



'Affordable, sustainable energy for all'

Trustee's annual report for the period:

15/03/2017	31/03/2018
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Reference and administrative details

Registered Charity Number: 1172051

Charity's principal address: 49 High Street, Bewdley,
Worcestershire, UK, DY122DJ



Names of trustees who manage the charity

Ben Ballin	Secretary
Kevin Bailey	Chair
John Rhymer	
Malcolm Garner	
Nigel Rayment	
Judith Ford	
Jackie Hopkins	Treasurer

Structure, governance and management

Type of governing document	Constitution
How the charity is constituted	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Trustees selection methods	Trustees are normally selected by recommendation and appointed by existing trustees

Additional governance issues

Trustees form a close group that meet at least three times a year and in addition communicate electronically.

The trustees contain members with a wide spread of experiences and expertise relevant to the aims of the charity.

Trustees take on formal roles such as chair, secretary and treasurer, but also advise on issues relevant to their field of expertise. An example of this would be technical advice on solar energy relevant to solar lights or project management in relation to the charities work.

Switched On – Gambia also works with other charities when appropriate such as Book Aid International who work closely as partners providing books and expertise to our project in The Gambia.

Objects and activities

To relieve poverty in The Gambia and West Africa through facilitating the provision of solar energy to those in need.

Summary of the main achievements during the year

- On 15th March 2017 Switched On-Gambia became a registered charity. The first meeting of trustees took place in July 2017.
- Switched On-Gambia has recorded great success in the year since that date. The organisation has embarked upon numerous programmes which were introduced into our project and successfully coordinated in all the schools and communities we've been recommended to work with by the regional education department in Central River Region, The Gambia. The main focus of Switched On-Gambia is to relieve poverty through the facilitation of solar energy. This has mainly been by supporting schools in off grid communities with donations of high quality solar lamps which are rented to pupils for the price of a candle. At each participating school 'Solar Committees' have been established to ensure efficient management of the programme.
- The organisations activities this year have expanded, thus necessitating increased managerial responsibilities for the Project Coordinator, Michael Mendy.
- The organisation has recorded an expansion of beneficiary schools from the original trial of four to twenty; opened a shop outlet to create accessibility for community members to purchase their personal lights; appointed a 'Solar Star' to work for the organisation and sell lights to inaccessible communities; set up community and teacher's rentals schemes introduced in some schools and communities and a 'Book Box' support project introduced to run alongside the Solar Library project in five beneficiary schools. This trial project to link books and lights is supported by Book Aid International and details of this initiative are expanded upon below.



- This year, 2017/18, Intouch Games have donated £13,000 to Switched On-Gambia. Small amounts of funding have also been received from schools. Funding for 2018/19 has been agreed at this rate although there may be the possibility of further increase depending on project developments in The Gambia.



- The project in The Gambia has been visited twice this year. Once by Kevin Bailey and Gary Booth in November 2017 with the aim of monitoring all aspects of activity including a detailed report by Gary Booth commissioned by the trustees. The second visit was by Kevin Bailey and Rosie England acting on behalf of our main sponsors 'Intouch Global Foundation' to monitor the project and visit other activities supported by the foundation



- We were pleased to formally welcome all of our trustees to 'Switched On – Gambia'. Ben Ballin, Nigel Rayment, Malcolm Garner, John Rhymer and Kevin Bailey worked together to form the charity before formal charity status was achieved. Jackie Hopkins, who has kindly agreed to help with finance related issues, and Judith Ford CEO of 'Wyre Forest Night stop' increased the expertise and experiences of the group when they joined during the year.

- Gambia based workers: Michael Mendy (coordinator), Musa (shop and technical) and Jabai (solar star) were acting in their roles for a substantial proportion of the year, however, Musa has now left SOG and Jabai now performs the dual role of shop assistant and occasional 'Solar Star' selling to more remote communities. Trustees are currently moving through a period of discussions relating to targets for the project. Some of these have been shared with Michael and used in his recent report, however, more time has been allocated to developing and clarifying these further. These targets relate to: sales of lamps, rental programmes in schools and the role out of book boxes in schools.



- An important issue this year has been consideration of the future status of the Gambia based organisation currently coordinated by Michael Mendy. Michael has liaised with his contacts in The Gambia in order to consider the options for creating an independent organisation supported by 'Switched On – Gambia'. Some developments of his thoughts are in his latest report. It has been pleasing to see Michael, with the support of SOG trustees, begin to

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form a group of experienced and talented board members. At the moment he is liaising with the group to agree a constitution and have the Gambia based organisation established as 'Intouch Gambia'. Eventually it will be an independent group supported by Switched On-Gambia (SOG).

- Book Aid International, based in London, have been an invaluable support allowing us to create a joint solar light/ book box approach. This has been very popular initiative and has allowed for some innovative use of solar lights including: homework clubs and extra evening lessons; examination preparation; community reading groups and enabling children to take home a book when they rent a lamp. Book Aid International have agreed to another donation of 8000 new and relevant books to extend the project in 2018/19. We are very pleased that the success of this innovative approach to supporting access to sustainable energy and by doing that relieving poverty has been a catalyst for Book Aid to adopt the same approach in the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya. Our relationship has also been instrumental in a substantial donation of 25000 new books to The National Library Association of The Gambia and a medical library in Janakpur, Nepal. Book Aid International have shown a clear aim to use our model as future strategy:



'...and particularly looking forward to introducing the new (to us!) element of solar technology to our work.' (Hannah Watson, head of fundraising and development, Book Aid International)

'The proposal for Kakuma is developing well and very interestingly and we are also considering how we might incorporate the solar lights more broadly in our projects where they would be of benefit. So a great piece of learning for us, for which we have SOG to thank!' (Alison Tweed, CEO, Book Aid International)

- As the year draws to an end a number of exciting initiatives are being planned. These include: 'Intouch Gambia' launch, expansion into a second shop to be used as store and office space, expansion of schools in the programme and appointment of a deputy to support Michael Mendy.