Artwork by Diana Ejaita — Feel for Reach for the Sun, Ten Steps to Creating a Solar Powered World (Little Sun, 2021)
Dear Friends,

For most of us, 2021 was a wild roller coaster ride. The pandemic raged, then abated, then raged again. The pandemic has increased global inequality, and made even more apparent the massive and unjust disparity in access to healthcare, vaccines, food, living wages, and other factors necessary for a healthy and fulfilling life.

It’s a lot to take in. Sometimes, we may just want to shut our eyes, retreat inwards, and make it all go away. At Little Sun, we have chosen not to do that – we remain hopeful in the future. Here’s why: everywhere we go, we meet people of enormous good will and extraordinary capacity who believe in the future.

Little Sun has stretched itself as far as possible to support these inspiring optimists, offering our partnership and accompaniment on a journey to a better future. We have enabled school children to study longer and safely with solar. We helped community health workers to do their jobs more efficiently with phone chargers, solar systems, and medical equipment. We have done more than ever to advance agricultural transformation and small business development, launching our first solar powered milling platform in Senegal, and supporting water pumping, egg incubation, and micro-entrepreneurial programs across Africa. Our Pay-As-You-Go initiative in Zambia is thriving. We are even exploring a new effort integrating solar powered cold storage into the milk sector there. Blades from our made-in-Africa wind turbine should be spinning in late 2022.

But that’s not all. This year, Little Sun has amplified its voice on the world stage to raise awareness for and accelerate the global transition to renewable energy. We partnered with remarkable artists worldwide to turn conversations often centered around fear and data, into conversations that center on feeling and hope for all. Happening from the digital space to Art Basel, COP26 in Glasgow and Times Square, our arts and culture programs made it into major press outlets, allowing us to spread the word about our impact work in Africa and galvanizing an even bigger audience.

None of this would be possible without you, our friends and supporters. On behalf of our founders, Olafur and Frederik, our board, and the entire Little Sun team, I wish to share my deepest and most sincere appreciation for your belief in Little Sun. Together, we can create a future where the power of the sun is available to everyone.

John Heller, CEO of Little Sun
Little Sun’s Global Impact
2012-2021

1,406,931
Little Sun products distributed worldwide

869,650
Little Sun products distributed in regions without electricity

2021
A Year in Pictures

2012-2021

4,175,624
people with improved access to energy*

1,090,724
metric tons of CO2 emissions avoided* (over lifetime of products)

843,561
kerosene lanterns replaced*

28,605
solar chargers delivered in areas without electricity

139,898,384
extra study hours for school children living without electricity**

118
solar systems installed in health facilities

6,049
solar products distributed to community health and childcare workers

$175,460,584
savings on energy expenditure, cumulatively* (over lifetime of products)

* from all Little Sun Originals, Little Sun Diamonds, and Natural Lights distributed in off-grid areas since 2012. Based on GOGLA, the Standardized Impact Calculator for the Off-grid Energy Sector. The calculations are based on the product lifespan.

** from Little Sun Foundation’s distributions to school children since 2018. Based on SolarAid’s Impact Calculator.
Providing safe and reliable healthcare is crucial for protecting people living in rural Africa, now more than ever before. We have supported community health workers and doctors with solar home systems, phone chargers, lamps, and medical equipment to help them reach people in need, with lifesaving tests, prevention, and treatment.

Without energy, economies do not grow. That’s why we focused on providing clean energy, using the power of the sun, to families, communities, and farmers in Zambia, Senegal, Burkina Faso, and Ethiopia.

Zambians are trading solar energy with their neighbors. Starting with the Pay-As-You-Go system a few years back, we are now installing bigger systems in remote areas in the country to power households and allow people to have an extra income.

Three hundred and forty million children in Sub-Saharan Africa live without electricity. This year, we provided thousands of students with solar powered lamps and workshops so they can learn their lessons, stay in school, and break down barriers to opportunity.

From the digital space to central Glasgow and Times Square, Little Sun has been shining bright all over the world to raise awareness for climate action and energy access worldwide. Through partnerships with artists, we have been featured in major media outlets, such as The Guardian and The New Yorker ultimately serving our impact work in Africa.

