



Annual report 2023

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# Sharing the power of light

Daylight, a fundamental part of human life, can vary in duration depending on the geographical location of humans on this planet. After sundown, we may choose to embrace darkness in order to rest, recharge and prepare for a new day, find solace, and spend time with our loved ones. However, darkness is not always a choice. Around the globe, 745 million people still live without access to energy, which often means living without access to light<sup>1</sup>. When darkness is not a choice, it can create barriers to accessing fundamental services, to security, and to livelihood opportunities.

The Signify Foundation's mission is to enable access to light for these underserved communities. Since our formation in 2017, we have been working toward our initial target of serving 10 million lives with lighting by 2025. Our progress toward this target is on track, with our projects reaching a total of 9.4 million lives by the end of 2023. Over the years, we have gathered experience and learnings that help us finetune our focus and operations to effectively serve communities in need.

This 2023 annual report will bring you along in the trials and triumphs we face as we work towards our vision, giving you insight into where we are and where we plan to go. Thank you for taking the time to read our report and joining us in reflecting and learning more about the projects and partners we have the pleasure to work with daily.

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1 International Energy Agency, 2023



Street lighting in communities on the perimeter of Garamba National Park, Democratic Republic of the Congo.



Sabera studying with her solar lightbulb, Pemba district, Mozambique.

## About the Signify Foundation

The Signify Foundation is an independent, non-profit organization primarily funded by Signify NV. The Signify Foundation's mission is to enable access to the benefits of sustainable lighting solutions for underserved communities.

With a vision of a world where everyone benefits from the power of light, the Foundation's core activities support the supply of energy-efficient lighting in places where access to the grid is either limited or non-existent. This is achieved through our Brighter communities program, which focuses on enabling access to light within three pillars of focus: Brighter learning, Brighter health, and Brighter living. Within these pillars, we provide lighting solutions while actively participating in the support of capacity building and education around energy efficiency, system installation, and maintenance. These projects aim to directly contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, with a focus on goals 3 (Good health & Well-Being), 4 (Quality Education), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) and 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). To learn more about the projects falling into these pillars, see the chapter "Brighter communities".

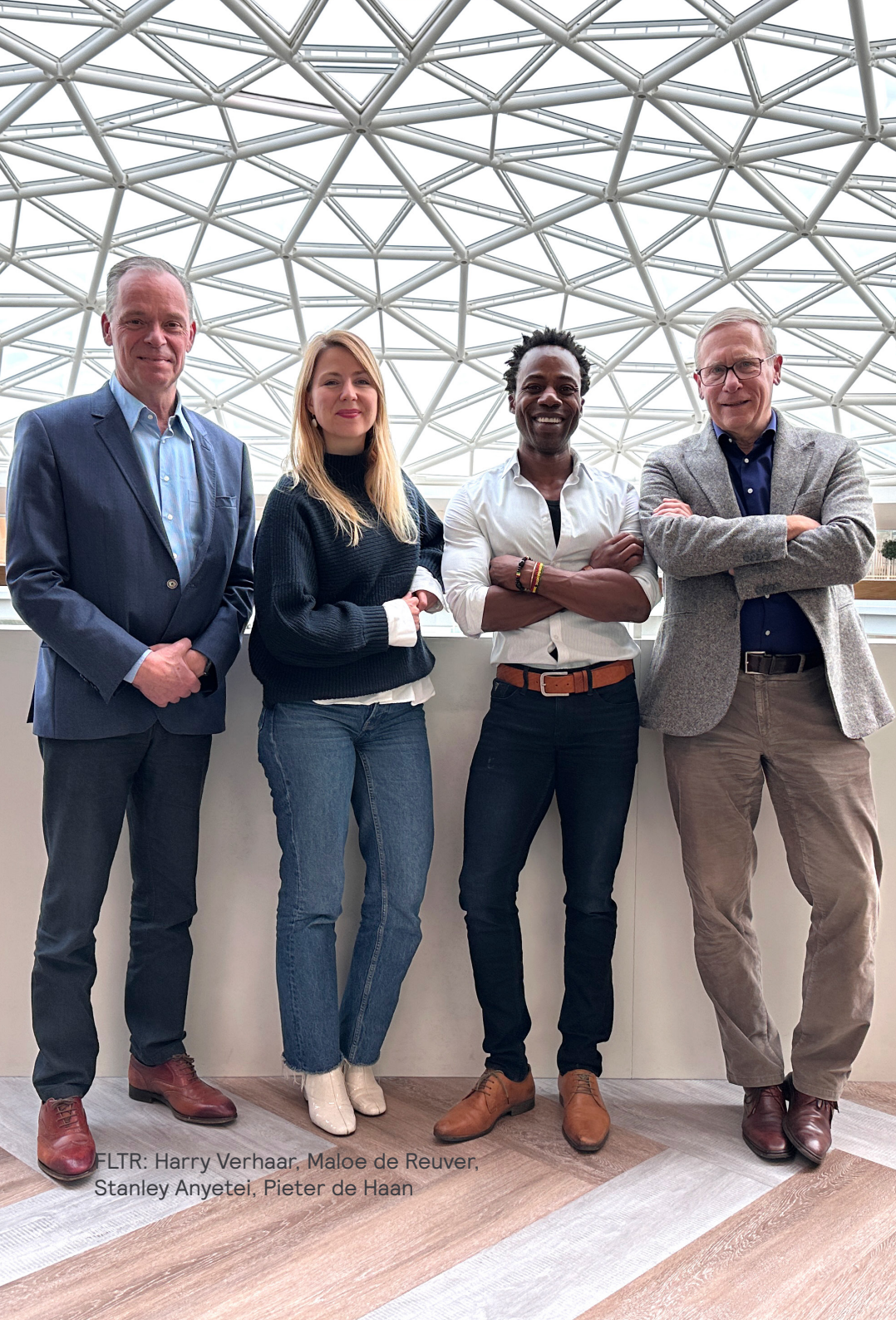
The Signify Foundation employs Signify's expertise to help develop and provide accessible sustainable lighting systems that have a meaningful impact on people's lives. Signify employees around the world support the Foundation in project scouting, design, and execution, as well as in core functions such as finance, accounting, legal, audit, and communications.

The Signify Foundation collaborates with implementation and advocacy partners globally, harnessing shared expertise and dedication to advance our mission and amplify our reach. We actively seek out and welcome new effort-sharing partnerships, recognizing that collective action yields greater impact. Together, we can strive to create meaningful change and improve lives worldwide.

Registered charity in the Netherlands (ANBI), RSIN number 857684553.

