



Olafur Eliasson's newly launched Little Sun Foundation transforms donations into study hours in rural Rwanda, bringing solar light to thousands of school children

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Berlin, 15 March 2018 – The Little Sun Foundation is an extension of the Little Sun social business, founded by artist Olafur Eliasson in 2012. The Foundation's mission is to bring solar energy to the most vulnerable communities worldwide who are off the grid and beyond the reach of entrepreneurial distribution models. These communities include remote schools, refugee camps, and people affected by natural disasters. The Solar Kids School Program is the Little Sun Foundation's first official project and has already successfully raised funds for 3200 solar lamps in rural Rwanda.

Through the programme, solar lamps were distributed to five schools in the Kamonyi District in February 2018, **giving children the power to brighten their own future**. Additionally, all 100 teachers in the district received solar-powered phone chargers, enabling them to stay connected and have access to online learning tools. In local solar workshops, the Little Sun Foundation and partner Safer Rwanda introduce teachers and children to the benefits of solar technology and the different uses of solar lamps.

According to the World Bank, **1.1 billion people worldwide lack access to clean and sustainable energy, and millions of school children cannot study after dark because they don't have access to light.**

The UNHCR revealed that a shocking number of people – 65.6 million – were displaced from their homes in 2016 alone and live without reliable electricity. Ending poverty is the number one goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, set by the UN. To achieve it, two factors are essential: quality education and access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy. The Little Sun Foundation tackles both.

In the Kamonyi District, 96.5% of the population don't have electricity at home. Year round, the sun sets at 6pm, ending all work. Meanwhile, the livelihoods of most families depend on agriculture. Children often help in the fields after school, until sunset, which means study time is often relegated to the evening hours. This is significant, because in Kamonyi, like in the rest of Rwanda, half of the population is below the age of 19. At home, families use kerosene lamps, candles, or battery-powered torches to light household chores, cooking, and reading. These light sources, however, can be expensive, noxious, and detrimental to eye health.

The Little Sun Foundation was initiated with the intention of supporting these children by providing them light to study, play, and socialise after dark. Mandela Muzinga Sam., Kamonyi District executive, related:

“More and more families in Rwanda have access to energy. We do not want to leave anybody behind. That is why the efforts of the Little Sun Foundation are helping us until every school and household in Rwanda is electrified.”

Until the electrification rate of the country increases, **small portable solar lights and phone chargers have proven to be the best technological alternative for the population to read, work, and stay connected.** A little solar lamp can have a huge impact on the lives of children and their families. It gives them safe, healthy light and increases their chance of achieving higher education – lighting the way to a bright future.

Olafur Eliasson: *“The mission of the Little Sun Foundation is to give energy to people who need it the most. A solar panel gives you access to energy, to light, and that has an enormous impact on your world. It effects education and safety, effects your quality of life in so many ways. Together, we can achieve climate justice and energy access for all, which is the UN’s seventh Sustainable Development Goal. As an artist, I believe in our collective power to co-produce reality, to turn thinking into doing and hope into action – to change the world.”*

What can you do?

Your donation has the power to brighten up the future

Your donation helps to finance Little Sun Foundation e. V.’s educational and development projects. All projects are selected and regularly visited by us, so you can be sure that all donations are used well and effectively. To donate, visit: <http://littlesunfoundation.org/donate/>

Become a sponsoring member of the Little Sun Foundation

You would like to support our work long-term? Great! When you become a sponsoring member, you decide on a regular contribution, and, in exchange, we’ll keep you up to speed with our organisation’s activities. Download the membership form here: <http://littlesunfoundation.org/donate/>

How to collaborate

From small local projects to large humanitarian and education NGOs and companies, we work with a variety of organisations to improve energy access worldwide! We are grateful to each one for their unique contributions. There are a variety of ways to collaborate. Feel free to contact us!

www.littlesunfoundation.org

Email: info@littlesunfoundation.org

Press contacts:

Rabea Koss and Romane Guégan, press@littlesun.com

Notes to Editors

About Little Sun Foundation – Solar Power Means Empowerment

The Little Sun Foundation was founded by artist Olafur Eliasson to deliver solar energy to the most vulnerable communities worldwide, as an extension of the Little Sun social business. We work with qualified partners such as Oxfam, Save the Children, UNHCR, and IOM to bring high-quality, durable, long-lasting solar products to displaced people and school children who would otherwise not have access to clean energy at all. Our solar-education programmes aim to provide children with tools and knowledge that empower them to shape a sustainable future for themselves and for the planet.

On average, people spend 1 USD per week on kerosene in Sub-Saharan Africa. Spending more than 1 USD per week and investing in a solar product is a huge step for people with little purchasing power. Without awareness and trust, people in remote villages will stick to kerosene and torches, and businesses will fail to serve BOP communities and be sustainable at the same time – a vicious cycle that hinders sustainable and economic development.

To download this press release and Little Sun info material, visit: <http://bit.ly/2FCRZPd>