Access to personal, portable light helps refugees in a number of ways, making camps safer at night, reducing air pollution from kerosene lamps and open fires, and saving households money. Together with our partners, we continued providing refugees and displaced people with some basic tools to help them rebuild their lives.
COVID-19 Relief & Health

6,049 empowered health workers

Since the pandemic started, we have put a particular effort into bringing solar to health workers and community-based childcare workers. Partnering with different organizations across Africa, we have been continuously supporting frontline community health workers with phone chargers so that they can access data tools and patients’ records, provide accurate diagnosis, communicate with the world more easily, and work more safely. We have electrified health centers, a major path leading to better healthcare and more accurate diagnoses for the millions of people living beyond the electrical grid. New mothers now return home with a clean and safe solar light, which improves indoor air quality, respiratory health, and fire safety.

TANZANIA, MALAWI

Two women receive a Little Sun solar lamp at the Maternity Africa clinic so that they can look after their babies with a safe light (top). Visit to a village in Tanzania during a door to door outreach by Maternity Africa (bottom left). Cecilia Scotch is one of the 200 community health workers working with Partners in Health in Malawi who received a phone charger in 2021.

Photos: brown pix (top, bottom left) Partners in Health Malawi (bottom right)
BRIGHTENING PATIENTS’ LIVES IN TANZANIA

From the Kivulini Maternity Centre to last-mile villages, Maternity Africa is delivering over 3,000 solar lamps to patients from impoverished communities, also offering vital antenatal care and postnatal care, and cervical cancer screening through their outreach activities.

The added benefit of the lights to these women will be significant. Being so close to the Equator, there are almost 12 hours of darkness in Northern Tanzania, every day and year round. Furthermore, with little or no access to electricity, peoples’ homes lack sufficient light to attend to many domestic tasks, including looking after babies. So, the benefit of these solar lights is huge – women can now tend to these tasks during the hours of darkness much more.

Michael Hynds, Maternity Africa

ARUSHA, TANZANIA

Visit to a maternity center (top and bottom left). Women living in rural areas of Tanzania receive Little Sun solar lamps to help them take care of their babies after dusk (top and bottom right).

Photos: brown pix
SUPPORTING COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS IN TANZANIA

After dusk, frontline health workers struggle to conduct their work if they don’t have access to electricity. They sometimes have to travel long distances just to charge their phone. Together with Amref Health Africa, we distributed over 590 phone chargers and 430 solar lamps to health workers. When community health workers have a Little Sun Charge, they can reach other medical personnel on a reliable basis, improve data capture, and ultimately, make sure their patients have better healthcare and a more accurate diagnosis.

This little lamp is going to be a big lifesaver for me, especially when people reach out for help during the night hours. It will not only enable me to have better communication with the community, but will also bring me much-needed peace of mind when I’m going back home in the dark.

Halima Salim Magongo, Peer Educator in HIV/AIDS Testing Services, Tanga
MATERNAL WELLBEING 
AND INFANT SAFETY

One to One Africa’s Enable Project accompanies women during their pregnancy and beyond, ensuring basic health checks and helping with access to public healthcare. The pandemic has severely impacted the communities in the Eastern Cape, South Africa where our partner works. Through this project, health workers are able to reach pregnant women reluctant to visit health clinics during the pandemic. Many of these households have been welcoming more relatives than ever because of unemployment in cities, resulting in major spending on food and leaving little income to invest in lighting. When Little Suns replace expensive candles, it not only saves money but makes it easier for mothers to nurse their children, ultimately giving newborns a healthier start into their lives.

Women in the program really appreciate the Little Suns as these will help them at night, particularly now that South Africa is experiencing load shedding with frequent power cuts.

– One to One Staff Member

EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

650 Little Sun solar lamps were distributed to families, leading to economic savings, fewer injuries, and more safety.

Photos: One To One Africa: Enable project
STRENGTHENING HEALTHCARE IN SENEGAL

Our team in Senegal has been busy these past few months replacing torches and candles in health centers. Thanks to our partners IntraHealth, Red Cross, and Eclosio we have installed 118 solar home systems in Thiès, Tambacounda, and Ziguinchor – improving healthcare for the local communities. With light and charging capacities, health workers don’t need to fear fire hazards anymore and are now able to deliver babies in a safer environment.

