

# Solar Energy Enables Sustainable Supply of Clean Piped Water in Mayuge district

**T**he idea to shift from constructing hand-pumps (boreholes) to solar mini powered water schemes by Ministry of Water and Environment has proven to be a very successful undertaking.

The Ministry introduced solar energy to replace hand-pumps because the latter require using a lot of energy by water users to access or draw/pump water from a borehole.

So, using hand-pumps has always proven challenging, mostly to women, girls and children in general. Yet in most cases, it is these people who are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that there is adequate water in homes.

In rural areas where some families do not yet have a tap stand in their homes, children are always told to first fetch water early in the morning before they

go to school.

In cases where families do not have school-going children, it is women that sacrifice their morning chores to first fetch water.

This means that more time is dedicated to pumping water at a borehole than concentrating on activities like farming and education.

The Ministry, therefore, introduced solar energy as a cheaper source of energy than electricity or national grid.

The use of national grid or electricity to sustain water supply is costly since it comes with paying bills.

With solar energy, there are no service bills to pay, thus making it easy for water users to pay a considerable water bill that enables the Ministry or



Micheal Wamala the scheme operator points at the solar panels of Nakalanga piped water scheme



the operator to sustain operation and maintenance of the water and sanitation scheme.

In Mayuge district, the Ministry through Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Department constructed Nakalanga solar powered water and sanitation scheme.

The scheme is located in Nakalanga B village in Mayuge district on the shores of Lake Victoria.

The scheme serves the entire population of Bukareba parish, Nakalanga village, Namuyongo island and Walumbe landing site.

There was a hand-pump/borehole until the Ministry intervened and improved the source to serve many people.

Apart from using water from the solar powered scheme for home uses, communities also use the water to irrigate their gardens. This has increased food production in the area and consequently reduced cases of malnutrition.

Beneficiaries from the areas of Nakalanga testify that the water quality is good and the tariff is friendly.

The scheme operator, Micheal Wamala, says it is easy for children, girls, women and the elderly to fetch water since it does not require energy like a hand-pump.

Wamala adds that the scheme operates using 28 solar panels and 4 water reservoir tanks.

"Recently, one of the tanks burst and the Ministry replaced it with a new so there is constant water supply," Wamala states.

He reveals that over 800 customers come to the public tap-stand which shows that the



A view of the borehole which acts as a water source

“With solar energy, there are no service bills to pay, thus making it easy for water users to pay a considerable water bill that enables the Ministry to sustain operation and maintenance of the water and sanitation scheme,”



Nabirye Hajira (Right) with other beneficiaries of Nakalanga Rural water scheme, fetching clean water (1)

water and sanitation scheme benefits a big population.

"We receive over 800 customers here because the tariff is Ugshs50 per jerrycan which all people find it easy to pay," Wamala reveals.

One of the beneficiaries identified as Nabirye Hajira a resident of Nakalanga B was full of excitement as she revealed how the use of solar to pump water has contributed to development in the area.

"We used to walk long distances looking for water which was always contaminated. This water is clean and

nearer our homes," Nabirye narrates.

The system has an active water and sanitation committee led by a chairperson, secretary and treasurer.

The committee ensures smooth running of the water and sanitation scheme by sensitizing communities on the health benefits of consuming clean piped water, using it for irrigation and above all to keep paying for water to enable sustainable operation and maintenance.

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