

One thing we have learnt this week – Let there be light

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Let

there be light is not just Gods command in Genesis 1v3, but also a Tearfund campaign. A major problem in the developing world is a lack of light at night. This affects everyday life to a massive amount. On earth day (coming up soon) try switching everything off for a few hours and see how it feels trying to read by candle light*. This is a big problem for children doing their homework, safety for women etc. But even small amounts of power can benefit the community in other ways. For example pumping water, charging mobile phones, possibly even using computers and TV's. Small battery powered fridges could be used to store medicines. Another advantage is it would replace dangerous and ineffective and particulate/CO₂ emitting alternatives such as candles and paraffin lamps. The technology for this is of course the rapidly becoming ubiquitous PV. The cost of these has plunged and the efficiency increased. The same thing is happening with batteries. Bring the two together and you have a major solution to a major problem of worlds poorest having no access to electricity. Both lithium batteries and PVs are very low maintenance and ideally suited to rural parts of the developing world. Their installation and maintenance will of course create jobs. The "Let there be light" campaign is asking the UK government to fund solar panels and batteries through its overseas aid programme. We are not talking about covering mud huts in metres of PV on roofs in the same way as here, but giving an individual householder a panel and a battery. A number of years ago Channel 4 had a very left wing presenter (surprisingly) gave a climate sceptic documentary. Part of his argument was that renewable energy would never work and was incapable of powering so much as a fridge. We know it can because its already happening. The "Let there be light" campaign is asking us to widen access so that this is the first generation where everyone has access to bright light at night. Lets prove him wrong. Join in [here](#). Neil * In the tropics it gets dark pretty much at 18:30 every night of the year and in my experience the daylight just vanishes.

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