



# Solar Energy: Awareness Raising & Fund Raising for Developing Projects *Solar Solidarity International, Belgium*

## Summary

Solar Solidarity is an AISBL (Association Internationale Sans But Lucratif) aiming to:

- Raise awareness amongst the general public (citizens, schools, universities, decision makers...) of the potential of solar energy by organising exhibitions, with the famous "Dancing Solar Flowers" of the artist Dang. The flowers are equipped with solar cells and dances thanks to the solar energy.
- Raise funds to support solar electrification projects in the developing world.



Exhibition of the field of 10.000 dancing solar flowers Council of the EU (18 February - 3 March 2008)

Lots of exhibitions were organised EU wide (in Belgium: at the European Commission, at the European Parliament, at the Council of the EU, in Barcelona (Spain), in Valencia (Spain), in Milan (Italy), in Tenerife (Spain), in Essen (Germany) and in Chambéry (France)). Each time the exhibitions triggered tremendous impact amongst the visitors. More than 10.000 of the "Dancing Solar Flowers" of the artist Dang were sold. The whole activity of Solar Solidarity enabled to support the solar electrification of schools in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Haiti and Nepal. Solar solidarity was also able to support Maternity facilities at Mali and Water Supply facilities at Madagascar.

### End-user area

- New buildings
- Refurbishment of buildings
- Transport and mobility
- Financial instruments
- Industry
- Legal initiatives (regulations, directives, etc)
- Planning issues
- Sustainable communities
- User behavior
- Education
- Other: Aid in the developing world: CDM

### Target Audience

- Citizens
- Households
- Property owners
- Schools and universities
- Decision makers
- Local and regional authorities
- Transport companies
- Utilities
- ESCOs
- Architects and engineers
- Financial institutions
- Other

### Technical

- Energy efficiency
- Heating
- Cooling
- Appliances
- Lighting
- CHP
- District Heating
- Solar energy
- Biomass
- Wind
- Geothermal
- Hydro power
- Other

## Context

The energy from the sun that hit the earth is 10.000 times (!) the energy consumption of the humans. Hence, sun energy represents a huge potential. Studies, including the study from the Joint Research Center of the European Commission «European Roadmap for PV R&D», show that the electricity coming from the sun should provide more than 70 % of the energy consumption worldwide in 2100.



Currently, 1, 7 billion people have no access to electricity.

The huge potential of solar energy can be the solution to the need of energy for many people.

- Energy & electricity gives people access to education and information (through computers and internet), access to water (by pumping and purifying it), access to medicines & vaccines (by storing of medicines and vaccines in fridges): these are in fact the conditions for Peace,
- The use of solar energy is a way to take care of the environment, in particular tackling the climate change.



Solar Electrification of a school in Senegal supported by Solar Solidarity

## Objectives

The objectives of the activities are to:

- Raise awareness amongst the general public (citizens, schools, universities, decision makers, etc.) of the potential of solar energy through exhibitions of the "Dancing Solar Flowers" of the artist Dang,
- Raise funds to support solar electrification projects in the developing world.

## Process

The aim of the activity is twofold:

1. Raising awareness of the potential of renewable sources of energy through exhibitions:

Solar Solidarity has organised several exhibitions featuring "Dancing Solar Flowers" of the artist Dang. These flowers are dancing thanks to solar energy. The flowers are moving even in indirect light, for instance in the presence of clouds. For example, a field of 10.000 "Dancing Solar Flowers" was exhibited at the EU Council (Building Justus Lipsius, Entrée d'Honneur) in Brussels under the high patronage of the Slovenian Presidency in February 2008. The exhibition triggered tremendous impact amongst people. It was of particular interest for the visitors to see how the flowers were moving slowly in the morning, very lively at lunchtime and then slowing down again in the evening. It was also very interesting for the visitors to see that the flowers were moving every day even though it was cloudy some days, it was winter, Brussels is located north and the cells on the flowers are tiny. This has highlighted in a very concrete way the huge potential of solar energy (and generally speaking renewable energy) amongst the public. The Slovenian Presidency congratulated Solar Solidarity in a letter for the success of this exhibition which enabled to highlight a top priority of the Slovenian Presidency which is the promotion of renewable sources of energy.



Lots of similar exhibitions were organised notably at the European Commission, at the European Parliament, at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Sart-Tilman (near Liège in Belgium), with schools in Brussels, and European wide: in Barcelona, Milan, Tenerife, Chambéry (Solar Event), Essen (Under the High Patronage of the Ministry of Environment), Valencia and in some other places. A similar exhibition featuring a field of Dancing Solar Flowers is planned to take place in Poznań for the Conference of the Parties of the Kyoto Protocol (COP 14 in December 2008). All past exhibitions were a clear success notably in terms of impact amongst visitors by giving them a radically new perception of renewable sources of energy, in particular by giving the visitors the possibility to see and feel in an alternative way the huge and untapped potential of renewable energy.