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FLTR: Harry Verhaar, Maloe de Reuver,  
Stanley Anyetei, Pieter de Haan

## Message from the board

As the Signify Foundation strives to fulfill its mission, we are continuously made aware of the urgent need to address the interconnected challenges of climate change, humanitarian conflicts, energy poverty, and socio-economic development. The Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2023 highlights the gravity of the current global situation, revealing that the scale of climate disasters and humanitarian crises has worsened significantly since 2022. With complex and protracted crises becoming the norm, four out of five people in need are facing at least two risk dimensions of conflict, climate, and socioeconomic vulnerability. Regions such as sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and Latin America are disproportionately affected by these disasters. In light of this challenge, our focus has evolved to providing longer term lighting interventions for communities in these geographies. This way, we hope to contribute to building resilience and create livelihood development opportunities for affected communities and regions facing long lasting disasters.

In our seven years of operations, we have also reflected on the total lifecycle of our projects, realizing that our efforts must go beyond providing access to lighting and energy solution delivery. We must also ensure that the lighting solutions we offer are sustainable and can be maintained over time, taking into account community needs and ground realities. We believe that enduring effort-sharing partnerships are the cornerstone of lasting change. As we move forward, we eagerly seek new collaborations and partnerships, knowing that together, we can achieve impactful interventions for a brighter future. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our partners, stakeholders, and the Signify Foundation team for their unwavering support, open minds, and dialogue. Together, we are steadfast in our commitment to create a positive impact on the lives of people around the world.

Yours faithfully,  
The Signify Foundation board

# Looking back

A message from Yue Cui, Director.

How many of us working in the developmental sector feel disconnected from the people we are trying to serve or the projects we support that are on the other side of the world? I certainly did, and I'm likely not the only one.

Two years of mostly virtual work during COVID times made me increasingly anxious in strategy or project discussions – what is the reality behind the data we use to drive decision making? Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication, yet what is missing?

There is only one way to feel reconnected, and that's what we did this year. In 2023, the Signify Foundation team traveled to East Africa to be on the ground again, with our own eyes and ears. On our site visits, we witnessed scenes and heard stories that triggered the reflections you will read throughout the rest of this report. Here are three key examples:

## 1. “No one asked us.”

In the heart of Palabek Refugee Settlement, Uganda, we embarked on a new project to install solar street lights throughout the community. We had made a plan based on reports and data gathered by our partners, but we quickly realized that a crucial piece of the puzzle was missing – the voices of the people themselves. We learned

that vandalism of the existing lights was rampant in the area, but we had no idea how or where it was happening most frequently. When we spoke to community members, they repeatedly told us: “No one asked us earlier where the street lights should be installed”.

Because of this knowledge gap, lights that had previously been donated to the camp were mostly located far from residential areas, leaving people vulnerable to safety risks after dark. In these locations, community members are unable to safeguard or exert any social control over the lights.

Lesson learned: involve, listen to, and work alongside the people. We cannot assume from afar.

## 2. “Electricians are too far away.”

In Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, Uganda, we witnessed the transformative power of solar energy enabled by our peers. Students graduating from solar electrician training confirmed that solar has reached their community and is growing fast. However, in some health facilities, the solar rooftop systems were no longer working. The doctors explained that these were donated to them six months ago, and they believed it was just a simple technical glitch that could be fixed by a

regular electrician. We were puzzled. “Did you ask the trainees next door to check it?” we inquired. “No, because the donor only allows us to hire certified electricians, who are all too far away in Kampala” – over four hours driving one way.

**Lesson learned:** if we want to ensure that solar energy reaches those who need it most, we must take the risk and prioritize the creation of job opportunities for local community members in installation and maintenance. By doing so, we can ensure that these systems are properly maintained and that people can fully benefit from them.

## 3. “Can you bring others to help too?”

In Kisumu, Kenya, we visited four health facilities where we had provided lighting in 2022. As we spoke to staff and patients, we were moved by the heartwarming feedback that the lights had significantly improved operations and security. But we soon realized that the needs of these health centers went far beyond lighting.

Reliable electricity that is not grid-dependent, basic life-saving medical equipment, and in many cases, access to clean drinking water, were all missing.

The gravity of the situation hit us hard when Nurse Grace burst into tears and left the room when she spoke about the challenges- “Last night, four premature babies didn’t make it to the second day. We need incubators and heaters. Can you bring others to help too?”

**Lesson learned:** We cannot do this alone. We need to work in partnerships and work together towards a common goal of improving the lives of those in need.

Thanks to the conversations during these visits, we are able to design future projects in a more sustainable way. Our future interventions aim to connect more with communities in decision-making, and to work alongside them to ensure that our work is grounded, and has a long-lasting impact on people’s lives. By prioritizing job opportunities for community members, we can not only provide much-needed employment, but also ensure that there are recognized skilled workers available for installation and maintenance in the long term. Furthermore, by working collaboratively in multifaceted partnerships, we can be more effective in community development.



Community members in Colombia creating handicrafts under an outdoor solar light.

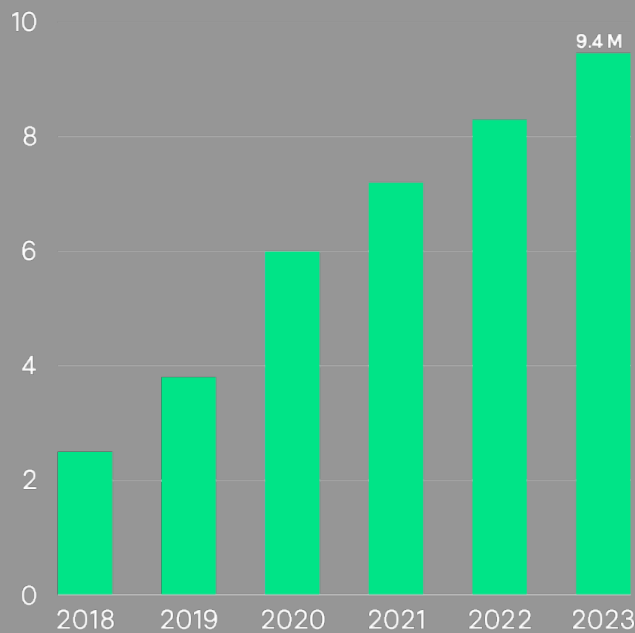
# Key highlights 2023

9.4 million lives lit

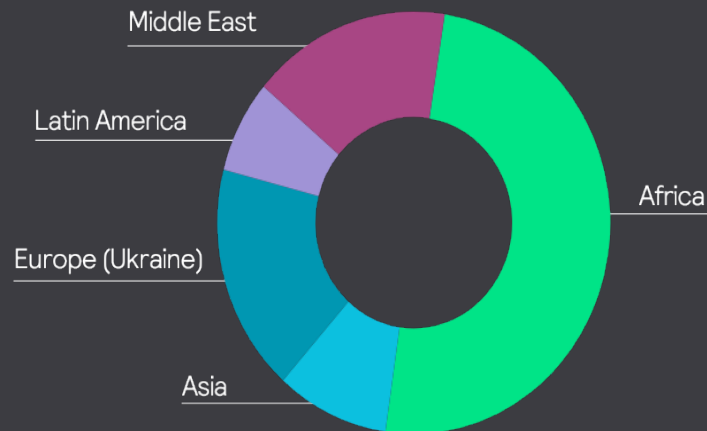
40 projects executed

in 19 countries

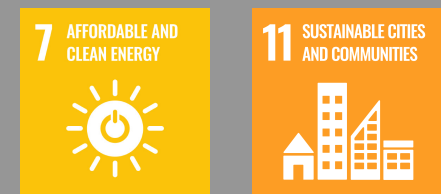
(Cumulative) Lives lit in millions



% of Annual Budget per Region



## Our contribution to the SDGs







## Brighter communities

Our flagship program 2024-2030.

