

# BRIGHT IDEAS

Azuri is leading next-generation energy in Africa. Our pay-as-you-go solar technology works to generate energy access, improve lives and economic opportunities, build sustainable markets, and combat climate change.



## Kipchoge goes the distance to support Nandi families

**The world's fastest marathon runner Eliud Kipchoge goes the extra mile, donating blankets, food and Azuri solar home systems to support local families worst affected by COVID-19 crisis.**

Azuri is delighted to help world marathon record holder Eliud Kipchoge support families in Nandi, Kenya with Azuri solar home systems. With their new solar power, these households can now access electricity within their homes and watch their favourite stars such as Kipchoge on their solar TVs rather than crowding together in bars.

Kipchoge lives and trains in Kaptagat, 30km from his family home in Eldoret where his wife, Grace, and children live. Eliud has always celebrated his home country in competition and attributes his success to the long hours of training along Kenyan roads and mountain tracks with his village teams and local athletes.

Kipchoge is keen to use his fame and platform to spread benefits far and wide, taking care of those who need help and giving back at every opportunity. He often visits the surrounding villages and provides opportunities to young runners to experience professional training. Kipchoge is helping households receive basic goods such as blankets, food, and solar energy to be able to live well during the current pandemic conditions.

*"I am doing a lot of campaigns on social media as we seek to sensitise athletes and locals on ways to keep themselves safe from Covid-19. We need to get the things right," Kipchoge said.*

Azuri is proud to donate to Eliud and his foundation to assist in its inspiring work enabling households to stay safe and avoid gathering in groups during the pandemic.

> [Azuri connecting rural Africa](#)



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# COVID-19: Azuri's Action

**Springtime 2020 brought a new challenge to our customers in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our priorities continue to be providing a safe working environment for all our colleagues both throughout Africa and in the, as well as ensuring our customers receive excellent energy services.**

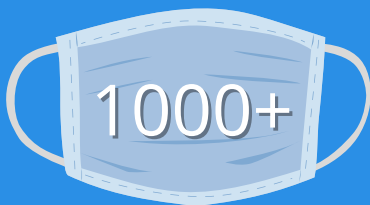
While there have been restrictions in some of our key territories, none of them has seen a prolonged period of total lockdown in the way that has happened in many European countries. In addition, Azuri enjoys "essential provider" status in our main markets which means travel limitations are not as of yet a major concern.

Our field teams have postponed all marketplace-based sales to avoid large gatherings, wear masks and follow local social distancing guidelines. We have been sharing educational materials for all our Agents and customers on how to wear masks properly, best practices for hand washing in rural areas and working with social distancing interactions. In the UK, the majority of our office-based jobs are working from home or on a COVID-safe office rotation.

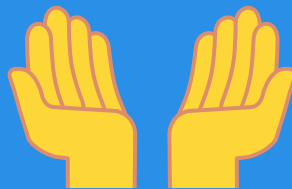
Azuri has been involved in industry-wide conferences to determine the response of the solar sector to ensure the continuation of essential solar business. Azuri is continuing to provide expertise and advice to assist policy makers in navigating this pandemic.

Now more than ever it is important for families to have access to renewable, affordable and clean power in their homes. Across Africa, many schools have closed which means families have a greater demand for entertainment and education within the household, and social restrictions mean more time within the home for now.

Customers with children have especially benefitted from their AzuriTV systems, as their brightly lit solar homes and solar TVs have helped with home study during the school shutdowns. Children view educational programmes to supplement their book work, learn new facts from e-learning shows and develop their interests by watching a range of school appropriate programmes. Furthermore, fully charged radios and phones keep customers in contact with friends and family until it is safe to see them again. As always, Azuri is striving to keep everyone connected.



