

For immediate release

New reports: the socio-economic impact of solar lamps on refugees and students



Addis-Ababa/Niamey/Berlin, May 30th, 2017 – Save the Children has just released two evaluation reports measuring the impact of the use of solar lamps on displaced people in Niger and on students in Ethiopia. Both reports show unmistakably empowering effects of the solar lamps on students’ school results as well as increasing personal security and living conditions.

Female students in Ethiopia using the Little Sun solar-powered lamp, October 2016. Credit: Seifu Assegid/ Save the Children in Ethiopia.

Over 1.1 billion people in the world live in energy poverty. They are reliant on dangerous, polluting and expensive kerosene or candles for their lighting. The alternative source of light for these communities is firewood, which takes time to collect, is sometimes not easily flammable and the smoke it produces creates a toxic atmosphere inside the home as well as raising the temperature to uncomfortable levels and causes eye diseases.

In refugee camps, the majority of people live with no or limited access to electricity. Without a strong source of light, they are afraid to leave their homes after dark, to go to the toilet, for example, as they fear injuring themselves or becoming victims of sexual violence. Women in the camps are particularly affected by this lack of lighting as they are usually the ones managing the household and preparing food after dark.

In the Afar region of Ethiopia, many students leave for school early in the morning when it is still dark outside and when they have finished class, they have household chores to do, such as looking after livestock or fetching water. The only time for them to read and study is after dark, once they have completed their household work. The lack of lighting affects their ability to read and write after dark.

Save the Children distributed 250 Little Sun lamps to people fleeing unrest in the Diffa region of Niger in October 2016, as well as 500 lamps to students who are benefitting from a UK Department for International Development funded education programme implemented by Save the Children and partners in the Afar Region.

Save the Children evaluated the overall lighting situation of the beneficiaries of solar lamps before the distribution, and then two and six months afterwards. Both reports show very clearly which impacts the lamps have had on the communities in terms of education, well-being and finances.

“There is a significant difference before the students got the Little Sun and now as there are improvements in their academic results”, says the School Director of Gewane Woredae Medeleda School in Ethiopia.

“Using flashlights costs a lot because I have to buy batteries. Now that I save money from not having to purchase batteries, I can do my work with no investment. I can use the savings and proceeds from this to support my children”, adds Atcha Ousman, a displaced woman working as a midwife in Boudouri, Niger.

The most striking result is that 100% of the users could save money on lighting as the lamp either partially or fully replaced the usage of kerosene, torches or other expensive and scarce sources of energy. In both groups, the users responded that the lamp was very easy and reliable to use. In Niger, 90% of the beneficiaries said that the lamp greatly improved their living conditions. 80% said their feeling of security increased positively and they felt more

happy and proud. In Ethiopia, 100% of the students said that the lamp was extremely helpful, as they were reading more after dark, which boosted their academic abilities. It was also useful whilst looking after camels and goats at night. The teachers noted that they could already recognize improvements in the academic results of the students who received a lamp. The findings show clearly that a simple solar light has been shown to restore dignity and safety and bring a far better quality of life after dark to refugees in Niger, and lead to a better academic performance amongst pastoralist communities in Afar, Ethiopia.

Felix Hallwachs, Director of [Little Sun](#), the German solar lamp manufacturer whose lamps were distributed: “*The statistical evidence brought by these impact reports confirms what we hear from our customers on a daily basis – a simple solar light helps marginalized communities, enhances education and restores dignity for refugees.*”



Displaced children in the region of Diffa, Niger, December 2016. Credit: Samaila Issa Ibrahim for Save the Children.

Press contact Little Sun: Rabea Koss & Romane Guégan, press@littlesun.com , +49 30 200 039 141

Full impact reports:

Save The Children Ethiopia: <http://bit.ly/2pZM3XF>

Save The Children Niger: <http://bit.ly/2qXKeIH>

For more information:

Save the Children Ethiopia: <https://ethiopia.savethechildren.net>

Save the Children Niger: <https://niger.savethechildren.net/>

About Little Sun

Little Sun is a social business and global project founded in 2012 by artist Olafur Eliasson and engineer Frederik Ottesen to bring clean, reliable, affordable energy to the 1.1 billion people in the world living in off-grid areas without electricity. Purchasing Little Suns in areas of the world with electricity makes the products available in off-grid areas at reduced, locally affordable prices, where they provide a clean alternative to toxic and expensive fuel-based lighting and a steadfast and clean alternative to relying on the electrical grid.

Since its official launch at London's Tate Modern, more than 500,000 Little Sun lamps have been distributed worldwide, with half going to off-grid areas. In April 2014, Little Sun received a ground-breaking \$5 million impact investment loan from Bloomberg Philanthropies, making it possible to scale up Little Sun's operations across the African continent.

Little Sun is a certified B Corporation.

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