In recent years, we have observed that the consumer solar sector in emerging economies is maturing rapidly, with well-established commercial players offering solar energy systems and innovative micro financial models to households in the 'last mile'. Solar Sister, for example, successfully distributes clean energy solutions in rural Tanzania, Nigeria and Kenya, with more than 10,000 trained entrepreneurs.

We have also noted that there has been increasing focus in the sector on reaching people within the bottom of the pyramid communities who have not been served by the market. This is driven by larger programs such as Acumen's 'Hardest-to-Reach' initiative and Renewable Energy Access Challenge (REACH) partnership.

This led us to question the ongoing effectiveness of our Empowering entrepreneurs program, which focuses on capacity building for the consumer solar sector, given our size and strengths. Market visits and project reflections, together with lessons learned from open conversations with communities and our partners, have helped us create a clear vision for the future program of the foundation.

While continuing to focus on the 'Lighting lives' and 'Empowering entrepreneurs' themes, we have now evolved and strengthened these themes by using a community perspective for our program under the name 'Brighter

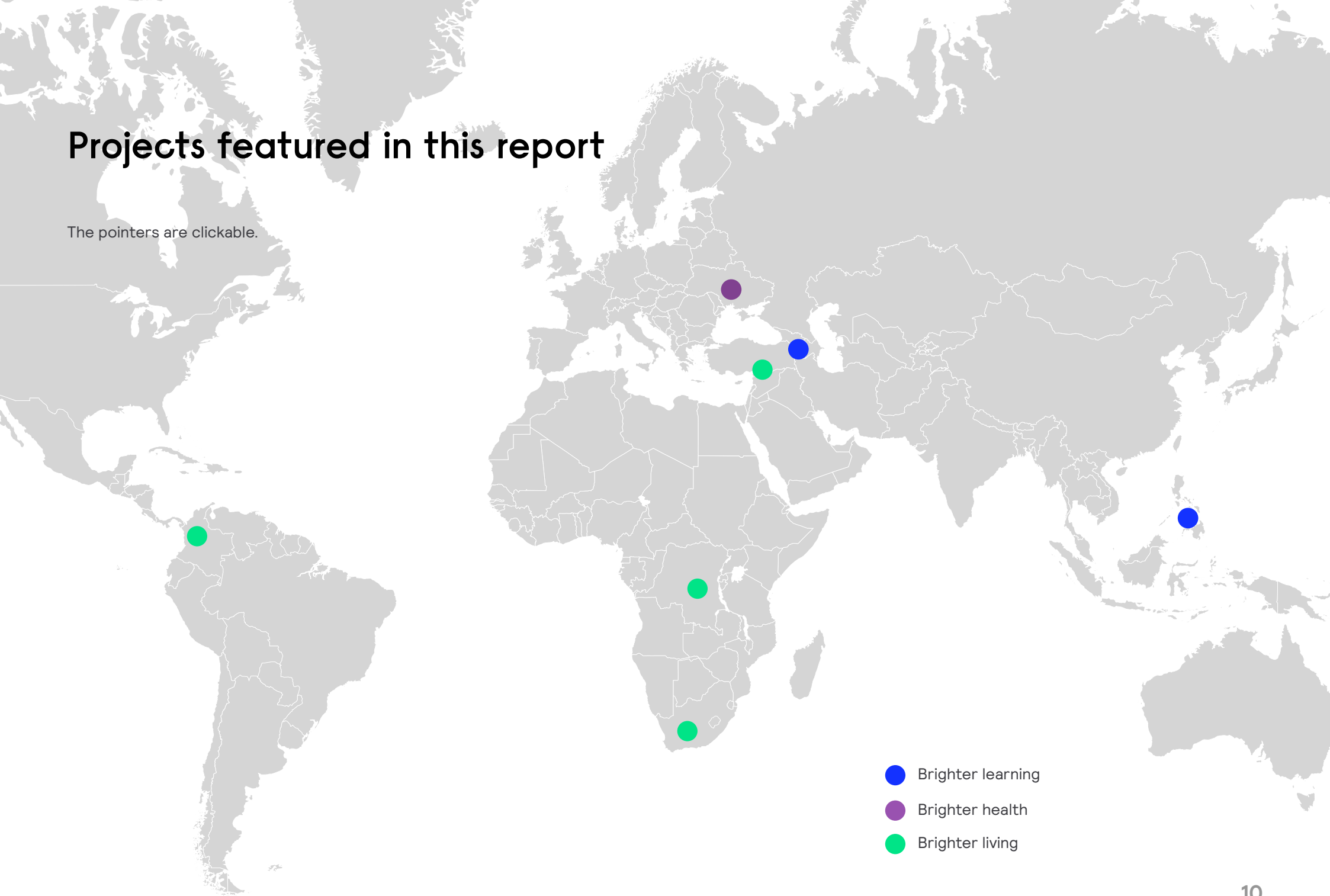
communities'. The focus on communities is informed by the lighting gap we have identified in remote (semi-)public spaces such as schools, health centers, villages and (informal) settlements, as well as the areas we can be most impactful given our capacity and strengths.

Our strength, beyond partnerships and funding resources, lies in providing quality and energy-efficient lighting solutions. We leverage Signify's product portfolio, geographical reach, and technical know-how. These solutions, ranging from solar to LED lighting for indoor and outdoor use, match the needs of remote communities to enhance energy efficiency, security, safety, and livelihood opportunities at night.

With this focus, we believe we can provide the most value and expertise for our partners, projects, stakeholders, and of course, community members. We invite you to learn about the pillars of the Brighter communities program: Brighter learning, Brighter health, and Brighter living, and how they tie in with our 2023 projects.

# Projects featured in this report

The pointers are clickable.



# Brighter learning

Schools, playgrounds and children's homes.

While electricity is a basic need in schools, a quarter of schools worldwide still lack access. This means that more than 230 million children attend schools without electricity. Unfortunately, this number has increased by 2% in the last five years<sup>1</sup>. Research shows that with energy and lighting access, student school attendance increases, educational outcomes are improved, and quality of learning rises. In addition, higher teacher retention and increased hours for operating and remote learning outside of daylight hours have been proven to increase quality of learning<sup>2</sup>.

