

Alleviating poverty

Solar power project lights up remote village in Busia

The project kicked off a year ago but faced challenges due to stringent Government regulations

By JOSEPHAT SIROR

A Portuguese-based technological firm has unveiled a lighting project in grass-thatched houses in Sidonge, a remote village in Busia County.

The project kicked off a year ago but faced challenges due to stringent regulations by the Government.

Last week, locals were ecstatic following the installation of the system in the first 12 households.

Project designer and managing director of Changing Rural Lives organisation Vivian Vendelino said the combined solar, biogas and water system would enable residents access essential needs.

Dubbed *Kadura rural village energy solution*, the innovation comprises three integrated units operated in a central unit.

The system consists of a solar photo-voltaic course, water and biogas units.

The whole system depends entirely on solar energy harvested from the sun.

ANIMAL MANURE

The biogas system is filled with raw animal manure, which is then decomposed in a process that eventually ends up with sacks of gas and fertiliser, which can be used for domestic purposes.

"The process-control unit of the biogas system uses energy

HUGE BENEFITS

The project will be of huge help to rural life and the environment in the following ways:

- Improved health due to reduction of raw water consumption and inhalation of fumes from open fire cooking and kerosene lamps
- Decreased use of and dependency on kerosene, wood, and coal
- Clean energy generated from renewable resources
- Improved agricultural output
- Reduced deforestation and carbon emissions as dependence on wood and coal decreases.
- Access to these services creates an impetus for increasing time available for productive, income generating tasks and increasing wealth over time.

from the solar. It has various levels which perform different tasks of cleaning raw manure to produce biogas," explained Mr Vendelino.

He said the project focused on the renewable material to avoid any environmental hazards.

On the water unit, he says: "We can filter to the tune of 1,000 litres of water an hour and 3,000 litres a day enough for six to eight families through ultra-violet technology."

The launch comes at the time when majority of Kenyans are still grappling to access electricity.

According to the firm, Kenya is the first among African countries to benefit from the project.



Managing Director and Founder, Changing Rural Lives Forever organization Vivian Vendelino (right) demonstrates how a special biogas polythene works as Centre for Africa Bio-Enterprise Executive Director Hannington Odame looks on. Locals will use the polythene to carry biogas for home use. (PHOTO: JOSEPHAT SIROR/STANDARD)

The project is billed as a solution to scarce electricity synonymous with rural villages across the country.

It is estimated that only 10 per cent of the rural population are connected with electricity. Harnessing solar and wind energy is the latest attempts to bridge the gap.

Local and foreign technology companies have in the recent past run series of renewable energy projects, but not so much in the remote areas.

Centre for African Bio-entrepreneurship (CABE) Executive

Director Hannington Odame said renewable energy projects could help relieve the country of costs associated with hydro-power generation.

HIGH LIVING STANDARDS

"With such projects, this country will feed its citizens as well as enhancing living standards," said Mr Odame, who was also involved in the implementation of solar energy project.

The project targets more than 100 houses first, but could be further replicated in other areas of the country.

Google launches music service

LOS ANGELES, Sunday

Google Inc has turned on the music at its new online store, aiming to wrest the lead from Apple Inc and Amazon.com Inc in audio entertainment distribution despite the absence of a major record label.

Google Music, with more than 13 million songs, will be integrated with Android Market, the company's online store for smartphone apps and videos as it plays catch-up with its rivals.

Apple, Amazon and Facebook have to varying degrees integrated music into their core online and mobile products.

Google Music will allow the Web search leader to do the same by letting consumers access music from various Internet-connected devices and easily share tracks with friends.

But analysts said the lack of soundtracks from Warner Music — a major label whose artists include Led Zeppelin and Prince, among others — will limit the appeal of Google Music.

"They've got to get that catalog filled pretty quickly," said Mike McGuire, an analyst at industry research firm Gartner. "It's a launch, but it's kind of like a work-in-progress."

Google Music was unveiled at a splashy event at the Mr Brainwash Studios in Hollywood, California on Wednesday last week.

Google has negotiated US deals with three of the four major music companies: Vivendi SA's Universal Music Group; Sony Corp's Sony Music Entertainment; and EMI.

It has also signed deals with the increasingly influential independent label group Merlin and London-based Beggars' Banquet label group, home to the year's biggest selling artist, Adele. —Reuters