



# WWF's EU Solar Project Improving Education Standards!



When the sun sets across most parts in rural Uganda, where majority of the population has no access to electricity, the school day ends and learning stops. For an entire half day, pupils and teachers must suspend academic activities—reading, homework, tutoring, grading—until the natural light returns in the morning.

For a typical child in rural Uganda, access to education remains the most important means of acquiring the knowledge and skills that are essential for professional advancement and social self-determination. The quality of education these children receive is affected by the availability of electricity.

Rural areas have the least number of people connected to the electrical grid, yet schools and students in these areas must compete for results with their urban counterparts. For those lucky to be on-grid in these rural areas, electricity is often unreliable and expensive, while few alternatives exist.

While the Government of Uganda has committed to improve educational access for all children, limited access to electricity poses the biggest handicap to rural schools.

Solar systems are one of the options to address this challenge. The advantage of this option is that it can act as a catalyst in various areas: from lighting to health, and to learning quality and safety.



Teachers, pupils and parents of Mughete Primary school celebrating the excellent performance in PLE 2019.

The installation of Institutional solar systems in primary schools in Western Uganda by WWF has been life-changing on many levels. The solar systems are having a major impact on the access to quality education for pupils there.

The systems provide safe, reliable and affordable electricity in the schools. This has enabled the lighting of classrooms and teachers' quarters and powering printers and computers.

The systems have had a massive impact on opportunities for pupils to excel. It has not only given them light to study even in the night, but also increased their access to teachers who have since moved their homes from the nearby trading centres to the teachers' quarters, thanks to the lighting from the solar.

Early this year, two days after the release of the primary leaving exams results of 2019, pupils, teachers and parents of Mughete Primary school holding WWF and EU branded fliers were still dancing and ululating.

The school had registered 8 candidates in division one and the rest of the pupils (50) passed in division two. For the first time in the history of the school, there were no pupils passing with divisions three and four as had been the norm.

They attribute this excellent performance to the installed solar institutional systems.

The head teacher, Rev Gideon Muhindo, stated that this was only possible because of EU and WWF.

*"The solar system enabled our candidates to have extended reading and revision hours with their teachers. It also allowed for extension of teaching hours in the night which enabled the teachers to complete the syllabus in time. Additionally, the Solar system lighted up the teachers premises which motivated them to stay within the school premises, which meant punctuality for lessons and availability to the pupils,"* he explained.

At Kisamba Primary School, Johnson Basolene, a teacher noted that even though their pupils are bright, previously, they hadn't been getting enough time to revise their books or go for preparatory studies as pupils in other schools do.

*"Most pupils come from families without electricity in their homes and this limits their revision in the night and very early in the morning,"* he explained adding that the light from the kerosene lamps is not only unhealthy for reading but quite expensive for some households to afford the kerosene.

However, the lighting of the school with the solar system enabled them to start a boarding section for candidates.

*"Additionally, we introduced weekly tests since we were and still are using our own printers powered by the solar system,"* he said, adding that it was not possible before because of the high printing costs from the commercial service providers.

Schools have also registered an increase in pupil enrollment and retention.

According to the District Education Officer, Mainja S. George, there was a remarkable performance improvement from schools installed with these solar systems in the PLE results for 2019 as compared to 2018.

*"We are grateful for the support from EU and WWF towards improving education in Kasese. Mughete primary school has been upgraded to a model school in our district,"* he said.

In September 2018, WWF completed the installation of solar PV systems for 31 schools and 20 health Centres in 6 districts.

These installations were done with funding from the European Union through WWF under the *Scaling-Up Rural Electrification Using Innovative Solar PV Distribution Models Project*. Its overall objective is to improve rural livelihoods and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions through widespread access to clean and renewable sources of energy by 2025.

Through the same partnership, the project established a distribution network of Community Based Organisations that has installed more than 3,000 solar home systems in 20 districts of the Albertine Graben—a region globally known for its rich biodiversity. This has reduced the risks associated with households' use of kerosene both health wise and economically.

## Improved performance of some of the schools installed with solar in Arua, Kasese and Masindi districts

NAME	Candidates' performance									
	2018					2019				
	D1	D2	D3	D4	U	D1	D2	D3	D4	U
KISAMBA P/S	0	13	16	2	1	0	38	20	0	0
MUGHETE P/S	12	46	2	0	0	8	50	0	0	0
YIVU SS	1	6	17	55	0	3	13	19	26	0
KOLOLO SS	3	14	40	53	0	1	8	30	42	0
Mt Wati SS	0	12	19	27	5	1	8	13	25	1
St Thereza H/S	2	13	21	24	0	1	8	22	24	1
KIBBALI P/S	0	1	12	12	11	3	14	16	3	0
OLEBA SS	2	16	33	27	0	4	22	48	0	0
Kalyango Junior Sch	0	19	9	0	0	2	1	16	1	0
Kikinura Bright J/S	0	7	26	4	0	0	2	30	10	2