CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

INSTALLATION

Solar for Health Project (S4H)

Summary

Country	Uganda
Implementer	Action for Rural Women Empowerment (ARUWE)
Target groups	Pregnant women and new-born children
Duration	09/2021 – 09/2022
Type of energy use	Electrification

Challenge

The frequently interrupted electricity supply in the rural regions of Uganda makes medical care difficult and poses a deadly danger to patients. In the Sembabule District with more than 200,000 inhabitants, the insufficient power supply affects a total of six health centres of different sizes. On average, up to 100 people are treated in each of these centres per day. Every week, about 45 expectant mothers seek help there. But the mortality rate for mothers and newborns during childbirth is high. After dark, the centres rely on paraffin lights, which makes it especially difficult to attend to night-time emergencies. Coal is still the most common basic material for boiling water and sterilising instruments. Medicines are missing or spoil due to lack of continuous refrigeration. Operations often have to be cancelled or postponed, which has already claimed many lives.

Impact Logic

In cooperation with the District Health Officers, ARUWE identified three suitable health centres, one in Busheka, one in Kasaalu and one in Kyaabi. The project brings together all key stakeholders, including national and local government officials, health managers, PV technicians and medical professionals. After the technical installation of the systems for solar energy generation, storage and cooling, the project focuses on training the technical staff in the health centres. In several training measures, the employees are trained in the operation and maintenance of the PV systems in order to ensure their functionality beyond the project period.

Innovative Project Elements

The S4H project provides more reliable and efficient sources of energy which are independent from the National grid. The national grid proves often not reliable and cannot be accessed by two of the targeted health centres at all. With an off-grid renewable energy supply, rural facilities gain the reliable and unlimited power supply that they need.
The solar system attracts more patients to the health centres because the system offers additional benefits of charging phones and lamps to the patients and their caretakers. Thereby, the work of the village health teams is made easier as less effort is required to convince communities to come for health services. The highest influx of people seeking health services at Kasaalu was registered during the national campaigns for mass immunisation against Covid-19. Kasaalu was the only immunisation centre in the entire Mabindo sub county because the project provided the means to run a refrigerator and solar system which guaranteed full time preservation of the vaccines. It is for this reason that the district is reconsidering Kasaalu for elevation to health centre level III (a higher level stands for a larger and better equipped health centre as well as more funds from the government).

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.gruene-buergerenergie.org

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