Solar energy and solar lighting can help accelerate school electrification, which is crucial for safety, education, and development outcomes. The majority of the Foundation's 2023 projects have been linked to the Brighter Learning pillar, and we are proud to showcase a few of them in this report. These projects vary in size and input, with some already implemented and others ongoing as part of larger programs. They range from children's homes to vocational schools as well as remote traditional schooling.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Education Report 2023, UNICEF

<sup>2</sup> A brighter life for every child with sustainable energy report 2022, UNICEF



Tawalinha doing her homework under a solar lightbulb, Pemba district, Mozambique.

# Shining a light to empower girls through education - Northern Mozambique

Three schools in Ancuabe, Palma, and Pemba, Cabo Delgado region in Mozambique.

**Partner:** Pathfinder International: a non-profit organization focusing on improving access to sexual and reproductive health services, empowering women and girls, and promoting gender equality.

**What:** 3000 solar portable lights donated to female students.

**Objective:** The solar lamps aim to increase study times for girls, enhance their sense of security at night, and provide families with access to lighting.

## Outcomes

This donation was made possible through the USAID-funded project 'Preventing Child Marriage in Cabo Delgado', implemented by Pathfinder International and Ophavela. Collaborating with the Chuiba school and its community, this project has illuminated pathways to empowerment for adolescent girls. The solar lamps enhance educational opportunities and security after dark and also light a path of hope and progress by safeguarding the girls' rights. This

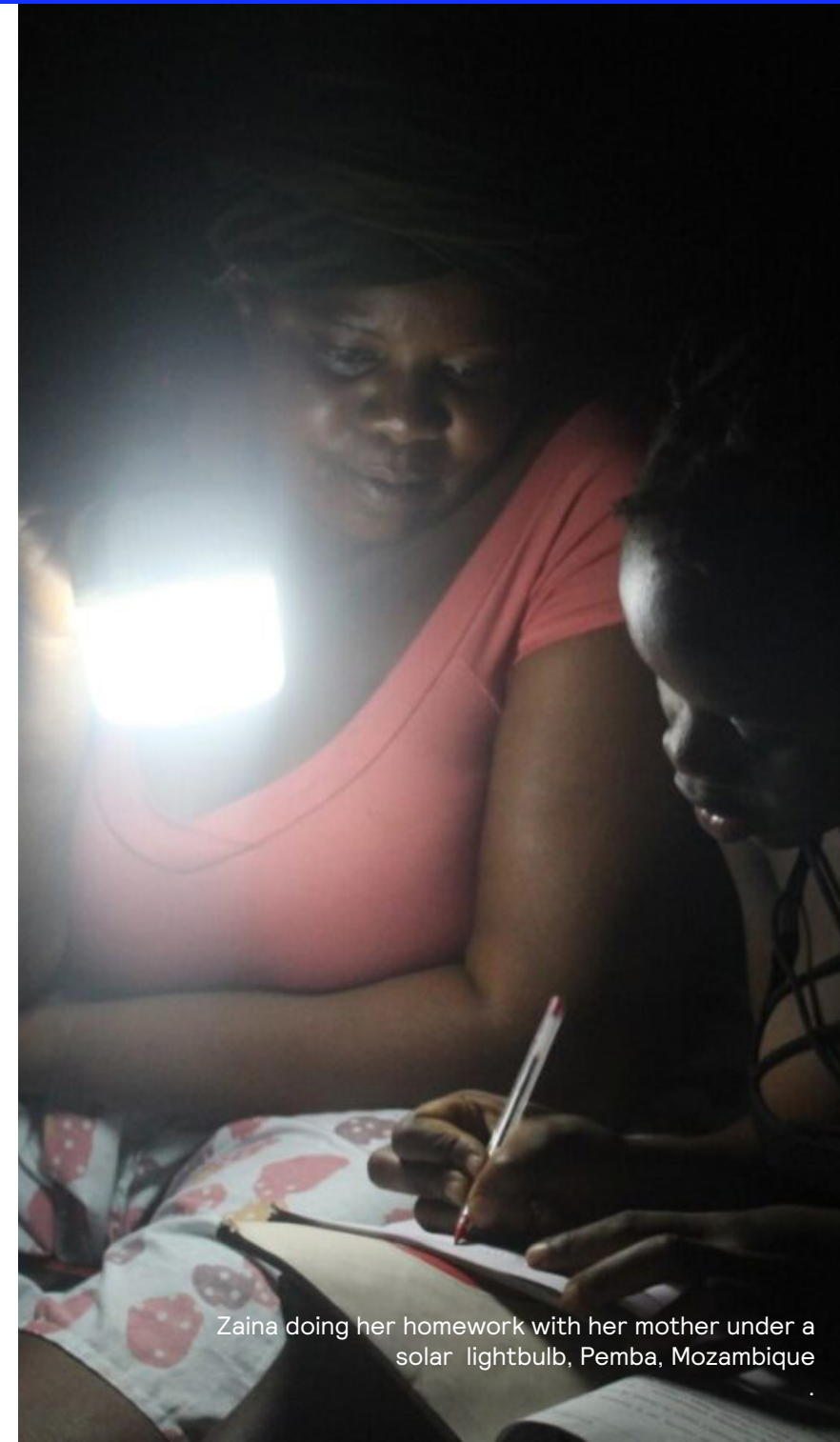
includes the right to education, sexual and reproductive health services, and protection from violence, including early unions. While the lamps aim to directly contribute to increased educational opportunities and security, the girls' families will also benefit from increased access to light.

## Challenges

The distribution of lamps was heavily delayed due to conflict in the Ancuabe district, which occurred in mid 2022 when the project had just started. Pathfinder worked on a contingency plan to support internally displaced people and host communities in Pemba City. It resumed distribution when it was safe to return to Ancuabe.

## Lessons learned

- Projects in conflict areas may face risks of delays. We need to keep monitoring and not give up on the people who can really benefit from the power of light.



Zaina doing her homework with her mother under a solar lightbulb, Pemba, Mozambique



Training course on solar lighting installation equipment.

## Supporting the next generation of female lighting entrepreneurs - the Philippines

BagSAMORO Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) in the Southern Philippines. The BARMM region has suffered from five decades of conflict and has the highest incidence of poverty in the country.

**Partner:** BRAC: an international non-governmental organization (NGO) that focuses on alleviating poverty and promoting social development. It operates in more than 10 countries and provides a range of services including education, healthcare, microfinance, and disaster relief.

**What:** Technical training and business skills development in solar installation services for adolescent girls and young women.

**Objective:** This project set out with a dual purpose: to increase solar installation services provided in the region and empower adolescent girls and young women through skills development. The goal was to provide and maintain solar energy for a minimum of 2,400 households.

### Outcomes

50 women have proudly graduated after undertaking the training on business skills, social empowerment, and solar technical skills. Despite climate challenges, the participants proved dedicated to the training and expressed their pride in earning their certification. Some have already begun to earn income, exemplifying that while electrical work is stereotypically seen as male-dominated field, with a supportive community and appropriate training, nothing can stand in women's way.