Agents with PPE in the field



Azuri donation to the Kipchoge Foundation



UK office staff working from home or COVID-safe rotations

## Solar-fintech is the necessary backbone to support Africa's digital boom says Kleos Advisory

**Kleos Advisory's latest report examines how 'COVID-19 is accelerating Africa's digital transformation beyond the point of no return'.**

Kleos Advisory states: 'the jolting impact of COVID-19 is forcing African governments and their citizens adapt to a new way of living and transacting business remotely. In uncertain times people innovate and the crisis is accelerating the digital shift'.

As school shutdowns require children to learn from home, the off-grid solar industry has seen a marked demand for TV and lighting systems.

[www.azuri-technologies.com](http://www.azuri-technologies.com)

Similarly in banking, remote access is essential during the COVID-19 crisis. In Kenya, 73% of the population have a mobile money account and 96% own a mobile phone. Consequently, consumers require accessible and affordable energy solutions to keep their devices charged at all times.

**As more and more businesses and individuals rely on digital technology for work and personal matters, the demand to be able to support their technology from home increases.**

'Led by smartphone technology and solar power, tech will help lead Africa out of the COVID-19 crisis, and as it does it will embed itself in the way Africans live, work and transact'



[> Read the full report here](#)

# Going off-grid leads Cambridge Judge Business School graduate to success

Neil Davey, who holds an MPhil in Technology Policy from Cambridge Judge Business School (CJBS) has won the Worshipful Company of Marketers' 2019 Award for Outstanding Performance in Marketing for an Azuri case study he co-authored with Jaideep Prabhu, Professor of Marketing at CJBS.

The award aims to improve the quality of marketing teaching in British business schools. Providing current case studies of businesses handling strategic decisions enables students to engage with real life scenarios and to weigh different solutions.

The Azuri case study is being used to teach MBA and MPhil in Technology Policy courses at CJBS. Case study analysis helps students to gain new perspective on the main challenges facing key sectors.

Azuri's CEO Simon Bransfield-Garth believes "success depends on innovation beyond the product line". Students assessing the case study will evaluate novel distribution approaches, for-profit business model flexibility and adaptation to sub-Saharan African markets.



"Azuri is an exemplar of a mission-driven company that understands its social responsibility as a for-profit. I hope both other corporations and students alike can learn from the Azuri business model" states Davey.

Azuri was chosen for the case study which examines how Azuri's Senior Management team strategically develops local distribution channels to keep growing the successful pay-as-you-go solar home system model.

Congratulations to Neil Davey and Cambridge Judge Business School on winning this prestigious award! Azuri is humbled and honoured that the case study will be used to challenge and inspire future generations of MBA students as part of their studies.

[> Read the case study here](#)

## COVID vs Kerosene: How the solar industry is fighting to keep indoors safe for low-income households

**As people stay indoors to avoid COVID-19, the solar industry fights to keep households safe from air pollution, burns, and other health hazards which may increase.**

Off-grid solar is more important than ever to enable rural communities' connection to energy, whilst not being connected to the grid. In March, the Global Off-Grid Lighting Association (GOGLA) wrote an [open letter](#) to governments in response to the Covid-19 crisis to establish that the off-grid energy sector in rural Africa is an essential service and therefore vital for companies continue to provide services throughout the pandemic.

Access to solar energy, provides a multitude of benefits to the consumers and in turn creates new consumer markets globally. Kleos Advisory estimates that the commercial opportunity for off-grid solar power in Africa is \$24 billion per year.

Kerosene is an expensive but often necessary form of fuel. Families require someone to trek to towns for mobile phone charging, which is time consuming and costly. Kerosene is also notorious for causing detrimental health effects from breathing in toxic fumes, which effects the lungs and skin. In the World Health Organisation (WHO) report "Burning Opportunity", "This household air pollution (HAP) is the single largest environmental risk factor for health worldwide: it caused 4.3 million premature deaths in 2012".

The current Covid-19 pandemic has brought an increased demand, beyond health concerns, for solar power for rural families in Africa. Solar TV enables students to access educational programmes and information whilst schools are in shutdown. Reliable, at-home device charging enables families to stay connected despite distance, and affordable payment plans assist those whose work has been affected.

