

Girl Launches solar backpack to light up homework for Kenyan school children

 uncova.com/girl-launches-solar-backpack-to-light-up-homework-for-kenyan-school-children

Image credits: forbes.com

Kenyan [Salima Visram](#); a former [Aga Khan Academy](#) student; [Mombasa](#); now in her final year of studying International Development Studies at McGill University; in Montreal; Canada has distributed the first order of 500 backpacks in Kikambala Primary School; Mombasa County to give kids light for their homework;

The 2,000 are part of the promise Visram made when she raised \$38,000 (\$39,990) through crowd-funding platform Indiegogo. The students' backpacks have a solar panel that charges during day and lights their homes at night for pupils to do their homework;

Visram; who attended [Aga Khan Academy](#); [Mombasa](#); for her secondary school education believes social business is the greatest catalyst in creating sustainable change; and hopes to form partnerships with UNICEF; the UNHCR and the Government of Kenya to expand the project to other parts of Kenya and Africa. Her goal is that through education; people will be given the tools to empower and alleviate themselves from poverty;

Salima grew up in Kikambala witnessing the effects that poverty and the lack of electricity had on school going children and came up with the solar backpack; which she calls the [Solar Backpack](#). The backpack allows children in rural areas to leverage the power of the sun during their long walks to and from school to provide light for reading at night;

The backpacks consist of a solar panel; a battery pack and an LED lamp. The solar panel stores solar power during the day and allows the LED lamp to be connected to it during the night as a light source. For four hours of charging; the backpack is able to give out seven to eight hours of light a night;

"If successful; I want to expand the project to a hundred schools in the county within the next year and a half. This is in direct alignment with Kenya's Vision 2030 "Masomo Bora"; which is the nation's effort to ensure that all children are educated; and realize their full potential;" said Visram;

Some 92 per cent of rural households in Kenya use kerosene to fuel lighting. When night falls; this sees millions of Kenyan school children forced to rely on the toxic and expensive light source to do their homework. For those who cannot keep up with the expense of buying the fuel; learning stops when the sun goes down; according to a report compiled by lighting company Sunny Money in Kenya;

"We see her emerging rapidly as a role model for all that the Academy stands for; and its mission in positioning talented young students as future leaders driving change and poverty alleviation for all;" said Mr Bill O'Hearn; Head of [Aga Khan Academy](#); [Mombasa](#);