Moving forward, the project's impact will be sustained by building a robust community

network, providing support by BRAC beyond the project's duration. Links with local stakeholders, communities, and authorities are vital for employment opportunities and continued backing. Future plans also include expanding solar power support beyond households to include institutions like schools and hospitals.

### Challenges

Despite an initial market assessment indicating otherwise, there were limited potential employers and companies for the trained girls within the municipality. Other nearby municipalities had to be explored for potential employers.

### Lessons learned

- Even with a thorough market assessment integrated into a project, we can be faced with different ground realities after implementation has started. The market assessment was conducted a year prior to project implementation, therefore, intermediate checks and having people on the ground to verify information given in reports could help prevent this in the future.

# Increasing comfort and security for a disabled children's home - Armenia

Kharpert, Armenia.

**Partner:** The Specialized Children's Home of Kharpert and Fond Armenien de France, who provided solar energy. This project was nominated by a colleague from Signify France.

**What:** The replacement of over 1000 conventional luminaires with LED lighting.

**Objective:** To improve quality of life for disabled children living in an orphanage home by enhancing security and comfort, while reducing electricity costs.

The Specialized Children's Home of Kharpert was established in 1950 and has been the only institution for children aged 6 to 18 years old with physical or intellectual disability in Armenia. Currently, 285 children are living there.

## Outcomes

The new lights have created better learning and living conditions for the children and staff. The school director expects to witness better performance from the children and a significant reduction in their energy bill, which we will follow up on in one year. The lights were installed by older students with guidance from local installers.

## Challenges

The biggest challenge was transporting the materials into Armenia during a time of conflict with neighboring countries. Despite the difficulties, the luminaires were successfully delivered by container ship and trucks through the Caucasus, a journey that took three months to complete.

## Lessons learned

- Unexpected situations can arise during the project execution. It is essential to remain resilient and patient while looking for the best and safest options to execute the project.



Older students learning to install donated lighting with guidance from local installers.

# A bright space to learn and grow - Honduras and the Dominican Republic

Honduras and the Dominican Republic.

Partners: Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos (NPH). NPH provides homes, healthcare services, and education to disadvantaged and vulnerable children in Latin America and the Caribbean.

What: Providing indoor LED lights in NPH homes. 2432 light bulbs were installed in Honduras, and 1450 light bulbs were installed in the Dominican Republic.

Objective: The project aims to reduce energy costs and improve the spaces for children and youth benefitting from NPH's social programs. These spaces include children's homes, schools, clinics, kitchens, and special needs homes.

## Outcomes

National director of NPH Honduras expressed that "the donation of lightbulbs goes beyond mere illumination; it symbolizes hope, growth, and a brighter future for those in need". NPH homes in both countries aim to provide an environment for the children to overcome their challenges and pursue their dreams. In this context, the donated lights enhance the living conditions of children and communities under the care of NPH through increased feelings of safety and comfort. They have also fostered a conducive learning environment for the children, allowing them to be more engaged in educational activities. Furthermore, the provision of energy-efficient LED lights has considerably decreased operating costs for the homes, allowing resources to be allocated more efficiently and for a larger portion of the funds to directly benefit the children that

NPH serves.

"With true light, our 550 children can see more clearly creating the conditions necessary for them to study and socialize so they can work on securing their future". - National Director NPH Dominican Republic

## Challenges

In the coordination phase of shipping the lights to Honduras and the Dominican Republic, the logistics involved shipping lights from Panama. Strikes in Panama delayed the shipment due to several roadblocks in the country.

## Lessons learned

- As an ongoing project, monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken in the future to gather data that will help us understand the lighting performance and impact.



Children from Nuestros Pequeños Hermanos playing basketball in a nocturnal friendly.

# Brighter health

Health clinics and centers.

According to the World Bank (2023), nearly one billion people globally are served by healthcare facilities with absent or unreliable electricity access. Proper lighting can mean the difference between life and death when it comes to complex procedures that need to be performed by day or night. Without reliable grid connection, health providers are never assured of lighting in emergency wards, in-patient rooms, outside on the clinic premises, or for safe and secure access to outside latrines.

This year, we collected impact studies from previous projects to better understand lighting needs in the healthcare context and to scale up some of our successful initiatives into larger programs in the future.



Solar floodlight outside of a laboratory, Kenya.





Installation of LED bulkheads at one of the community health centers.

## Lighting up remote health facilities - Kenya, Phase 2

Busia and Siaya County, Northwest Kenya.

**Partner:** Community Based Organisation (CBO) Bright Dada, which focuses on capacity building and training of young women to become lighting sales agents and installers.

**What:** Providing indoor and outdoor lighting to 21 more primary health centers.

**Objective:** The aim is to provide quality and energy-efficient lighting to improve evening operation capacity, safety, and security at the primary health centers.

After the successful installation of lighting in seven remote health centers in Homabay County, West Kenya in 2022, the foundation decided to scale up the project in the region by adding another 21 health centers in 2023. The program was again supervised by Signify East Africa and our local partner CBO Bright Dada, which helped install the lighting in the first phase.

The Signify Foundation operations team visited the health centers in the beginning of 2023 to get a better understanding of their needs, keeping the lessons learned in mind from the start of the project. Bright Dada will be closely involved in the maintenance of the lighting in case of defects in the long term. The floodlights installed on the compounds are a great source of lighting and safety at night. The ambition is to further scale the program to 100 health centers in 2024 and 2025.

### Challenges

From the first phase of this project, we learned that vandalism was a problem in some of the facilities, impacting the sustainability of the project's impact.

### Lessons learned

We learned that LED tubes work better than bulbs to prevent vandalism and theft. A backup system for energy provision is needed for the indoor lighting solutions if the power goes off. A responsibility plan is vital for maintenance of the lighting in case of default when the warranty runs out. These lessons have been discussed with the Bright Dada team to come up with a program plan to ensure the sustainability of the lighting installed.

# A recoverable grant enabling access to solar energy for 92 primary health facilities - Mozambique

Solafa province, Mozambique.

**Partner:** SolarWorks! is a social enterprise that provides affordable and reliable solar-powered products and services to off-grid communities in Southern Africa. Its mission is to improve access to clean energy and reduce poverty by providing sustainable energy solutions that meet the needs of rural and remote communities.

**What:** Providing a recoverable grant to social enterprise SolarWorks! as inventory capital. In turn, the project enabled SolarWorks! to serve 92 primary health facilities with solar energy systems.

**Objective:** Supporting green energy enterprises and enabling access to renewable energy systems for remote health centers.

This project was overseen and funded by USAID, but its funding was only disbursed after the installation (result based), meaning that SolarWorks! had to pre-finance the inventory itself. This is where the recoverable grant from Signify Foundation came in. The grant allowed the company to swiftly secure the stock necessary for the project and meet its timelines.