In Zambia, Azuri has introduced a novel payment plan which offers customers the option to pay a significant proportion of their overall system cost during the more profitable harvest seasons where they have more readily available income. Then during the less profitable months, they pay a much smaller contributory fee. This reduces pressure on customers to save money throughout the year for future payments. Azuri's customer-centric model is making clean, renewable solar energy even more affordable to continue connecting the unconnected despite the pandemic.

'Given a choice, those who depend on polluting energy sources would make the switch to clean fuels and technologies, much as residents of today's developed countries traded coal stoves for gas burners, and oil lamps and candles for electricity and light bulbs, almost a century ago'

- WHO.



Azuri  
#SolarStories  
Kenyan farmer Joseph Otieno is using pay-as-you-go solar to power smarter farming

70%

The percentage of people in East Africa who rely on agriculture for their livelihood

3%

of Homabay residents has access to mains electricity

The nearest kiosk for phone charging, kerosene and candles is 4-5km round trip from Joseph's home

40% saving  
Joseph has cut his seed costs by forty percent since connecting with farming advice groups

## Smart farming requires smart energy

The agricultural sector in Kenya continues to be the main source of livelihood for over 70% of the country's population.

Azuri customer Joseph Otieno, 48, is a farmer from Rangwe in Homabay County, Kenya, who grows maize and kale on his 1 hectare smallholding to help support his wife and four children.

Despite agriculture being the main economic activity in the county, Homabay is still a net importer of food crops and livestock products. Outdated farming methods and techniques are among the key reasons farm output remains low.

Until recently, the local market has been the only avenue for Joseph to sell his maize and kale. His average income from farming per quarter was about KSh4,000, which was largely taken by school fees and essential household needs. Of course, like many in the informal economy, Joseph has a second income, spending a portion of his day working off-farm on building sites.

Off-farm employment provides an important risk-management tool. In times of negative shocks that affect agriculture, such as droughts, families can rely on a second income to maintain their households.

"Joseph is one of just a few smallholder farmers to have a smartphone. He managed to save up loyalty points and redeem the points with his mobile provider. Joseph's aim was to accessing farming information online and download apps to help connect him to co-operatives and buyers. But without access to mains electricity, he was limited by the cost of having to find ways to keep his phone constantly charged.

*I knew that with a smartphone I would be able to learn more about the right ways of farming and that I could sell my produce to customers online. I thought I would also be able to sell my maize and kale much quicker than walking to market and looking for buyers"*

Since having Azuri solar power installed in his home, Joseph has been able to charge his phone in the evenings ready for the next day, saving time and money. Joseph has also joined a WhatsApp group set up by the Homabay Agricultural Board that shares farming tips including where to buy certified seeds, the best time to plant, the placement of seed, fertilising and ways to reduce post-harvest wastage. The group shares weather updates and warnings, and event updates on when the County or the National Government Cereals and Produce Board requires stock.

Advice on better farming techniques has helped Joseph improve crop yields and make savings. Buying seeds via the Homabay Agricultural Board WhatsApp group, combined with better planting techniques, Joseph has cut his seed costs by 40% and is using less seed for greater yields.

Joseph still relies on casual work at building sites to supplement his farming income, but solar has also helped him stay a step ahead. The ability to keep his smartphone continually charged and connected to WhatsApp groups has helped him increase income by more than 50%. Joseph can see where and when workers are needed and put his name forward, rather than chasing jobs or waiting for calls or texts from friends or family.

Thanks to pay-as-you-go solar, Joseph can run a proactive household rather than reactive, taking control of his finances and using the resources available to him to increase productivity and plan ahead. In fact, Joseph is now saving to build a new home and possibly buying more farmland to keep expanding his businesses. Social media and PayGo solar are revolutionising farming practices in Kenya.

[> Read more inspiring stories](#)