President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, with the Solar Solidarity team.

## 2. Raising funds to support projects of solar electrification in the developing world:

After the exhibition, thanks to the copyrights offered by the artist Dang, the Dancing Solar Flowers were made available to people in order to raise funds. These funds enabled to entirely cover the costs of the exhibitions and to support electrification projects. The whole activity of Solar Solidarity enabled to support the solar electrification of:

- One school in Haiti in 2005, two schools in Burkina Faso in 2006, one school in Senegal in 2006, two schools in Nepal in 2007, a school in the town of Sakalalina in Madagascar in 2008,
- 8 maternity facilities in Mali in 2007,
- Water supply of the town of Sakalalina (3500 inhabitants) in Madagascar in 2008.

In addition, Solar Solidarity submitted the electrification projects to foundations for further raising funds which enabled the full realisation of the projects.

## Financial resources and partners

The exclusive resources of Solar Solidarity for organising exhibitions are the copyrights of the artist Dang. The activity of Solar Solidarity is fully self sufficient.

The copyrights of the artist Dang enable additionally to support the electrification of projects in the developing world. The budget necessary to fully realise the projects is completed by foundations notably Europe Tiers Monde, Eau pour le Sahel and Schuman Trophy.

The partners who realise the projects on the ground have been till now Electricians sans Frontières and Soleil sans Frontières.

## Results

Some of the results of Solar Solidarity can be mentioned as follows:

Roughly 40 exhibitions and events were organised featuring the Dancing Solar Flowers or generally Solar Art all over Europe, at the European Commission, at the European Parliament, at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Sart-Tilman (near Liège in Belgium), with school children in Brussels, and European wide: in Barcelona, Milan, Tenerife, Chambéry, Essen, Valencia, etc.

More than 10.000 Dancing Solar Flowers were sold.



Education program were carried out for 3000 school pupils.

Numerous video clips were shown at TV in Belgium, Germany, Spain, France (Euronews, RTBF, RTL, ARD, LCI etc. ) and there were numerous of publications.

Solar electrification of 7 schools, 8 maternity facilities and a water supply for 3500 people was supported (Haiti, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Nepal, Madagascar)

## Lessons learned and repeatability

The repeatability of the project is particularly easy and well adapted:

All the exhibitions with the Dancing Solar Flowers have been reproduced a lot of times.

The cost of the exhibition is zero euro! This is possible thanks to the fact that the artist Dang has offered for free his copyrights to Solar Solidarity and that the flowers are made available to the public after the exhibition to raise funds for integrally covering the exhibition costs and additionally for supporting solar electrification of projects in the developing world.

Economically viability is the heart of the scheme:

The zero euro cost also highlights that the activity is fully economically viable.

Impacts regarding energy: Each time, the exhibitions with the Dancing Solar Flowers triggered significant interest and impact amongst visitors. Firstly they are arousing the curiosity of the public when they are passing by, then stimulating a debate and finally raising awareness on the potential of renewable sources of energy. It came clearer to the visitors that renewable sources of energy have a huge potential for supplying mankind with energy and at the same time for tackling climate change. Furthermore, lots of people have bought a Dancing Solar Flower and show it to their family, friends, and colleagues hence further conveying the message of the potential of solar energy. These people become the carriers of the message of the potential of solar energy thanks to the Dancing Solar Flowers that embodies this message.

Environmentally benign / Socially and politically acceptability: The activities have contributed to the solar electrification of several projects. The projects give people in developing countries access to electricity and at the same time reduce emissions of greenhouse gases. The socio-economic benefits are evident for the beneficiaries of the solar electrification projects. Furthermore, the exhibitions with the Dancing Solar Flowers are now recognized and the Dancing Solar Flowers are used for educational purposes in agreement with the artist Dang.

The techniques and tools used are particularly well adapted for raising awareness to a large public and in particular for school children: the Dancing Solar Flowers carry a message which anyone can understand. They move thanks to solar energy. In addition, the more energy there is, the quicker they move. They even move in the shadow which highlights the fact that energy is also present in the shadow. No complexity, no reference to techniques which are not possible to understand, everything is very clear to understand hence making the activity particularly attractive and well suited for a large public and for children.



**Contact for more information:**

Project Web Site: [www.solarsolidarity.org](http://www.solarsolidarity.org) (& website of the artist: [www.dang.be](http://www.dang.be) )

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**Video**

A video is available presenting the project of solar electrification of a school supported by Solar Solidarity and realized by Electricians sans Frontières.

See video "Harness the power of the Sun" on the website of the Sustainable Energy Week:

[www.sustenergy.org](http://www.sustenergy.org)

Or direct link to the video: [http://www.tvlink.org/vdata/210\\_EN\\_high.wax](http://www.tvlink.org/vdata/210_EN_high.wax)