Progress report
d.light design East Africa / SolarAid Tanzania
Student Solar Light Campaign

Prepared for Twaweza December 2012
**d.light / SolarAid: What is the story?**

In May 2011 d.light design ended its direct activities in Dar es Salaam to take a more regional approach to market development from Nairobi. At the same time SolarAid realized the potential of the school campaigns that where initiated by d.light with great results and decided to take up the challenge. With full cooperation from d.light, SolarAid has taken over the full d.light operations, lock, stock and barrel with the aim to speed up the market development for solar lights in Tanzania. SolarAid has branded the schools campaign the Sunny Money Schools Campaign and this indeed became the major focus of SolarAid’s work.

**The campaign: Where did we go, what did we achieve?**

The schools campaign has developed through several stages described below:

1. The initial campaign was a collaboration between SolarAid and d.light to run a schools campaign on Mafia. This resulted in sales of solar lights on Mafia of over 3,000 pieces in three days and became the main driver for further school campaign development.

2. d.light continued with developing school campaigns in partnership with Femina HIP which has been a valued partner throughout the awareness campaigns done by d.light. This campaign was based on delivery of special student offers together with the Fema magazine to 2,680 secondary schools. In that campaign over 1,600 schools ordered lights by mail order which were delivered using bus transport to places nearby the schools. This resulted in sales of close to 45,000 units between October 2010 and March 2011.

3. Realizing that the sales numbers were very impressive but that market development was limited due to the wide geographical spread of the sales, but at the same time having low penetration of solar lights in these areas, the campaign has evolved into a combination of the Mafia approach and the mail order approach. We target to reach a minimum penetration of lights among 15% of the students in a geographic area. This results in a demand shift where people start realizing on a much larger scale that kerosene is the light source of the past and solar the light source of the future. SolarAid has started this combination campaign in Monduli district working its way through Manyara, Karatu, Aru Meru districts and now set to start in Kilimanjaro Region in the new year. Although the direct sales are lower than with countrywide mail order campaigns, the sales lead to the development of a widespread demand and are the first steps towards a sustainable solar market. Ninety percent of the schools in the targeted areas have been visited by this campaign.

So far we have been able to sell 44,462 lights with Twaweza’s support.
The campaign itself is built up in the following steps:

1. The Sunny Money campaign team organizes an introductory meeting with the regional education authorities to request their consent in running the campaign in their area. The regional authorities generally invite a number of the district education authorities and together with them a district route map is developed.

2. Next, a meeting at the District Education officers office is arranged which is the basis of the planning of headmaster meetings. The district authorities invite all headmasters in their area to a meeting where the school campaign is explained.

3. At the headmaster meeting we present the solar proposition and explain the benefits of solar, how their students and schools can benefit and how the campaign will work.

4. With the Ward education officers present, directly after the meeting, we prepare a route plan of schools and start making visits to schools. The ward education officer of the particular wards join us in visiting their schools.

5. We make the solar proposition to students and offer them two moments to buy lights. One is there and then, prearranged by the headmaster (and the orders confirmed to us by phone before we visit), the other opportunity being 2-4 weeks after the school visit with a delivery of lights by a local transporter to an area close to them.

As we are learning, the campaign is improved continuously by making small and large adjustments to our way of working. This has been improving the impact of our work tremendously and we will continue to improve on new learning.

**Team developments**

As the campaign is growing we are developing our teams further. We started the campaign with one school visiting team and piloted operating with two teams in November. From January we will have two teams and we plan to increase this to four at the end of the year.

We have a new operations director for the whole Tanzanian program coming in. Claire Pedersen is the project manager and is in charge of the specific school program and team development and management. To assist her in the field we are recruiting a field manager whom will be in charge off the day to day field operations
enabling Claire to focus more on the project development and support side from Dar es Salaam.

We have a total of 22 people employed for this campaign and this number will be growing significantly in 2012.

Anecdote

Below is a story from our field team about a happening at a particular school. Similar stories come up on many of the visits we do.

Tanzanian Parent Teacher Meeting

On one of the longest drives into the bush the Sunny Money team reached a school populated mostly by Masaai students. Word had spread in the previous weeks through the headmaster that a company selling modern lights will be doing a show.

As we arrived we were greeted by swarms of students dressed in the bland attire of school uniforms. We were invited into one of the large classrooms that was packed with over 200 brightly dressed Masaai parents.

When Cecy, a long term school campaign staff member, introduced our team we were all a bit intimidated by the intense stares of a captivated audience. You could tell they were there to see a brighter future for their children.

As we presented the solar light technology to the pastoral people we often think it will be difficult to explain these new technologies. Somehow, this is not the case. Many of these parents are avid cell phone users and quickly understand the benefits of
new technologies.

It's hard to impress upon city people how incredibly remote these places are. People hand plough their fields, cook on wood, and burn kerosene for light for their students to read hundreds of kilometers away from the power grid. As Cecy pressed the button on the d.light S1 solar lantern an ‘Oohhh Ahhh’ reverberated around the room, like the sounds you hear on a large fireworks show. Questions were fired back and forth about the longevity of the light, battery replacements, hours of use, etc. We are always amazed at the sophistication of the consumers we try to reach.

The teams training enabled them to answer the crowd’s questions and students and parents then discussed the benefits and rationales of small solar lights. Ultimately, most recognized the price being offered to students as being very attractive, knowing it was a one time offer.

Several weeks later the orders were coming into the Sunny Money call center in Dar es Salaam and we were all impressed by the number of lights ordered by an extremely rural community.

This reminds us that all parents are looking for a brighter future for their children.