

Masindi residents get electricity, plan for development

MASINDI

By Priscillar Nyamahunge

Residents of Pakanyi sub-county, Masindi district who recently got connected to the national grid, have expressed willingness to use it to develop their areas.

The villages were connected through the Rural Electrification Agency (REA), a government initiative to power up rural Uganda.

Electric cable lines and transformers have been installed and connected. People will only be required to wire their houses and then receive electricity.

The villages connected include Kisanja, Kyamugwera, Kisabagwa, Labongo, Kihonda, Kilanyi, Kijumbura, Kihaguzi, Bokwe, Kasenyi and Kigaragara.

Other villages are Kidwera,

Nyakanika, Nyakarongo, Kitengule, Kitanyata, Kyangamwoyo and Kiruli; all located in Pakanyi sub-county.

According to residents, they are only waiting for the commissioning of the power line in order to start benefiting fully from the initiative.

Residents react

Charles Galibahwera, the defence secretary of Kihaguzi market, said: "We are excited about being connected to the national grid. We did not expect to receive it soon."

"Electricity should not be used for only entertainment, but rather to create employment." Pakanyi councillor

Galibahwera said electricity will help create development initiatives, including the setting up of maize mills.

"As farmers, we can start adding value to our products," Galibahwera said.

Francis Tolu, a resident of Kijumbura village, which is

about 16km from Masindi town, said people will be able to set up businesses such as bars and restaurants where they can sell refreshments and food.

Yosephat Rwebembera of Kijumbura said many people have been using solar-

powered energy, but cannot use it to run businesses, such as maize processing mills.

Galibahwera said solar power cannot be relied on during the rainy season.

Rosemary Katusiime, the treasurer of Kijumbura village, said: "We have not been dealing in perishable businesses, but once we get on the national grid, people will buy refrigerators for cold storage."

Challenges feared

Leonard Bagamba, a resident, however, said people in the entire sub-county need to be sensitised about the use of electricity, in order to avoid any incidences of fire outbreaks that may be caused because of poor connections or management.

Strategies

Melekizedeki Kanaginagi, the

district councillor for Pakanyi sub-county, advised residents to get connected on the grid and be ready to tap into the opportunities that come with electricity, which will help them develop.

"Electricity should not be used for only entertainment, but rather to create employment by setting up businesses that will develop the community," Kanaginagi said.

Denis Tumwesige, a resident of Kijumbura, said the electrification of the area should be an avenue for the youth to create or even access jobs.

"When businesses, such as welding, carpentry and mechanic garages, are set up, the youth will have the opportunity to learn new skills through apprenticeship and get employed," Tumwesige said.

WHAT RESIDENTS SAY ABOUT ELECTRICITY

Mark Muhimbo

The community needs to be advised about which organisations and individuals to use when wiring their houses. Otherwise many unscrupulous people will claim to be electricians. We do not want to be duped by unqualified people who will do substandard work.

Yosam Gucwaki

Power should be connected to all health centres in villages so that they provide healthcare services at any time of the day.