

Summary report of the SolarAid project

SolarAid is an international charity, based in the UK, and operating in Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia. The charity aims to promote a market for solar lighting equipment, to bring safe light to people without access to electricity in Africa. These safe, clean and affordable solar lights reduce reliance on kerosene lamps, which are dangerous and damaging to health, and are also expensive.

SolarAid approached PBE for advice on calculating the macroeconomic impact of solar lighting in the countries in which they are active. We matched the charity with development economist Paul Ackroyd, who helped clarify the methodical issues involved in estimating the macroeconomic effects of solar lighting and advised on secondary sources of data which might be available. Paul produced Terms of Reference so that a local economist could be engaged to quantify the economic impact from replacing kerosene lamps with solar lighting.

Kat Harrison, Director of Research and Impact at SolarAid said “Having Paul and PBE support our discussions around the macroeconomic impact of our work was insightful and very valuable. Paul helped us to identify what areas we needed to explore in more depth to help answer some of our answers. While we recognise that a lot of this information is not available, it has helped us shape how we can make a start and build on the research work we’re already doing.”

“The technology involved in solar lighting has so improved and the costs have come down so significantly that the programmes of Solar Aid are making a major impact on the lives of poor people in Africa. I was very pleased to have the opportunity to make a small contribution to their work”.

Paul Ackroyd