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Lighting Africa Newsletter – January 2010

The Lighting Africa newsletter is a briefing on the latest developments in the program and in the off-grid lighting market. It is provided to all member organizations and individuals in the Lighting Africa network. Help us help you tell your story by sending us your articles. However, Lighting Africa does not endorse the contents of the articles sent by its members. For comments, questions, or suggestions, please contact the Lighting Africa Project Team at support@lightingafrica.org

Top stories

Lighting Africa offers technical and purchase tips to importers of off-grid lighting goods in Kenya

Oftentimes, importers tend to focus on chasing the lowest consumer price points and higher sales volumes oblivious of the price-quality trade off and unknowingly triggering an erosion of consumer confidence in the emerging off-grid lighting products. A consistent trend of unhappy consumers through low-quality products leads to market spoilage and undermines the development of the market. This is a key concern for Lighting Africa. At a workshop held on January 13, 2010, Lighting Africa met with 41 importers and distributors from 31 companies based in Kenya to build their capacity to choose quality components that make up off-grid products. They were given technical tips on identifying quality components, LEDs, batteries and circuitry designs. Importers acknowledged that they have a vital role to play in the mitigation of market spoilage in Kenya that reaches 75% for torches in some locations. In the words of one participant: *“The market is big enough for all of us, provided that we agree on basic rules to follow in our business”*. Click for [product selection tips](#) or visit the [Lighting Africa website](#).



Marge and Econoler start Lighting Africa’s policy evaluation work in Ghana

The consulting firm Marge and Econoler has started a phase of consultations to review existing policies in Sub-Saharan Africa. The consultative process is part of a 15-month study to conduct a comprehensive overview of policy and regulatory environments impeding the development of solar-based lanterns in eight African countries: Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and Tanzania. Starting in Ghana in end-January, Marge and Econoler met with key stakeholders in the country to draw cross-country analysis of the policy frameworks and review successful approaches implemented there. The list of stakeholders consulted in Ghana included the Ghanaian Ministry of Energy, the Association of Ghana Solar Industries (AGSI), Ghana Standards Boards (GSB), KITE, Solar 4 Ghana Ltd., Malawi Engineering, Rural Energy Foundation, E+Co, Deng Ltd, ARB Apex Bank Ltd and the Toyola Group. At the end of the consultation process, a regional workshop will be organized with policy-makers, government agencies, industry and other key stakeholders to disseminate the results of the study and agree on follow up actions on its recommendations. [More details](#).



Lighting Africa supports the World Bank Group’s relief efforts in Haiti

With the entire world, Lighting Africa was shocked by the devastation suffered by Haiti and its people during the January 12, 2010 earthquake. The program supported relief efforts by the World Bank emergency relief program, Good Energies and Earthspark International etc. by providing technical advice and support to project design, and by offering guidance on quality for eventual off-grid



lighting product procurements for the Haiti earthquake victims.

Off-grid lighting news from around the world

D.light launches a campaign on safe lighting in Tanzania

In January 2010, D.light launched the “Right to Safe Light” Campaign in Tanzania, in partnership with social media platform Femina HIP. The campaign aims at creating awareness among schools, parents and students about consumer solar products as an alternative to kerosene lamps and candles for night-time studying.



Resources & useful links

Lessons from an LED lighting experiment in Malawi

Lessons learned from the introduction of solar LED lanterns in rural Malawi through a market-based program selling lanterns to village households without subsidy. Households that purchased a lantern reported high levels of satisfaction with the LED lanterns as well as savings in annual kerosene expenditure comparable to the price of the lantern. These lessons suggest that similar market based models of LED lighting technology dissemination have the potential to be replicated and scaled up in other off-grid regions in developing countries. [Read more.](#)

Impact assessment of the OSRAM off-grid project in Kenya

Through a redesigned and locally adapted use of photovoltaic technology, the costs and amounts of energy services used in households, business and the fishing sector can be reduced with a positive impact on development, economy, health and environment of the user and the region. The study evaluates the alternative to fuel-based energy use for lighting considered inefficient, health endangering, environment-damaging and cost-intensive. [For more details.](#)

Excerpts from the Lighting Africa Briefing Notes, January 2010 edition

“To ensure adequate lifetimes, LED temperatures should be measured under real world operating conditions and the measurement results compared to lumen depreciation data from the LED manufacturer. In addition, multiple test products should be run continuously early in the design phase. Lighting Africa recommends at least 2000 hours of test operation to rule out the possibility of early failure”. [Read more](#) in the January 2010 edition of the [Lighting Africa Briefing Notes](#).

The Road to Lighting Africa's 2nd International Business Conference & Trade Fair

Promoting affordable and high-quality off-grid lighting products and services for low income populations

The Lighting Africa International Business Conference & Trade Fair is Sub-Saharan Africa's most important conference and trade fair of its kind. Held every two years, the conference aims at promoting the use of affordable and high quality off-grid lighting products and services targeting low-income populations in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through several plenary sessions, break-out meetings and side events, the conference will address some of the key developments and challenges in the off-grid lighting and offer insights on industry trends and developments to date. The event is a milestone in the promotion of affordable and high-quality off-grid lighting products for low-income populations. [Read more.](#)



CONFERENCE TIDBITS

- **Worldwide community event:** Organized by Lighting Africa, the international conference and Trade Fair is a global event meant for the entire off-grid lighting community worldwide.
- **Significant participation:** Over 400 participants attended the first Lighting Africa's International Business Conference and Trade Fair held May 2008 in Accra, Ghana. For the upcoming conference & trade fair in Nairobi, Kenya, over 500 participants are expected to attend.
- **Global representation:** In Ghana 2008, participants came from 52 countries and territories representing five continents: Africa, Americas, Asia, Europe and Oceania.
 - Africa – 30 countries and territories:** Algeria, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, The Gambia, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
 - Americas – 4 countries and territories:** Bolivia, Canada, USA and the US Virgin Islands.
 - Asia – 8 countries and territories:** India, China, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Taiwan.
 - Europe – 10 countries and territories:** Belgium, Britain, Italy, France, Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Sweden and the Netherlands.
 - Oceania – One country:** Australia
- **Successful exhibition in 2008:** Close to 40% of the participants took part in the Trade Fair section of the first event. For the 2nd Trade Fair in Nairobi, Kenya, **50 booths** have been prepared to accommodate exhibition requests by industry players.
- **Keen media interest:** More than 40 media registered to attend the first conference, most of them coming from Ghana, the host country to the conference. Media interest is expected to be even higher for the second conference scheduled May 2010 in Nairobi, Kenya.

SELECTED QUOTES FROM 2008

Shanghai Roy, Solar - *“Best conference on the topic in Africa I've been to – felt welcomed; would appreciate being included in quality discussions” –*

Chibundu J. Mmuozoba - *“We especially appreciate the practical models that attempt to address the affordability which is a most critical challenge providing solar options to the developing world. We have decided to take the concept we learn here to Nigeria. We plan to replicate the Lighting Africa model in Nigeria as well as apply some innovative best practice models to facilitate affordability”.*

Gissima Nyamo Hanga - *“How do we address the environment challenge resulting from used CFL and LED lights and batteries? Do we have a plan at hand to collect and recycle used CFL, LED or batteries?”*

Anonymous participant - *“I suggest that you start manufacturing here in Africa and try and make it affordable to the common man if really you want to achieve something from this program, the products are costly, the rechargeable lanterns are costly for the end users, so do something about it, we will appreciate”.*

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