



STRATEGY AT A GLANCE

2025-2030



Our vision and mission



SOLAR AID'S VISION IS A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE HAS SUSTAINED ACCESS TO CLEAN, RENEWABLE ENERGY.

Today, hundreds of millions of people across sub-Saharan Africa still live without electricity. Those most affected are often the poorest and most remote rural communities, the very communities that markets and traditional development approaches struggle to reach.

SolarAid exists to help change this.

Our mission is to achieve 100% sustained energy access that meets the priorities of underserved communities across sub-Saharan Africa.

Our ambition for the next five years

OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS, SOLARAID AIMS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT ACHIEVING 100% SUSTAINED ENERGY ACCESS IS POSSIBLE AT SCALE.



This means working with rural communities, governments, and partners to design and prove practical solutions that ensure people not only gain access to energy, but can retain and benefit from it over the long term.



Our work focuses on communities that are currently being left behind: places where poverty is high, infrastructure is limited, and vulnerability to the climate crisis is acute.



By demonstrating effective models and sharing what we learn, we aim to accelerate progress toward universal energy access across the continent.

What do we mean by "100% Sustained Energy Access"?

For SolarAid, energy access is not just about providing a product or connecting a household.

**100%
SUSTAINED
ACCESS
MEANS...**

Everyone in a community can access clean, renewable energy

The solutions meet real household and community needs

Access continues over the **long term**, not just the lifespan of an individual product

Energy access leads to **meaningful improvements** in livelihoods, education, health, and climate resilience

Communities can access **affordable** maintenance and repair to systems once they have access

Achieving this requires listening closely to communities and designing solutions together with them.

How SolarAid works

**SOLARAIID FOCUSES
ON DEPTH, EXPANSION
OF IMPACT AND
STRATEGIC
PARTNERSHIPS,
RATHER THAN
EXPANSION OF ITS
OWN ORGANISATION
FOOTPRINT.**

Rather than spreading our efforts across many countries, we concentrate on testing, learning, and demonstrating models that can be scaled.

Our work happens through four complementary approaches...

1

Demonstrating solutions directly

We implement innovative programmes in selected locations to test what works.

For example, our work in Malawi and Zambia explores new ways of delivering energy access, such as Energy-as-a-Service models (In partnership with REAL Programme Catalysts) and repair ecosystems, that can sustain access over time.

These demonstration projects allow us to learn quickly, refine models, and show what is possible.

2

Partnering to deliver and scale solutions

SolarAid collaborates with NGOs, social enterprises, solar companies, researchers, and governments to deliver energy access solutions.

Through partnerships, we support organisations to adapt and implement effective models in different contexts.

This approach allows impact to spread beyond SolarAid's own programmes.

3

Incubating new initiatives to solve sector challenges

Barriers to universal energy access cannot be solved by one organisation alone.

SolarAid helps incubate collaborative initiatives that address systemic challenges, for example:

Financing models for underserved communities

Energy-as-a-service delivery models

Improving product repair and maintenance systems

Initiatives like REAL Programme Catalysts and the Off-Grid Solar Repair Lab are designed to bring together partners and scale solutions across multiple countries.

4

Using evidence and storytelling to influence change

SolarAid seeks to generate research and community insights to help the wider sector understand what it takes to achieve universal energy access. We share evidence with:

Governments

Funders

Development organisations

Private sector actors

Our goal is to influence policy, funding, and industry practices so that solutions prioritise the communities currently being left behind.

1.

To achieve our ambition, SolarAid's work focuses on four strategic priorities.

DEMONSTRATING AND SCALING SOLUTIONS FOR 100% ENERGY ACCESS

SolarAid develops and tests practical models that show how 100% sustained energy access can be achieved in hard-to-reach communities.

These models seek to address both household energy needs and wider community energy systems.

Key areas of work include:

Demonstrating district-level energy access solutions

Scaling Energy-as-a-Service models

Developing repair ecosystems that keep systems working long-term

Supporting collaborative initiatives like REAL Programme Catalysts and Solar United Madagascar

By proving these models in communities, we aim to enable others: governments, companies, and NGOs, to adopt and scale them.

2.

To achieve our ambition, SolarAid's work focuses on four strategic priorities.

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY ENERGY NEEDS

Achieving universal access requires understanding what communities actually need from energy.

SolarAid will strengthen research and learning systems to ensure community priorities guide programme design.

This includes:

developing a Community Research & Learning framework

mapping energy needs at community level

evaluating the impact of energy access on poverty and climate resilience

100% sustained energy access metrics that can be used across the sector

These insights will help ensure energy solutions are relevant, equitable, and effective.

3.

To achieve our ambition, SolarAid's work focuses on four strategic priorities.

AMPLIFYING COMMUNITY VOICES AND INFLUENCING CHANGE

SolarAid will continue to be a leading voice advocating for energy access for underserved populations.

Using evidence from communities and programmes, we will engage governments, funders, and sector leaders to push for policies and investments that prioritise universal access.

Our advocacy will focus on:

Promoting the adoption of 100% sustained access principles

Encouraging investment in solutions for the hardest-to-reach communities

Influencing policy environments that support repair, affordability, and long-term energy access

4.

To achieve our ambition, SolarAid's work focuses on four strategic priorities.

STRENGTHENING LOCALLY LED SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

The SolarAid operations in Malawi and Zambia will evolve into strong, locally relevant social enterprises.

These organisations will:

Operate sustainably (this includes localised fundraising capacity)

Be led by local leadership

Remain focused on achieving 100% sustained energy access

This transition will ensure long-term impact that does not depend on ongoing unrestricted funding from SolarAid (although this does not necessarily preclude this type of funding being made available).



Strengthen partnerships
across the sector

Enabling our strategy



Grow evidence-based
advocacy

TO DELIVER THIS STRATEGY SOLARAID WILL...



Improve research,
impact measurement,
and learning systems



Invest in systems,
tools, and programme
management capacity




Build storytelling and
communications

We are committed
to operating as a
lean, high-impact
organisation that
delivers strong value
for money.



Secure sustainable
funding aligned with
our mission

Our values



Our work continues to be guided by three core values set by our founding board and Senior Management Team.

COURAGE

We tackle difficult problems and challenge conventional approaches.

POSITIVITY

We believe change is possible and focus on solutions.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

We test ideas, share learning openly, and encourage others to build on what works.

Looking ahead

The challenge of universal energy access remains immense, but significant and rapid progress is possible.

SolarAid's role is to demonstrate what works, ensure communities are at the centre of solutions, and help drive the systemic changes needed to achieve energy access for everyone.

By working with partners and communities across Africa, we aim to show that 100% sustained energy access is not only necessary, but achievable and should be prioritised.





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