



14 August 2014 - Over 80% of the Ugandan population lack electricity and depend on either indoor fireplaces or petroleum lamps for lighting. Both methods are relatively dangerous, bad for the environment, and can be related to respiratory diseases, which are among the leading causes of death in the country.

The yearly cost of petroleum for lamps also amounts to around 150,000 Uganda Shillings (around €43), which is a lot of money for poor families.

A new and simple solution helps to solve all of these problems. A simple solar cell lamp now provides light to thousands of homes, and more lamps are on the way from Denmark. The solar cell lamps require no fuel, are non-polluting, and are not hazardous in any way.

Lighting helps the children study and families to have a higher income

The project to send solar lamps to Africa was initiated by Helle Pasgaard from Energi Nord A/S in 2010 and is called “Lys i Afrika” (Light in Africa).

Helle Pasgaard has since then travelled to Uganda several times to supervise the project and has received widespread praise:

“Many locals have told me that their children no longer suffer from sore eyes when they read and that their cough has disappeared.”

The lamp, which is named “Little Sun” was developed by Danish-Icelandic artist Olafur Eliasson and an engineer called Frederik Ottesen.

After a day of collecting energy from the sun, the transportable lamp can provide light for three hours at maximum capacity and several more at a lesser force. The light hence gives children the ability to study in the evening and the adults the ability to craft things that they can sell in the local market the next day.

“Those who own stores can also extend their opening hours, which enables them to earn more money as the light attracts customers,” says Helle Pasgaard.

Not humanitarian aid

The success of the project is closely linked to Energi Nord’s cooperation with local partners. The organization cooperates with Nordisk Folkecenter and the local environmental organization JEEP. Due to a successful partnership with a local Ugandan partner, the lamps are sold for only €4,5.

“We don’t consider our work to constitute humanitarian aid and we do not give out the solar cell lamps for free. When people pay for the lamps they will also take better care of them and repair them if they get broken,” explains Helle Pasgaard. According to her, these are vital elements in

assuring the continued success of the project. Equally, it is worth noticing that local lamp repairmen are being educated. The solar cell lamp project thus also helps to create jobs in Uganda.

Additional information:

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