

# Solar Publication

A regular and saveable module to build knowledge of solar power, build on Zimbabwe's experiences and build the Zimbabwean Solar Industry

**Vol 1  
Issue 3**

## How to get started

The cost is daunting.

No doubt about that.

However if you think it is a good idea, and want it, you can get it!

Perhaps slowly over time,

but it is an investment in yourself (always the best place to invest!), that should pay off. The best saving is from a geyser, so if money is the problem, start there.



**If you have lots of money, and can afford a turnkey solution, go for it!**

But then this publication is not aimed at you! Turnkey means / implies you buy a system where you simply 'turn a key' and it is all 'go' and working fine for you. If it goes wrong, pay someone to come and fix it!

### For the rest of us -

If your first step saves you money, you have to remember and discipline yourself, to invest those savings for the next step.

Solar works best / provides the most savings / gives optimum benefits, when it is managed properly. And solar implies a certain change of life and lifestyle - more relaxed, more 'natural'.

For example, two people want to get clean from a solar geyser, and they both get home after the sun has set. First - one has a bath, and the second person's bath is cold! If your geyser capacity is 100 litres, and the first bath takes 80 litres, your second bath will be cold. If the geyser automatically fills up as it is being used (yes, it is more convenient!), there is no longer sunshine on the geyser to heat the new water!

- They could take showers, and use less hot water.

- A larger capacity geyser, would hold more hot water.

If the geyser did not fill automatically there would be hot water in it until it was refilled. This is an available option, but requires planning, knowledge, and specific instructions to your installer.

If one could manage to get home at 16h30, and took an immediate shower, the final rays of the day could heat some of the inflow for the second.

Knowing and understanding - and even "being in touch with nature / the real world" makes it possible to overcome all obstacles.

### Cooperative

To get over initial costs needs thought. Cooperation could assist. One or many steps could be achieved with a cooperative association.

**For example, 10 people put in \$50 each every month. In two months, someone has a Solar Geyser, and savings start to happen. In twenty months (or less as the savings accumulate) everyone has a geyser, and is contributing to the next step.**

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## Ownership

Another problem is that the vast majority of Zimbabweans (far more than 20 years ago) live in rented accommodation. The law is generally that anything 'fixed' to the property belongs to the property owner (the landlord). So if you, the renter, put panels up, you are legally giving it to them. And perhaps rightly so, if your installation has altered his building (even if just broken tiles?) The landlord has a right to something.



Communication is the key to most things. Talk to them.

- Anything that enhances their property, and therefore makes it more attractive to rent, they should be keen to have, and should pay for.
- However, it benefits the renter more than the landlord, so why should they pay? And why should *your* need affect *their* cash flow? Both sides have a point.

But, over time, both will benefit. Perhaps they have the capital to invest, and you can pay them over time? Perhaps you have income to invest, and they could pay you over time (a reduced rental)?

All this requires discussion and it would be better if you both had a firm understanding of how it all works, to avoid confusion.

For example, there are many inverters. Some can be set up to work when there is sun, without any battery. As batteries are about



80 percent of the cost of a solar system, and they are the only parts that 'age', wear out, and need replacement, perhaps the landlord could buy panels and inverter, and the renter (if they want after dark power) would provide the batteries, and take them when they leave.



The landlord would have a more valuable property and the renter would save money when the sun is out!



However, there would need to be an agreement, which might include:

- Who could install / remove items to prevent damage.
- Who would be the 'expert' to consult.
- Times (length of agreement).
- Places (where they could and could not be installed).

## Modular

This modular approach could be used to get started in a place you own too.

Why not start with panels and inverter only?



Batteries should never be 'mixed'. It is best practice - considerably best practice - to have all the same batteries. All the same:

- Type
- Age
- Size
- Specifications

So if you start without, and run what you want while the sun is up, you have your made a first step. You are starting to save, you are teaching yourself to learn and

understand, you are starting to manage. No evening or night time entertainment, no

lights, but, fridge and freezer cold all day, no food spoilt, run your office, vacuum the floor, wash the clothes - during the day.



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