



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, DESIGN, ART AND TECHNOLOGY
(CEDAT)

PRESS RELEASE

THE SOLAR ENERGY KIOSK: TAKING ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY TO RURAL COMMUNITIES

The Centre for Energy and Energy Conservation (CREEC), under the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology, Makerere University is carrying out research in the area of “Rural Electrification in Uganda - Improving access to modern types of energy”.

In this project, four pilot plants with different renewable energy technologies will be implemented with technical assistance from CREEC. One of these pilot plants consists of a solar PV system for an energy kiosk.

The energy kiosk powered by a solar PV system will provide services like internet services, rent of portable DVD players, stationery, phone and solar lamp charging for a small village.

The kiosk will be deployed in Ntenjeru, Mukono District.

In remote areas, “Pico PV” products with end-user prices of US\$ 20-150 and low maintenance costs have become of interest. These products include small solar lamps, flashlights, lanterns, or home systems which provide bright LED lighting, charge radios and cell phones. Such products will be offered in the energy kiosk to have a platform to enhance the product features and quality by getting field experience. Other services to be offered include; low power consuming PC with Internet connection, scanner, printer and copy-machine and portable DVD players for charging and renting

The energy kiosk is an innovative solution to give off-grid areas access to better lighting, communication (via internet / mobile phone charging) and the possible “help to help themselves” by providing energy and education.

For sustainability, the services provided by such an energy kiosk have to be paid for at an affordable fee hence it gives a profitable business opportunity from which local people will benefit as well.

The energy kiosk is an ideal platform for research in solar lighting products (pico-PV). Companies all over the world have produced pico-PV products for dissemination but some of them are of low quality causing serious implications on consumer trust in the new technology. The energy kiosk will be in position to conduct tests on the lamps by lending

them out to test users. This will help to monitor performance, test lamp behavior and get feedback on consumer preference, among many. Previous lab tests have focused the awareness of governments and donors on the importance of quality control and customer information however, field tests in different countries with sufficient sample sizes are needed for a better understanding of pico-PV performance under real-life conditions and to identify gaps in the emerging draft lab test procedures, the energy kiosk then provides a solution to such problems.

The private sector actors lack basic market information on renewable energy technology. These issues include market potentials, local consumer preferences and willingness to pay. The results from this research can be used to help in coming up with the decision on if and how to enter this new market segment.

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