## Outcomes

From speaking to staff in the health centers and people living around them, it is clear that the impact has been significant and truly felt. Most of these clinics did not have light during night-time hours. This led to difficulties for labor and emergency care. Any such care was often postponed to dawn, causing complications or

additional medical issues that could have been avoided. SolarWorks! also reports that they have seen the health centers become de facto community centers; as the only places with electricity in the entire community. People come to the center to socialize, and in this way, the solar energy systems have an uplifting effect on an entire community.

## Challenges

The process of implementation by SolarWorks! was not always easy. Most of the clinics are in rural areas far from cities, towns, or even decent roads. The rainy season often turned those roads to mud, so that reaching clinics sometimes took half a day or more.

## Lessons learned

Liquidity is still a gap for most social enterprises in the solar sector. Recoverable grants or bridge financing can be a very useful tool to catalyze and showcase the possibilities for larger programs.



“SolarWorks! staff preparing cabling for the installation of a solar system in Muda Health Centre in Manica Province, Mozambique.”

# Rising to the needs of health facilities - Ukraine

Six health facilities in Ukraine.

**Partner:** Signify Ukraine, Lviv City Administration, Vinnytsia Military Hospital, Irpin Clinic, Ivano St Luka Medical Center, and Dnipro Military Medical Center.

**What:** The installation of different types of in- and outdoor lighting solutions for health facilities across the country.

**Objective:** Strengthen the lighting infrastructure for these health facilities that help servicemen, veterans, armed forces, and civilian patients.

The Signify Foundation supported multiple projects in Ukraine in 2023, with lighting for health and rehabilitation centers as a large focus. Ultraviolet-C lights that disinfect air as well as LED lights were installed in clinics and rehabilitation centers across the country.

[This link will direct you to a map showcasing our other projects in Ukraine.](#)

## Outcomes

The Signify Ukraine team confirmed that amidst the ongoing conflict, lighting serves as both an illuminating force and a symbol of solidarity with the resilience of healthcare providers who continue to provide critical services despite the challenging circumstances.

Four of the health centers that received lighting installations were newly constructed, while three were existing military hospitals that required new lighting systems. Today, these seven centers are already accepting patients across Ukraine, providing a beacon of hope in challenging times.

## Challenges

Project sustainability can be a challenge to safeguard during times of war.

## Lessons

These ongoing projects will undergo monitoring and evaluation to enable us to understand project performance and impact in more depth.



Lighting installed in the “Superhumans” Rehabilitation center for civilian and military patients, Lviv, Ukraine.



Community members in Colombia sitting under an outdoor solar light.

# Brighter living

**Informal settlements, refugee settlements, remote villages, and disaster and conflict affected communities.**

The Brighter living pillar brings together our previous Lighting lives and Humanitarian lighting pillars. Brighter living projects will now serve both off- and unreliable grid low-income communities and disaster and conflict-affected communities. In this context, lighting plays a vital role in creating livelihood opportunities and increasing safety and security for community members by reducing the risk of accidents, crimes, and violence. Adequate lighting is particularly important for the protection of vulnerable groups such as women, children, and the elderly by providing better visibility and a sense of safety. The focus of Brighter living projects is on lighting up remote public spaces and communal areas to enhance livelihood opportunities, safety, security, (re) building community infrastructure and resilience.

In 2023, over 117 million people were displaced for various reasons ranging from conflict to climate crises<sup>1</sup>. Displaced people are forced to build a new life away from the place they used to call home, or rebuild homes that were once there. Lighting up these communities adds comfort to routines in daily life and the general feeling of being safe. Lighting interventions for disaster or conflict-affected areas are mostly focused on mid- to long-term solutions and rebuilding efforts, though we also supported immediate relief efforts this year, for example, after the Türkiye and Syria earthquakes. With more focus on sustainable (re)building and development, we can participate in making these communities more resilient and more future-prepared.

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<sup>1</sup> UNHCR, 2023

# Light for better access to food in townships - South Africa

Alexandra Township, Johannesburg, South Africa.

**Partner:** Wakanda Food Accelerator. Wakanda is an independent business accelerator for foodpreneurs driving disruptive solutions for the future of food in South Africa.

**What:** The provision of 100 solar powered lamps and 4 street lights.

**Objective:** Solar powered lights enable local food dispensaries and small businesses to continue operating during load shedding, and increase safety at night for the low-income households they serve. These dispensaries increase access to affordable, nutritious food.

Alexandra Township is a densely populated informal settlement in Johannesburg, with many areas lacking adequate infrastructure. Load shedding, a controlled electricity outage strategy implemented in South Africa, exacerbates the situation in Alexandra Township by disrupting lighting, impacting the safety and daily life of residents and small businesses. Power interruptions can lead to economic losses, affect productivity, and hinder essential services. In homes, it disrupts daily routines, impacts cooking and heating, and compromises access to essential services such as healthcare and education.

## Outcomes

Our partner, Wakanda, has helped to solve some of the challenges mentioned above by installing lights for small businesses and in community areas. This initiative provides light in areas that will increase visibility and overall safety for the

community. As these lights are solar powered, load shedding does not affect their operation.

Wakanda takes a multi-level approach to the sustainability of the project. It will continue to engage with the community to understand evolving needs and capture feedback, while providing education and training to educate residents on optimal use of the lights. To ensure longevity and functionality of the lights, Wakanda is implementing a system for regular maintenance and repairs. Additionally, Wakanda will explore opportunities to expand the project further into Alexandra and similar communities.

## Lessons learned

- Spend time listening and understanding unique challenges faced by the communities the lights will be given to. Involve communities in decision making to create a sense of ownership for the sustainability of the lighting.



Installation of a solar lightbulb, Alexandra Township, South Africa.



“Recognising that understanding their specific needs is integral, we’ve learned that the value of the alternative lighting extends far beyond the provision itself. In any community-driven initiative, understanding their distinct challenges is imperative, ensuring that interventions align precisely with the community’s requirements and contribute meaningfully to their well-being. This invaluable lesson guides our approach as we continue to work towards sustainable solutions for Alexandra and similar communities.” Josephine Katumba, Wakanda.

Description of the picture

# Bringing light to rural and indigenous communities - Colombia

Bahía Chucheros, La Guajira, Bolivar, and Hondible Communities, Colombia.

**Partner:** Tierra Grata, which provides access to clean energy, water, and safe sanitation to rural communities in Colombia. This project was nominated by a Signify Netherlands colleague.

**What:** The installation of 35 solar street lamps, and in-cash contribution for Tierra Grata to install clean energy solutions for ten underserved communities.

**Objective:** To enable community members to continue life outdoors after dark, socializing, engaging in sports or educational activities.

