

## **TERRE and Barefoot Power give girl students in rural India a new reason to be regular to school**

**12 July 2013, Rahimatpur, India** -“We realize the importance of light when we see darkness”, said Malala Yousafzai, today while speaking at United Nations in New York. Malala, since Taliban shot her last year has become symbol of peaceful activism for girl’s education all over the world. “We want schools and education for every child and for its bright future”, added Malala.

On the same day, 12th July, TERRE Policy Centre and Barefoot Power India commissioned a solar *charging station*, in Kanyashala (girl’s school) in tiny town of Rahimatpur. That provided girl students a big reason to come into school in the morning and get light to carry back with them in the evening everyday! It was on-the-ground contribution to what Malala dreams and what UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon aims to achieve under Global Education First Initiative.

The installation of *solar charging station* is part of TERRE’s Asia wide project called ‘ Light for Brilliance’. A girl’s school-*Suman Phadatare Kanyashala*-is now first solar school in Rahimatpur, Satara district in the State of Maharashtra. It is pilot project of Bare Foot Power embedded with a novel social entrepreneurship experiment that addresses the basic lighting needs of households that have limited or no access to electricity. Each station installed in a school can support the charging of up to 24 lamps and also small solar lanterns and even mobile phones. A student can use this lamp to study at home uninterrupted by power shutdowns that have become so common after dark. The students would bring the tiny desk lamps in to school to charge every other day.

By paying a small sum of money (less than Rs 5 depending on the size of the desk lamp) a student (or a household) can recharge their lamp, making this an affordable way of renting the system until it is paid for – at which point the lamp and panel belongs to the household.

The charging station can be an asset with which a young village entrepreneur can start a small business to charge other solar lighting apparatus for the shop owners, craftsmen, women “ Now students can come to school not only to learn but also take back the ‘light’ for their rigorous studies by overcoming the difficulties of power black outs. It is also the way to learn about the power of renewable energy at young age”, said Rajendra Shende, Chairman of TERRE Policy Centre. “ In Barefoot Power, TERRE has found a like-minded

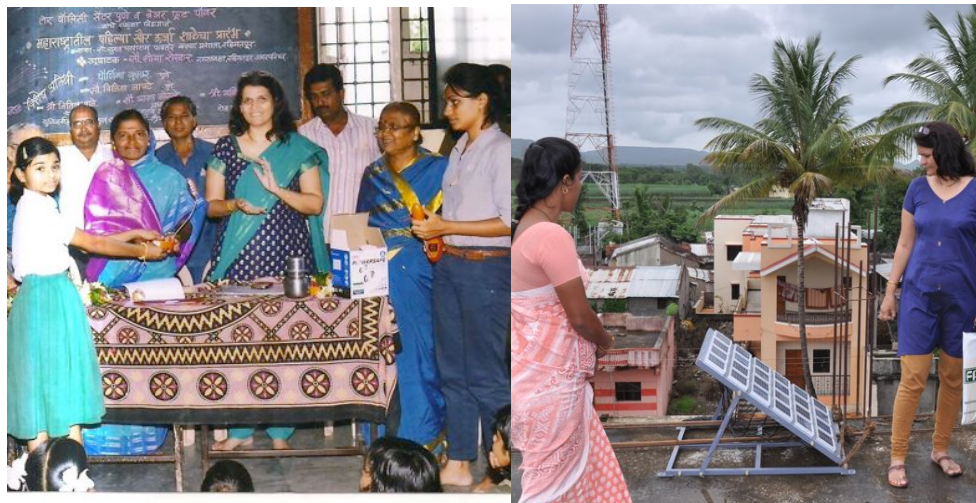
partner to spread the concept of social entrepreneurship among the youth in the villages’, added Mr. Shende.

The operation avoids the upfront capital cost and allows staggered repayment, which is an easy way to compete with subsidized kerosene prices in rural India.

As Purnima Kumar (BD, BFPI) points out, “the merit of this model lies in its replicable design even outside a school setting”. Vernie Sannoo (MD, BFPI) adds, “Any entrepreneur with a shop and an interest in solar lighting solutions can set up these stations, with the support of BFP, and lease out our Firefly lamps’. The payback period of these lamps can vary from 12 to 18 months. *These projects have been made possible by a grant from **Osprey Foundation**.*

## TERRE Policy Centre

Technology, Education, Research and Rehabilitation for Environment  
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