There is a taboo about going to the health center during the day. Nobody wants to show they are sick, so having light at night is a game changer.

Mamadou Moustapha Diouf,
Health Worker in the Keur Massouko center

THIÈS REGION

Mamadou Moustapha Diouf (left) shows how the solar home system works (bottom right). Inside of the health center (top right).

Photos: Little Sun
Food Security & Livelihood

This year, we have reached a major milestone. While our founding programs distributed solar lamps in Sub-Saharan Africa, we are now proudly implementing other sustainable solutions to improve livelihoods in rural areas of Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Senegal.

In Burkina Faso, our partner BETA SARL launched an egg incubator pilot in Yarkanre, located six kilometers away from the electricity grid. Since then, over 500 chickens have been incubated, benefitting the whole village. Our programming has also expanded to include the installation of water pumps in Burkina Faso and Ethiopia, which support organic gardening and reforestation projects.

BURKINA FASO, ETHIOPIA, SENEGAL

A farmer is using a water pump in Ethiopia (top). A woman in Burkina Faso is opening the egg incubator (bottom left). A woman shares the products she produces with Little Sun’s team member, Astou (bottom right).

Photos: Little Sun
Our team in Senegal has been traveling across the country to improve livelihoods, particularly supporting women entrepreneurs. Thanks to charging stations, households now have a clean source of light and offer charging services for small electronic devices to make extra money. With a solar dryer, food can now be processed and sold at local markets – we even received our first dried mangoes in the Berlin office this summer.
Food Security & Livelihood

Solar panels and a Little Sun lamp are charging on a roof.

Photo: Tandem Agency

SENEGAL
When we combine the power of the sun with the power of women, miracles happen.

John Heller, CEO of Little Sun, during a visit with women’s group representatives in Senegal

HUSKING, MILLING, FREEZING, AND CHARGING WITH SOLAR

Our very first multifunctional platform is now installed in Loumatyr, Senegal, in partnership with Nadji Bi. Here is how it works: Solar panels power multiple devices in a purpose-built building, helping communities to automate processes and transform products sustainably.

The platform includes a solar husker, a solar mill, a freezer, and a charging station. Instead of milling by hand or using diesel-powered machines, the solar husker brings automated crop processing closer to home – with no waste and energy costs.

The system is run with remote monitoring and cashless payment software.

SENEGAL

A partner shows millet to be milled (left). The solar panels that power the mill are placed on the building’s roof (top right).

Photos: Little Sun
Entrepreneurs and business owners have been working hard to grow their businesses, even as they faced enormous challenges during the pandemic. In Zambia, our team has expanded our Pay-As-You-Go initiative, which means even more low-income households living in remote areas can pay for small amounts of electricity as they use it. What’s more, this innovative system enables neighbors to trade energy, too.

$175,460,584 saved on lighting and phone charging

Economic Development

ZAMBIA, SENEGAL

Sales agent Angela Mwanza installs solar panels for a household in Zambia (top). The team holds a workshop on food preservation and milk processing with small scale dairy farmers. In Senegal, our team visits a network of about 50 local women’s groups (bottom right).

Photos: Chona Mwembe (top, bottom left) Little sun (bottom right)
Together with Solarworx, our team continues to install solar home systems in Zambia in communities that previously had no access to the electrical grid. For the first time, neighbors can now sell energy to each other. In Mumbwa, the team successfully deployed a solar powered decentralized micro-grid that connects all of the system’s users located within a small geographic radius. The electricity generated can be used for lighting, refrigerators, TVs, and even for productive use. And, if there is a surplus, they can trade the extra power.
This year, we delivered more lamps to Ethiopia than ever before. Thanks to the help of the Ministry of Education, over 70,000 children now have access to solar energy in primary and secondary schools in some of the most remote areas of the country.

Meanwhile, in Rwanda, our partnership with SaferRwanda and the Ministry of Education helped us bring another 3,500 lamps to students in the Kamonyi district, where electricity is very scarce. This brings the total number of empowered children up to 40,000, especially crucial due to the particularly long school closures in the country during the pandemic. But our education programs are much more than that. We equipped teachers with phone chargers so they can access educational content, and keep in touch with students and family. We also provided workshops around energy, solar technology, and climate so that children can build their own path towards a brighter future.