## Outcomes

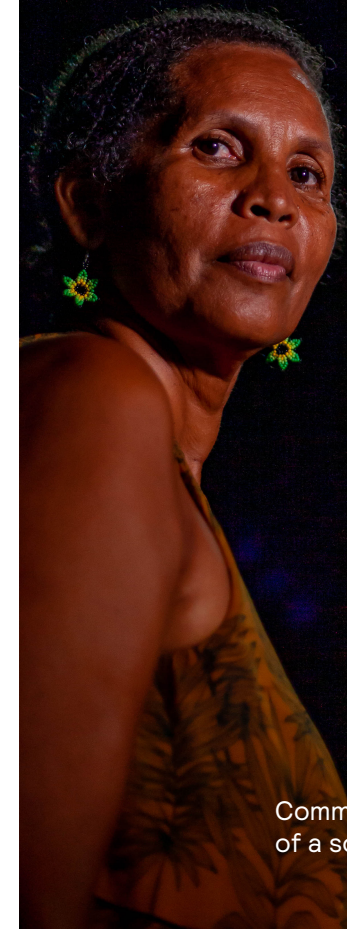
The installation of solar systems and solar outdoor lighting in the communities improved the quality of life for community members. The project also employed a social intervention model aiming to empower and include community members. Communities were able to interact with the installed systems through the appropriation of knowledge, a sense of ownership, and the experience of care and community change. The ability to charge phones facilitated better communication between families, and lights around sports fields created a space for extended enjoyment beyond daylight hours. The solar systems also had positive impacts in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving air quality by reducing the need for diesel generators.

## Challenges

Complex logistical costs were faced due to the remote nature of the communities.

## Lessons learned

- As an ongoing project, monitoring and evaluation will be carried out in the future to gather learnings, particularly on the effectiveness of the social intervention model that aims to be inclusive and empowering for community members.



Community member stood in front of a solar street light, Colombia.



Solar street lighting around villages, Northern DRC.

## Lighting a path for harmony with nature in development - Democratic Republic of the Congo

Tadu and Faradje villages in Northeastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

**Partner:** Nuru, an organization dedicated to enhancing connectivity in the DRC, deploying mini-grids through different regions.

**What:** The provision of 35 solar street lights with partner Nuru.

**Objective:** To provide nighttime security and road safety, and to allow businesses to operate after dark, which improves livelihood opportunities and creates a positive space for the community.

Located in northeastern DRC, Garamba National Park is part of the Congo basin, home to the second largest rainforest in the world. Given its natural riches, Garamba could be a thriving eco-tourism destination. Instead, it has been the frontline of an ongoing 30-year struggle against poaching and the ivory trade, creating a hostile environment for local people and the park's wildlife. In response to this fragility, Nuru partnered with the Signify Foundation to deploy new renewable energy infrastructure with 35 solar street lights in Tadu and Faradje. In a region with little economic opportunity, the provision of lights aims to stimulate eco-tourism and other livelihood developments, safeguarding the well-being of humans and nature, while promoting opportunities beyond artisanal mining and wildlife poaching.

### Outcomes

The installation of streetlights yields a multitude of positive effects that extend far beyond mere

security. When surveyed by Nuru after the project implementation, 81.7% of respondents unequivocally affirm that they now feel much safer at night.

To assure a longer-term positive impact of the lighting on the community, Nuru has established a maintenance plan to make sure the lights are regularly checked and cleaned to optimize their function. Nuru is also educating the community on the benefits of having solar lighting and encouraging community members to report any issues they find.

### Challenges

High logistical cost and import duties to execute such projects in DRC, especially in remote areas.

### Lessons learned

When working on a project budget, it is helpful to collaborate with the partner on the ground and go through every logistical step while factoring in contingencies for unforeseen scenarios.



# Lighting relief after devastating earthquakes - Turkiye and Syria

Southern Turkiye and Northern Syria.

**Partner:** Global Medic. GlobalMedic is a Canadian non-governmental organization (NGO) that provides emergency medical services, disaster relief, and humanitarian aid in response to natural and man-made disasters around the world.

**What:** Providing 12,780 pico solar lights as part of emergency kits.

**Objective:** Immediate lighting relief after the earthquakes.

On February 6, 2023, a powerful 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck southern Turkiye near the border with northern Syria. A second earthquake of 7.6 magnitude struck just hours later, amplifying the catastrophic incident. After the earthquakes, many cities had serious damage to electricity infrastructure and families did not have access to power and light.

## Outcomes

Solar lights are an important tool after a disaster. Restoring light, especially in winter, is critical for maintaining a sense of security and normalcy for affected families.

During the distributions, GlobalMedic ensured that beneficiaries understood how the lights work and how to take care of them. Many of the recipients will be moving to new forms of housing. These lights are portable and can be moved with them to their new accommodation, extending their impact.

## Challenges

The biggest challenge of the project was importing the solar lights into Turkiye. After the earthquake, the Ministry of Interior Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) was receiving all shipments of aid into the country. This meant the process to import was much longer

than anticipated, including the customs process. GlobalMedic worked with local partners and AFAD to get the lights into the country as fast as possible.



Civilian receiving an emergency kit containing solar lights.





## Floods in Libya, September 2023.

Two hospitals devastated by the Derna floods. To support rebuilding and the recovery of essential services, solar street lighting will be installed around these hospitals in 2024.





Solar street lighting installed in a remote village, Montenegro.

## Looking forward

With hope and positivity, we gear up for 2024 and the expansion of our Brighter communities program. While we continue to work with our dedicated partners, we also invite new effort-sharing partnerships and innovative collaborations to serve stakeholders with a broader package of solutions.

If you are, or know of, a partner that would be a good fit within our Brighter communities program, please do get in touch.

# Financial statements

## Balance sheet as at December 31 (in euros after result appropriation)

	Note	2022	2023
<b>Current assets</b>			
Cash and cash equivalents	1	2,709,959	2,760,178
<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>2,709,959</b>	<b>2,760,178</b>
<b>Total assets</b>		<b>2,709,959</b>	<b>2,760,178</b>
<b>Equity</b>			
Other reserves	2	2,187,782	1,397,440
<b>Total equity</b>		<b>2,187,782</b>	<b>1,397,440</b>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Accounts payable	3	0	9,494
Accrued expenses	4	522,177	1,353,245
<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>522,177</b>	<b>1,362,739</b>
<b>Total equity and liabilities</b>		<b>2,709,959</b>	<b>2,760,178</b>

## Statement of contributions and expenses (in euros)

	Note	2022	2023
Contribution from Signify	5	1,824,275	1,045,506
Other contributions		4,268	23,123
<b>Total contributions</b>		<b>1,828,543</b>	<b>1,068,629</b>
Donations	6	(788,880)	(1,777,888)
Other expenses	7	0	(79,412)
Financial expenses	8	(8,018)	(1,671)
<b>Total expenses</b>		<b>(796,898)</b>	<b>(1,858,970)</b>
<b>Result</b>		<b>1,031,645</b>	<b>(790,341)</b>

## Notes to the Balance sheet and the Statement of contributions and expenses

### General

Stichting Signify Foundation is registered at the Dutch Chamber of Commerce with number 69001464 as a foundation under Dutch law. Its legal address is Basisweg 10, 1034 AP Amsterdam.

