



Solar Connect

Solar power, computers, and internet access for rural African schools

Solar Connect is an exciting new initiative from Link Community Development to install solar power into rural school communities across Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda. Solar power will be installed in selected districts in each country in order to support our aim of promoting access to quality education in sub-Saharan Africa.

Each country will have community based centres with environmentally sustainable, solar powered internet and printing facilities, which will serve as training and resource centres for local education staff. Each centre will be provided with a netbook, printer and internet connection. Teachers from local schools along with district education staff will be given training on the use and maintenance of the equipment, and the use of the internet and email.



Some of the benefits of **Solar Connect** include:

Increase the time teachers spend in class

- Access to electricity and email will make it much easier for teachers, head teachers and district education staff to communicate and conduct school monitoring and evaluating activities, resulting in less time spent travelling and out of school, and more time spent on school management, and teaching and learning. **Solar Connect** will result in improved school and local education district efficiency and performance.

Better school partnerships

- Access to the internet will enable more frequent communication between schools working in partnership. This more immediate communication makes shared learning easier and more efficient, increasing the opportunity for school partnerships and development education to be integrated into the curriculum.

Support for teacher and curriculum development

- Many teachers currently teach ICT having never used or seen a computer. **Solar Connect** will enable teachers to bring ICT studies to life and access new learning resources impacting on teacher motivation and confidence, bringing the wider world to rural schools making them more attractive places to work and learn.

Increased environmental sustainability action and awareness

- The use of alternative energy sources in rural sub-Saharan African communities, vulnerable to the effects of climate change, reduces green house gas emissions, and raises awareness of sustainable energy on a local and global scale.

Supporting:

- ✓ **Millennium Development Goals**
 - Goal 7: Ensure environmental sustainability and integrate the principles of sustainable development into country programmes
 - Goal 8: Develop Global Partnerships for Development, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications
- ✓ **Bonn Declaration**
 - Support the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development by incorporating sustainable development issues in education, in particular through the development of effective pedagogical approaches, teacher education, teaching practice, curricula, learning materials, and education leadership development

Benefits to the community

- Solar centres benefit the wider community by offering facilities to charge batteries and mobile phones, this can present small scale but meaningful fundraising opportunities for schools to make solar power a sustainable solution to support community and school development.

Rural electrification in sub-Saharan Africa has a large role to play in teacher education, school and district development. **Solar Connect** is an opportunity to significantly improve teacher and school development in the 10 districts across 5 countries in which LCD works, as well as an innovative way to maximise the potential of school partnerships.

By working in 2 districts in each country, we aim to install 10 solar centres per district, each providing support to approximately 10 schools in the surrounding area, as well as the local district education office. **Solar Connect** is targeting over 3,000 educators across sub-Saharan Africa and it has the potential to reach many more.

Partners in Learning, Partners in Development

Our **Link Schools Programme** brings schools together from Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda, and the UK, Ireland and the USA to work in partnership to learn from one another and to support quality education.

Over the next 3 years, over 1,000 schools across the EU, USA, and Africa will have the opportunity to learn together about important global issues such as climate change using partnership teaching and learning resources developed by Link Community Development.

Solar Connect offers school pupils the opportunity to take action on climate change by raising awareness in communities around the world of solar power as an alternative energy solution locally and globally.

“For the world’s poorest, access to sustainable, healthy sources of energy remains a basic critical need... Vast renewable energy resources are available but under-exploited in some of the poorest countries... they may require investment in capacity building and awareness-raising; [and] strategic capital inputs from donors.” **International Institute for Environment and Development**

ICT in Teacher Education “would enable them [teachers] to use different ICT skills and resources to improve their teaching, collaborate with colleagues and become innovative leaders in their classroom and institutions.” **Commonwealth of Learning, International Perspective: ICT in Teacher Education**

We are looking for partnerships to secure funding for **Solar Connect** and to maximise the successful delivery of the project.

Please let us know if you would like to support the installation of one or more solar centres in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, South Africa and Uganda. By doing so you will help teachers maximise their time in the classroom, improving school and local education district performance and will bring exciting teaching and learning experiences to children around the world. You will be supporting teacher and curriculum development, raise awareness of climate change and build support for sustainable energy. Your support would also enable us to offer global communication opportunities to rural sub-Saharan African communities.



Solar Connect receives funding from the European Union

If you would like to find out more or to support us please contact Natalia Battistini, Development Officer:
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