In South Africa, soaring energy prices and ongoing load shedding leave many disadvantaged communities in the dark. Therefore, we have supported households who cannot afford to buy energy, bringing over 500 solar powered products to school children in Northern Cape’s Concordia School with our friends from the Santa Shoebox project. In Tanzania we delivered over 6,000 lamps to students and almost 400 chargers to teachers in the Maasai communities.

139,898,384 extra study hours for school children living without electricity

Tanzania

Students are leaving school with their new Little Sun solar lamps (top). A school teacher shares a story book about a solar lamp with school children (bottom left). Students are watching the Ubungo cartoon to learn about the difference between renewable and non-renewable energy (bottom right).
Thanks to our wonderful community, we have managed to raise over $86,000 – even exceeding our goal – for our yearly fundraising campaign. This means we will be able to bring 5,000 solar lights to children in Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Ethiopia, giving them the opportunity to read their lessons and do their homework after sunset.

**POWER TO READ: 5,000 LAMPS FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN**

Thanks to our wonderful community, we have managed to raise over $86,000 – even exceeding our goal – for our yearly fundraising campaign. This means we will be able to bring 5,000 solar lights to children in Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Ethiopia, giving them the opportunity to read their lessons and do their homework after sunset.

**ETHIOPIA**

Zala shows her Little Sun. Aida has now the opportunity to learn her lessons after dark and improve her grades at school.

*Photos: Naad Lemma*
I used to wake up at 4:30 a.m. to do my homework, and often failed to finish in time for school. My classmates used to laugh at me because I was always sleepy. I like my lamp because I hate getting up early.

Kalisa, 
Nguzi village, Rwanda
THE MAASAI COMMUNITY SCHOOLS PROGRAM

In collaboration with AAIDRO, the Arusha Archdiocesan Integrated Development and Relief Office, we have provided 6,000 solar lamps to schools located in remote Maasai-inhabited areas in Tanzania. Now children and teachers not only have access to bright, clean light, but can also learn the benefits of renewable energy thanks to an illustrated manual, a storybook, and a cartoon about clean energy and climate change... played on a solar TV.

At last, my baby twins will benefit from clean energy and we will finally get rid of the kerosene smoke which causes eye infection to many small babies. I can leave them in bed with a safe and clean light while doing a few home chores.

Veronika, mother of twins

TANZANIA

Veronika’s oldest child, a preschooler, brought a Little Sun lamp home after our partner AAIDRO visited her school to distribute lamps.

Photo: AAIDRO / brown pix
Stella* (center) is a student at a secondary school in the Longido District and dreams of becoming a heart surgeon. She has improved her performance at school since she has access to clean light.

*Photo: AADRO / brown pix
SHINING A LIGHT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Together with the National Association of Child and Youth Care Workers, we provided a total of over 650 phone chargers for at-risk children living in areas that are poorly connected to the electricity grid. Children reached through the NACCW’s program are particularly vulnerable due to neglect, abuse, or poverty. Many of them live in single parent, youth- or gogo-headed households, in shacks in informal settlements or on farms with poor electricity supply or none at all. Instead of using candles for lighting, children will rely on our solar chargers, allowing them to stay connected with their relatives, study at night, and walk outside safely after dark.

Lerato is an 18-year-old student who lives with her two siblings and her mother. She lives in an informal settlement in the Western Cape. Lerato and her family are constantly affected by load shedding which negatively affects her homework and study time. She also lives in a community with very little to no street lighting which makes it dangerous for her to walk alone outside at night. The solar charger has provided the family with a power source to charge their phones and a light source for the children to study and complete their homework. The light from the solar chargers has also provided Lerato with a sense of safety when she goes outside at night.
In 2021, we launched a culture program, engaging artists and other creative voices to craft new narratives around climate change. Our aim is to shift the often data-driven climate conversation into an intimate and hopeful dialogue. We were thrilled to collaborate with great artists around the globe, helping to amplify our message to raise awareness for climate action and energy access worldwide. From a ten-step call to action designed to inspire us to create a solar powered world to a poignant series of films by global artists to a giant poem written with Little Sun lamps at COP 26...we have been very busy this year spreading solar.