### Financial reporting period

These financial statements cover the year 2023 which ended December 31, 2023. The comparative figures cover the year 2022, which started on January 1, 2022 and ended December 31, 2022.

### Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Guideline for annual reporting 640 'Non-profit organizations' of the Dutch Accounting Standards Board (RJ640).

### Going concern

These financial statements have been prepared on the basis of the going concern assumption.

### Basis of measurement

The financial statements have been prepared on a historical cost basis. Unless stated otherwise, assets and liabilities are shown at nominal value. Valuation takes place at nominal value less any provision deemed necessary.

## Accounting policies

### General

An asset is recognized in the balance sheet when it is probable that the expected future economic benefits that are attributable to the asset will flow to the entity and the cost of the asset can be measured reliably. A liability is recognized in the balance sheet when it is expected to result in an outflow of the entity's own resources and the amount of the liability can be measured reliably.

Contributions are recognized in the Statement of contributions and expenses when the amount can be determined in a reliable manner and collection of the related contribution to be received is probable. Contributions and expenses are allocated to the period to which they relate.

#### Use of estimates

The preparation of the financial statements requires the Board of Signify Foundation to make judgments, estimates and assumptions that affect the application of accounting principles and reported amounts of assets, liabilities and contributions and expenses. Actual results may differ from these estimates. The estimates and underlying assumptions are continuously reviewed. The impact of revised estimates is reflected in the period in which the estimate is revised.

#### Functional and presentation currency

The financial statements are presented in euros, which is the Foundation's functional currency, and have been rounded to the nearest euros. Transactions denominated in foreign currency are translated into euros at the exchange rate applying on the transaction date. Exchange differences resulting from the settlement of monetary items or resulting from the translation of monetary items denominated in foreign currency are recognized in the Statement of contributions and expenses in the period in which they arise. Due to rounding, amounts may not add up to totals provided.

#### Receivables

Receivables are measured at initial recognition at fair value. After initial recognition, the assets are measured at amortized cost using the effective interest method, less a value allowance. The

allowance is determined by individual assessment of the receivables by applying the expected loss model, which utilizes historical collection data and forward-looking estimates.

#### Current liabilities

At initial recognition, accrued expenses are measured at fair value. After initial recognition, the liabilities are measured at amortized cost using the effective interest method.

#### Other reserves

Other reserves consist of the results of the previous years as well as the current year.

#### Notes to the Balance sheet

##### 1. Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents relate to the current account balances and are available without restrictions.

##### 2. Equity

The movements in Other reserves are shown below:

	2022	2023
Opening balance	1,156,137	2,187,782
Result	1,031,645	(790,342)
<b>Other reserves</b>	<b>2,187,782</b>	<b>1,397,440</b>

##### 3. Accounts payable

Accounts payable related to other expenses for an amount of EUR 9,494 (2022: nil).

#### 4. Accrued expenses

Accrued expenses reflect the amounts related to projects that have been approved by the Board and communicated to the beneficiary but for which payments will materialize in the following year(s).

Accruals related to:	2022	2023
Brighter living	399,964	1,272,330
Brighter learning	117,279	58,171
Brighter health	4,934	22,744
<b>Total</b>	<b>522,177</b>	<b>1,353,245</b>

The accruals are mainly due to the Foundation's payment approach to disperse most donations in tranches based on milestones.

The accrual for Brighter living projects in 2023 was EUR 1,272,330 (2022: EUR 399,964), mostly related to projects in Pakistan, Sudan, Ukraine, amongst other countries.

#### Notes to the Statement of contributions and expenses

##### 5. Contributions

In 2023, the Signify Foundation received a contribution of EUR 1,000,000 from Signify, lower than received in 2022 (EUR 1,824,275) which included an additional EUR 800,000 funding for the immediate relief and medium-long term development support for Ukraine and neighboring countries. The funding was made in two installments received in April and July. In February 2024, Signify agreed to contribute to Signify Foundation an amount of EUR 1,000,000 in 2024.

## 6. Donations

Donations are recognized as an expense in the year the commitment has been approved by the Board and communicated to the beneficiary of the donation. Included in the donations of 2023 is an amount of EUR 200,000 that potentially can be recovered by Signify Foundation during 2025 if the beneficiaries are able to meet certain conditions. In 2022, an amount of EUR 163,000 was included in donations that could potentially be recovered by Signify Foundation.

In 2023, an amount of EUR 138,295 was repaid to the Foundation related to recoverable donations issued in previous years after the beneficiaries were able to meet certain conditions.

<b>Donations related to:</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
Brighter living	428,940	1,465,828
Brighter learning	128,11	235,168
Brighter health	231,829	76,829
<b>Total</b>	<b>788,880</b>	<b>1,777,888</b>

Donations fall within a new classification within the Foundation's projects. In 2023, 20 Ukraine projects were funded. These projects were classified under Brighter living.

## 7. Other expenses

In 2023, Other expenses increased to EUR 79,412 relating to consultancy and travel costs. Refer to note 8. Personnel for further details. In 2022, no Other expenses were incurred.

## 8. Financial expenses

Financial expenses in 2023 of EUR 1,671 (2022: EUR 8,018) relate to bank and interest costs and the cost of foreign currency conversion.

## 9. Personnel

In 2023, Signify Foundation employed one full-time project manager based in Kenya (co-funded by the Dutch Young Expert Programs), and two part-time contingent workers based in the Netherlands.

In addition, Signify Foundation's operations team consists of employees of Signify who are seconded to the Foundation. Their salaries and expenses are paid by Signify.

The Board members of Signify Foundation receive no remuneration for their duties, any expenses incurred are reimbursed by the Foundation.

Signify Foundation also receives human resource functional support from Signify, mainly in the areas of legal, finance, internal audit, communications, in-country Foundation ambassadors, and skillbased volunteers on specific projects.

## 10. Subsequent events

On February 23, 2024, Signify agreed to contribute to Signify Foundation EUR 1,000,000 in 2024 to be paid in two installments in April and July 2024.

There are no other subsequent events to report.

May 16, 2024

Board of Management  
Harry Verhaar  
Pieter de Haan  
Stanley Anyetei  
Maloe de Reuver

## Special thanks

We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation to our colleagues within Signify NV for their support, contributions, and efforts in helping our Foundation achieve its goals. Your dedication and commitment to our shared vision have been instrumental in driving our success, and we are truly grateful for the many ways in which you have supported us as our ambassadors and helpers.

Whether through support in field visits, project ideation and execution, legal and financial advice, or general support, thank you for being an indispensable part of our team. We look forward to continuing to work together toward a bright and prosperous future.

Solar street lighting around villages,  
Northern DRC.



# Colophon

The Signify Foundation operations team 2023. Yue Cui, Tarini Bhasin, Natalie Cru, Aninda Eijkens, Eric Otieno, Lou Van Reemst and Lea Richter.

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