is simply out of reach.

A Light Library is just like a library for books, but for solar lights. Borrowing a solar light from a Light Library, for a fee much less than it would cost to buy a candle, is an affordable option and helps build trust in solar products. Families also experience the solar light in their own home, removing the risk out of later buying one.

THE SOLUTION



Building on SolarAid's experience of working with schools and communities across the continent, SolarAid has designed Light Libraries specifically to reach the poorest students and their families with safe and affordable light.

Light libraries are like a book libraries, but for solar lights! For as little as 1p a day, much less than families are spending on candles, kerosene or batteries, students can borrow a solar light from their local school.

With access to solar, children have the opportunity to realise their dreams and create a brighter future.

In addition to providing schools with portable solar lights, we also equip schools with solar systems to light up classrooms for evening study - this is particularly important during exam times. The solar systems allows teachers to plan lessons and mark school work after dark, as well as keep phones charged and stay connected with the education authorities.

Light libraries mean that low income households which struggle to purchase a solar light, can still benefit from access to a solar light and stop wasting money on alternatives such as candles.



Over time, these solar lights can help households save money, while at the same time generate revenue for local schools, boosting education budgets.

Light libraries also act as a 'try before you buy' model, helping to build trust in and demand for solar products. Each Light Library is linked with a locally recruited solar entrepreneur, who can offer solar lights for sale in the community.

"The light library is important because it assists children with reading. Most of the children's reading abilities have improved."

- Beatrice Maluza,
Head Teacher, Kalira Primary School, Malawi



IMPACT

Access to solar light changes everything. When a student uses a solar light, every member of the household will benefit. Through our impact research, over 30,000 interactions with rural customers, we understand the impact a solar light will have on a family:*

Education

Children can study after dark under clean, safe light - on average, children with access to a solar light do an extra hour of study each night.

Money saved

Families save 10% of their income from not buying kerosene, candles or batteries - savings are spent on food, schooling and improving livelihoods.

Environment

Over 1 tonne of CO₂ is averted over the lifetime of a solar light - mitigating climate change and reducing indoor air pollution, which kills more people per year than HIV and malaria combined.

Health

Over half the household notice improved health, with less eye and respiratory illness. Particularly important now due to the nature of the COVID-19 virus.

Wellbeing

Families can enjoy each other's company after sunset - with improved security and safety.

*Calculated over the conservatively estimated three year life span of a basic solar light

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