GERMANY, UK

Berlin, Berlin solar, a collaboration with HIGHSNOBIETY. Diana Ejaita, the artist behind Reach for the Sun, in her Berlin studio. Robert Montgomery, who imagined Grace of the Sun, installing the poem in Glasgow.

Photos: Little Sun (top and bottom left), Philip Volkers (bottom right)
Reach for the Sun is a digital, artist-illustrated campaign to mobilize individuals and organizations in the global energy transition to solar. Produced by Little Sun and supported by IKEA Foundation, the campaign harnesses the power of arts to ignite individual transformation and drive collective change. Illustrated by Nigerian-Italian artist Diana Ejaita, Reach for the Sun consists of a ten-step digital guide to creating a solar powered world, an open-source communications toolkit, and resources for organizations and individuals to take action. The campaign comprises three phases: Feel, Change, and Engage. From sun guided meditation to a letter to politicians, find out more about our ten simple and actionable steps online. Thanks to our great partners for supporting this campaign and helping us in our mission to create a world powered by solar.

**REACH FOR THE SUN: TEN STEPS TO CREATING A SOLAR POWERED WORLD**

1. Imagine a solar powered world
2. Touch the sun and feel its potential
3. Reflect on your energy behavior
4. Changing the world begins with changing habits
5. Power your home with renewables
6. Consume from and invest in clean companies
7. Support nonprofits advancing solar
8. Involve your family and community
9. Write to your elected officials
10. Vote Solar

Discover all of the steps
FAST FORWARD: FIVE ARTISTS SHARE THEIR DREAMS FOR A REGENERATIVE WORLD

In July, we released Fast Forward, a series of short films that explore five artists’ dreams for a regenerative world. Featuring over 300 global voices, the films have been made by artists from Ethiopia, Senegal, and the United States. The series explores a future that is fair and regenerative, realized through global collaboration and the centering of historically marginalized groups. It intends to reframe the prevailing political rhetoric on climate change, grounding the narrative in the lived experience and voice of global citizens. Our aim is that these artworks help to turn an often data-driven and technically heavy conversation surrounding the global energy crisis into an open, intimate dialogue, creating accessible stories and new motivation for change.

Fast Forward was commissioned and produced by Little Sun, and stewarded by an advisory board composed of global leaders in climate and art. The series also formed the foundation of an experimental curriculum for 16-18 year olds intended to spark conversations about climate change, climate justice, and the role of artists in shaping our collective future. The series launched on our website and the digital video channel NOWNESS.

Read more and watch the films

ETHIOPIA, SENEGAL, UNITED STATES

Screenshots of the five films. The series has since travelled around the world, even taking over the screens in Times Square and appearing on the main stage of TED Countdown and at COP 26 in Glasgow.

Photos: Ghost of a Dream (top left), Jessica Segall (middle), Ezra Wube (top right), Naod Lemma (bottom left), Selly Raby Kane (bottom right)
THE SOLAR PANEL ART SERIES AT ART BASEL

In September, we were delighted to showcase our cultural program at Art Basel, the international art show for modern and contemporary art. In the UBS Art Studio, we presented a new edition of the Solar Panel Art Series entitled Aligned by the Sun (a revolution), three artworks created by Ghost of a Dream, an artist collective composed of American artists Adam Eckstrom and Lauren Was.

Aligned by the Sun (a revolution) is a collage of sunset images collected by artists from over 200 countries and autonomous areas in the world, printed on solar panels. Using the sun as a symbol of interconnectedness, the artists aim to raise awareness for climate action towards a more equitable and sustainable future. The work is a continuation of Aligned by the Sun, a short film presented by Little Sun in July 2021 as part of the Fast Forward series. The artworks are available on artsy.net with proceeds benefiting the artists and our impact work in Africa.

The space dedicated to Little Sun also featured the Fast Forward film series, as well as a Sunlight Graffiti booth.

Visitors looking at the newest edition of our Solar Panel Art Series (top). The limited edition sunglasses from our collaboration with #TOGERTHERBAND is also on view in the UBS Art Studio (bottom).

