



A Songa Mbele na Solar road show in Kenya, August 2012. Credits: Andres Bifani/Lighting Africa/2012.

EXPERIENTIAL MARKETING

Songa Mbele na Solar: A Campaign for Market Development and Behaviour Change

Selling the switch from hazardous, polluting kerosene for lighting to cleaner, safer options like solar and dynamo-charged systems

Lighting Africa's *Songa Mbele na Solar* (Get Ahead with Solar) campaign won the Marketing Society of Kenya's (MSK) Best Experiential Marketing Campaign Award in the NGO/Government Category on 30th November. Other winners included Safaricom and Coca-Cola. The Award recognizes

marketing creativity, innovation and utilization of marketing best-practice.

In its evaluation, MSK took into consideration the quality of the material/activity; the strategy, execution, creativity and results; and the usefulness to the target audience.

Lighting Africa, a joint IFC/ World Bank energy access programme, has been running consumer education campaigns in Kenya since 2010 as part of its efforts to catalyze markets for modern off-grid lighting products,

and to displace kerosene as a lighting source in Kenya. For the programme, the switch from hazardous, polluting kerosene to cleaner, safer options like solar and dynamo-charged lighting systems requires a change of behaviour in the way consumers at the base of the pyramid access and use energy. "Good products alone cannot achieve this behavioural change: it must also be fostered through consumer awareness and education," says Nana Asamoah Manu, Lighting Africa Programme Manager in Kenya.



EXP conducts a forum allowing potential consumers to understand the viable solar options available to them during a IFC/World Bank Lighting Africa Activation in rural Kenya.

Lighting Africa's Songa Mbele na Solar is implemented by EXP Kenya, the lead consulting agency on the experiential campaign in Kenya.

Lighting Africa, a joint IFC/World Bank energy access programme, has been running consumer education campaigns in Kenya since 2010 as part of its efforts to catalyze markets for modern off-grid lighting products, and to displace kerosene as a lighting source in Kenya.

The campaign engages with community groups such as religious groups, women's groups and SACCOs, to explain the benefits of solar lighting over kerosene and enable consumers to distinguish between a substandard and a high-quality lamp. The campaign reinforces these messages on local vernacular radio shows.

To date, *Songa Mbele na Solar* has run over 1,100 community forums and 190 road shows all over Kenya, reaching over 260,000 people in rural areas.

Typically, a consumer education day entails two forums, with community groups of 20-30 people, for an hour of skits, songs, instruction, question & answer and product trial. In the evening, tied to market days, the Lighting Africa Team also organizes a road show, which attracts large crowds (from 500 upwards). A truck stationed at a vantage point like the centre or market square plays loud music and attracts crowds for 3-4 hours of edutainment. This kind of face-to-face engagement with consumers is referred to as experiential marketing. Feedback from the sessions indicates that, on average, over 90% of participants increase their knowledge on cleaner off-grid lighting and would like to switch to these options. Lighting Africa backed its approach with solid

market research: its 2010 market report¹ showed that lack of consumer awareness about alternatives to kerosene lighting was the main barrier to market growth for clean off-grid lighting products. It also revealed that for consumers at the base of the pyramid, clean lighting is more than a commodity. The lamps are also aspirational products – hence the campaign slogan '*Songa Mbele na Solar*'.

Lighting Africa's *Songa Mbele na Solar* is implemented by EXP Kenya, the lead consulting agency on the experiential campaign in Kenya. The company's ability to receive and incorporate feedback from Lighting Africa, its associate distributors and consumers, has been critical to the campaign's success.

Lighting Africa, a joint IFC and World Bank programme, seeks to accelerate the development of commercial off-grid lighting markets in Sub-Saharan Africa as part of the World Bank Group's wider efforts to improve access to energy. Lighting Africa is mobilizing the private sector to build sustainable markets that provide affordable, modern off-grid lighting to communities across Africa that are not on the electricity grid. Lighting Africa operates in Kenya, Ghana, and has started work in Senegal, Mali, Tanzania and Ethiopia. The programme and its partners have brought cleaner, safer, and better lighting to close to 4 million people and are working to increase energy access, providing better lighting to 250 million people by 2030. Visit www.lightingafrica.org

¹ *Solar Lighting for the Base of the Pyramid – Overview of an Emerging Market, Lighting Africa, 2010.*