


Solar Suitcases light the way to safer healthcare in Madagascar

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Janice Biehn

March 26, 2026



Nurse Itelvina looks forward to the installation of the Solar Suitcase in her clinic.

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In 2025, Alongside Hope continued its almost decade-long project to provide life-saving solar power to rural health clinics without reliable electricity. *Coming Alongside Hope with Light* raised more than \$170,000 to install Solar Suitcases in Mozambique and Madagascar. The Solar Suitcase is mounted to the clinic wall and connects to a solar panel on the roof. The suitcase opens to reveal two medical grade lights, a fetal Doppler, a head lamp, phone charging outlets and more, all powered by the sun.

Since 2016, Alongside Hope has funded 79 Solar Suitcases in Mozambique's Nampula Province, working with local partner EHALE, and supply partner We Care Solar. This third phase in 2025 raised funds to install an additional 35 Solar Suitcases in Mozambique, and 14 Solar Suitcases in Madagascar with Pivot Health.

Reliable electricity is essential for safe childbirth, nighttime emergencies and patient care. Without reliable electricity at night there can be tragic consequences. Health workers struggle in near-darkness, unable to detect life-threatening conditions, treat complications or deliver timely emergency care.

In Madagascar, many facilities in Vatovavy region operate without stable power. Pivot Health is a non-government organization that works alongside the Ministry of Health. When the 14 Solar Suitcases arrived in Madagascar, expert technician Wadson Muchemwa trained the Pivot and Ministry of Health teams in Solar Suitcase installation and maintenance. “This involved a combination of didactic and hands-on learning with a core group,” said Madeleine Beebe, Director of Development for Pivot Health. “They then went on to install the Solar Suitcases and train health staff at each centre on their upkeep and use. The core group worked with Wadson to absorb the information they needed and master the installation process.”

Now 14 maternity wards in Nosy Varika and Mananjary are fully equipped with dependable lighting and power for childbirth, nighttime emergencies and maternal and newborn care. These upgrades mark a major step toward more resilient service delivery across the region, reducing health facilities’ vulnerability to power interruptions and strengthening the safety and quality of care in remote communities.

“As any midwife knows, babies decide when they are ready to be born,” said Mauthaline Antonie Raharilalaina, a midwife and head of Fanivelona Health Centre in Nosy Varika District. “Before, when a birth happened at night, we would use the flashlights on our phones for light. It is such a relief to know that we no longer have to manage nighttime deliveries in the dark.”

While the work in Madagascar has proceeded smoothly, the installation of Solar Suitcases in Mozambique has faced delays due to administrative challenges and unprecedented flooding in Nampula and neighbouring Zambezia province, which damaged roads and bridges. However, Alongside Hope and EHALE are now confident the 34 suitcases will be installed in the very near future.





Nurse Itelevina looks forward to the installation of the Solar Suitcase in her clinic.

They can't come soon enough for Itelevina, a nurse at the Zimpeto Health Centre. "Performing a delivery in the dark is one of the most difficult experiences I have faced as a nurse, and it is a constant challenge here."

Nurse Zulmira of the Boquisso Health Centre echoes Itelevina's anticipation. "It will be a great advantage because with this support, light will reach the areas that remain dark at night. It will improve the quality of patient care and make our work easier. It will also reduce costs for the facility. Sometimes we have to turn off other machines just to keep the maternity running."

While nurses and midwives and patients await, EHALE and Alongside Hope are working to finalize the installation plan, as well as select people who will be trained in specific considerations for the installation of the suitcases.

The needs in Mozambique are considerable. Despite the challenges in implementation, Alongside Hope remains committed to enabling health care workers to deliver babies safely during the night. For 2026, plans are underway to install 25 more Solar Suitcases in Nampula Province as well as neighbouring Zambezia Province.