

Social business Little Sun reaches a milestone by successfully delivering one million solar lamps worldwide



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Berlin, 17 December 2019 – Social business Little Sun, founded by world-renowned artist Olafur Eliasson and engineer Frederik Ottesen, just announced the delivery of its one millionth solar lamp, reaching a major milestone in their pursuit of clean energy access for all. The one million solar lamps have created a substantial social and health impact, accounting for 613,523,012 hours of light. As a result, 2,629,384 people now use clean solar energy instead of harmful fossil fuel-based lighting sources.

“We started the Little Sun project to raise awareness about the unequal distribution of energy today and to deliver a healthy, safe and affordable light to the people who needed it the most. What we have achieved today is a major milestone, not only for communities living without electricity, but for everyone fighting for the end of the fossil fuel era, global climate justice and a better future for us and our planet,” says Olafur Eliasson, founder of Little Sun and UNDP Goodwill Ambassador for Climate Action and Clean Energy Access.

Of the one million Little Sun lamps, 397,621 were sold in the Global North, while 602,379 solar lamps were delivered to families living without electricity, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa: “Part of those lamps were distributed through our social business-approach, which allows our sales agents to supply light to remote communities while making a living at the same time. In addition, we deliver lights on a donation basis to those who need them the most. This includes school children, refugees and people affected by natural disasters,” explains Felix Hallwachs, Director of Little Sun Foundation, the non-profit entity of the Little Sun project.

Looking to the future, the social business is planning a number of ways to provide energy access to off-grid communities beyond solar lamps. In Zambia, Little Sun is currently developing a pay-as-you-go initiative: “The model we are testing at the moment will make small amounts of electricity available for low income families as they use it. This way, we can reach even more people with clean energy,” explains Frederik Ottesen, founder of Little Sun.

To celebrate the distribution of Little Sun’s one millionth lamp, Little Sun is launching a community of monthly donors in early 2020, who work together on bringing the next million lamps to off-grid communities all around the globe. You can join the community here:

<http://eepurl.com/gNcEYX>

Through Little Sun’s social business model, each lamp sold in areas with access to electricity makes another one available to communities living off the electrical grid at an affordable price. This business-based approach created much needed job opportunities for over 2,600 solar sales agents in Sub-Saharan Africa. Alioune Sène was trained as a sales agent in July 2018 and has since sold close to 1,000 Little Suns in his home region of Fatick, Senegal. He reports: “I spend half of my time selling Little Suns and I never had such a lucrative job. I am first and foremost a farmer, but thanks to this new source of income, I gain more than double the average income in our region.”

Working with NGOs, corporate and private donors, Little Sun equips rural schools and refugee camps with solar energy to ensure basic human needs are being met. Having light at night is crucial, especially for school children and people living in refugee camps without access to electricity.

In South Sudan, Little Sun worked with Oxfam to deliver 3,000 solar lamps to displaced women who managed to escape from attacks in their villages in Unity State:

“The most important item I have received in this distribution is the solar light because I have a small child who needs to be taken care of in the night. . . . Previously I would light the fire then change her bedding but with this solar light I will just press the button and do it easily.”

– Nyadhial, Internally Displaced Person from Unity State, South Sudan.

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Press photos: <https://bit.ly/2PrOpMX>.

To download this press release and Little Sun info material, visit the Little Sun media page:

<https://littlesun.com/media/>

Notes to Editors

The impact of 1,000,000 Little Sun solar lamps:

2,629,384 people with improved, clean energy access

613,523,012 hours of additional light hours for off-grid households*

121,535,987 USD savings on energy expenditure for families traditionally using kerosene for lighting*

The equivalent of 584,308 kerosene lamps replaced

648,581 tons of CO2 emissions avoided**

Based on GOGLA, Standardised Impact Calculator for the Off-grid Energy Sector.

*cumulatively, over lifetime of products

**in metric tons over lifetime of products

Why solar?

Solar lamps have a remarkable impact on communities living off the electrical grid, which is why the UN made ‘clean energy access’ one of their Sustainable Development Goals (SDG7). In Sub-Saharan Africa, solar lamps replace toxic and dangerous kerosene lamps and enable communities to extend their daily routine after sunset, providing additional time for study, business and socializing. Having a clean light source doesn’t only have health benefits, but impacts school results, economic development, safety, and well-being.

On average, people spend 1 USD a week on kerosene in Sub-Saharan Africa. Spending more than 1 USD a 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 businesses will fail to serve BOP communities and be sustainable at the same time – a vicious cycle that hinders sustainable and economic development.

About Little Sun

Artist Olafur Eliasson and engineer Frederik Ottesen launched the Little Sun social business in July 2012 at London's Tate Modern to bring clean, affordable solar energy to the 1.1 billion people living 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. In 2017, Eliasson launched the Little Sun Foundation as an extension of the social business. The non-profit brings light to the most vulnerable communities worldwide who are off the grid, both in Sub-Saharan Africa and worldwide, focusing on school children, refugees and people affected by natural disaster.

Little Sun is a member of GOGLA (the Global Off-Grid Lighting Association).

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