Cameroon solar power

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Upon completion of the project extensions, Release’s total projects will provide energy to approximately 200,000 households in Cameroon, as estimated by ENEO. This will result in an annual electricity production of around 141.5 GWh. With the added storage capacity, the installation will ensure a stable electricity supply even during peak hours.

"This extension is a testimony to the success of the initial projects and to the benefits provided by our innovative offering. By increasing the installed capacity in the country, we are reaffirming our collaboration with ENEO and our commitment to Cameroon as a key market for our solutions," says Hans Olav Kvalvaag, CEO at Release.

"In addition to improving electricity supply in Cameroon and significantly reducing the cost and CO2 emissions from alternative generation based on diesel supply, these pioneering leasing contracts with ENEO are serving as a model for access to affordable clean energy for other countries and large energy consumers in the region. We have the funding available to support significant growth and expect to close and start implementing several additional projects from our pipeline in the coming months," added Kvalvaag.

“Our successful partnership with Release by Scatec has greatly benefited the local population in northern Cameroon by eliminating blackouts. This new project will further reduce our dependency on diesel and save the government millions of dollars in fuel costs,” noted H.E. Gaston Eloundou Essomba, Minister of Water and Energy, Republic of Cameroon.

Herself an indigenous Mbororo woman, Buba knew through interviews and research she had conducted after university graduation that the lack of electricity was one of the greatest difficulties faced by her people.

In this era of rapid technological development, energy poverty can affect almost every aspect of life. Without power, it is difficult to communicate, to learn, to cook, and to earn money. Isolated communities are also deprived of a window to the outside world - a particularly dangerous privation during a global pandemic and domestic unrest.

"I saw that a lack of electricity is one of the greatest challenges faced by indigenous communities," Buba said in an interview. "So, I said, "Okay, let me see how I can help them because they are cut off from the mainstream society.""

With funding from the Global Environment Facility"s Small Grants Programme (SGP) through its Indigenous Peoples Fellowship, she embarked on an initiative that has delivered multiple benefits by introducing solar energy to indigenous women in the communities of Yolo, Dedango, and Botombo.

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Cattle-rearing is the main economic activity for Cameroon"s one million Mbororo, the country"s largest indigenous group, but the lack of electricity makes it difficult for these pastoral people to realize the full economic potential of their generations-old expertise.

"Now we have trained them on how they can transform this into other dairy products - like yogurt, cheese and butter--that they can preserve using the solar power and then sell to generate income," Buba said.

Not long after the project began, spreading conflict in Cameroon"s northwest forced Buba to make some adjustments. Perhaps the largest of these was the relocation of the team"s original dairy factory from the original site in Bali Nyonga eastward to the town of Sabga.

Still, Buba"s experience of leading a project during a crisis has taught her valuable lessons. She passed some of these on last month, during the GEF"s virtual Consultations with Civil Society on Enhancing Climate Resistance, which was co-hosted with the UNDP-managed SGP and the GEF CSO Network.