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The community of Chã das Caldeiras on the island of Fogo is unique. It is one of the few places in the world where people have built a life in the crater of an active volcano.

Fogo is one of a collection of islands and archipelagos that make up the isolated nation of Cabo Verde, also known as Cape Verde, which is situated some 375 miles off the coast of West Africa.

Clearly, there are some risks when it comes to building one's life in the crater of a volcano. However, for the nearly 800 residents of Chã das Caldeiras, the "what ifs" associated with the volcano have been outweighed by other pressing concerns — including a lack of running water, access to reliable electricity and poverty.

A new solar minigrid aims to solve the electricity challenges facing the community, and it will help bolster the economic situation as well.

The people of Chã das Caldeiras have a strong connection to the land that their families have been cultivating for generations.

The volcanic soil in the crater is incredibly fertile, driving the largely agrarian economy.

Local farmers grow a variety of fruits and vegetables, but the region is especially known for its coffee and wine. It also has a burgeoning tourist industry.

The minigrid, which includes a 40-kW solar array, 150-kWh battery energy storage system, 50-kV generator and a 5-kilometer (3.1 mile) underground electricity distribution network, will provide reliable electricity to the residents and help drive economic growth.

A total of 210 homes and businesses will be connected to the minigrid, which was launched last week during a ceremony attended by the country's prime minister, Ulisses Correia e Silva.

The minigrid project was developed by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) in partnership with AgroCoopCha, a local cooperative.

Funding was provided by the Cabo Verde government, the U.S. Agency for International Development and ECREEE via its ECOWAS Special Intervention Fund (ESIF).

The Fogo minigrid is one of many electrification initiatives developed by ECREEE and funded by ESIF. In



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the past year, the organization has launched clean energy minigrids, solar home systems and solar pumping systems for drinking water and irrigation across West Africa.

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