Photos: UBS
SHINING A LIGHT ON CLIMATE ACTION AT COP26

We were proud to kick off COP 26 with the announcement of Grace of the Sun, an art installation by artist Robert Montgomery. Grace of the Sun was a solar powered light poem urging commitment to renewable energy at the UN climate conference. The artwork was constructed using 1,000 solar powered Little Sun lamps and made possible by green entech pioneer Octopus Energy and MT Art Agency. During COP26, it illuminated every day at sunset as a poetic beacon of hope for Glasgow.

We also shone a light on climate action at Pathway to Paris with a solar powered sunrise, thanks to our long-lasting friends Rebecca Foon and Jesse Paris Smith, founders of the organization. After the event, the lamps were collected and will be donated to school children in the Arusha region in Tanzania, as part of our Power to Read campaign.

In the Green Zone, we hosted a panel discussion titled "How Can Art and Culture Accelerate a Just Transition?" The panel featured screenings of three of the films in the Fast Forward series and a conversation with four creatives mobilizing their practices to advance the climate justice movement.

GLASGOW, UK

On stage (top right), Little Sun’s Alex McClure holds a panel discussion in the Green Zone with Thimali Kodikara, Kristy Drutman, Yazmany Arboleda, and Favianna Rodriguez. Jesse Paris Smith leads a sunrise at Pathway to Paris’ concert (left), where Patti Smith also performed (bottom).

Photos: Little Sun (top right), Sean Purser (left and bottom)
Grace of the Sun, an art installation by artist Robert Montgomery, lit by Little Sun solar powered lights and made possible by green tech pioneer Octopus Energy and MTArt Agency.

Photo: Philip Volkers
The audience performs a solar powered sunrise at the Pathway to Paris concert.

Photo: Duncan McGlynn
We continued to pursue our long-standing humanitarian work, providing solar solutions to refugees and displaced people, mostly thanks to our partners IOM, Unicef, and CARE. This year, IOM procured over 25,000 Little Sun solar lamps for Nigeria, Sudan, and Ethiopia. In Tanzania, we completed our program work with REDESO (Relief to Development Society), delivering over 7,000 solar lights and 360 phone chargers to refugees and their host communities. Lamps were distributed at three refugee camps in the Kigoma Region, Northwest Tanzania, and their host communities in the North, close to the Burundian border.

As part of the intervention, we conducted youth training workshops and educational screenings on renewable energy, revealing the potential of solar energy, including its role as a job creator, and inspiring young people to become ambassadors for renewable energy.

36,555 solar lamps distributed to humanitarian organizations

TANZANIA

In a camp close to the Burundian border.

Photos: brown pix
I use the Little Sun solar lamp together with my family, also to make sure that my children are sleeping on a safe area.

A. M., Kigoma Region
Before I had to use a battery torch which was very costly because I had to buy a new battery every day. When I did not have money for it, I would stay in the dark. Now that I have the Little Sun solar lamp, I use the money from the battery for food, even soap. It also helps me during cooking, going to the toilet at night, and it protects me from dangerous animals like snakes.

I.K.,
Umhasha village, Tanzania
One of Little Sun's missions is campaigning for global access to clean energy. A big support to this endeavor is ongoing media coverage. Thanks to everyone around the globe who featured our stories throughout 2021 and spread the word about energy access for all!
Thank you to everyone, near and far, who has helped further Little Sun’s solar mission to bring energy access to all. Our partners and donors help us deliver energy to those who need it the most – by supporting us financially, spreading the message for climate action, and distributing our solar lights, chargers, and other innovative energy tools in remote areas.
An organization established by artist Olafur Eliasson and engineer Frederik Ottesen to spread clean, affordable solar energy across the globe. Little Sun is a work of art that works in life.

We deliver solar lamps to students in Sub-Saharan Africa so they can study where there is no electricity at night. We distribute solar phone chargers to frontline health workers so they can treat patients in remote communities. We bring solar energy to farmers and small businesses across Africa to create jobs, boost livelihoods and generate new opportunities. We work with artists and cultural leaders to fuse sun and heart, crafting new narratives that guide humanity to a better future. We partner with companies, governments, communities, non-profits, and people everywhere to bring the magic of the sun to everyone.

Learn more about our partners and supporters at littlesun.org
We are all #ConnectedByTheSun

www.littlesun.org  Facebook  Twitter  Instagram  littlesun.org

If you want to support our work with a donation, please visit: littlesun.org/donate