



# Microgrid applications kampala

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BALA, Uganda, May 28, 2024 - A new solar microgrid promises to improve legal and municipal services in rural Uganda. The "Justice Microgrid," a 14.25-kilowatt photovoltaic (PV) system located in Bala, provides power for a legal support center, local government buildings, and community spaces. The pilot project, a partnership between the Solar Electric Light Fund (SELF) and BarefootLaw, aims to foster a more accessible and equitable justice ecosystem using clean, distributed energy.

Despite being connected to the national electric grid, Bala experiences frequent, often weeks-long power outages. This became a problem for BarefootLaw, a Uganda-based legal justice nonprofit. Their BarefootLaw Box (LawBox)--a community center in which people can receive free legal support--was established in 2022. Its reliance on computers, internet, and video conferencing meant that when the power went out, services also ceased.

BarefootLaw reached out to SELF for a solution. SELF developed a solar-powered microgrid for the LawBox and expanded the system to meet other legal and municipal needs.

"You can have an incredible resource like the LawBox, but without reliable power, it doesn't matter," says Robert Freling, SELF's executive director. "Unreliable grids are all too common in these rural communities, and it obstructs access to crucial services. It's a major problem, but fortunately, it's one we can solve."

The microgrid provides power for lights, computers, internet, device charging, printing, and more. Staff can now serve more people with better resources, and keep their doors open through local blackouts.

"It is very important to have constant power at the LawBox," says Midi Awor, a Bala resident who received legal help after her livestock were stolen. "Whenever I come, I can easily be connected to a lawyer in Kampala using a television."

The microgrid also provides power for the courts, town council, police station, and community development office. In addition, solar streetlighting has been installed to improve safety and extend the hours available for commerce and community gatherings. All of this aims to create a more collaborative, transparent, and inclusive justice process.

"People can now tell their stories. Town officials are listening and have the resources to make change. There is support and collaboration," says Gerald Abila, founder of BarefootLaw. "Change is possible, and Bala is the blueprint."

The Solar Electric Light Fund (SELF) is a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit that uses solar energy to fight poverty and climate change. Since its founding in 1990, SELF has worked in dozens of countries, bringing



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clean energy where it's needed most. Whether powering schools in South Africa, or health clinics in Haiti, SELF uses the power of the sun to drive lasting change. Learn more at:

BarefootLaw is a nonprofit organisation, which uses technology and innovation to bridge the gap between people and justice. The organisation was founded in 2013 and has since provided simplified legal information and guidance to remote communities in Uganda, Malawi and Kenya through technology-enabled legal support and recently via "The BarefootLaw Box" - mobile offices and mediation centres. Through tools such as SMS, toll-free numbers, and AI-powered systems, BarefootLaw's efforts attract people, especially women, in rural areas and youth in urban and semi-urban areas.

BarefootLaw believes that if the law is made more readily available, people will use it to peacefully prevent and resolve their problems, leading to better livelihoods for themselves and their communities. Learn more at:

Today, the Belgian renewable energy company Tiger Power signs an agreement with the Ugandan government to power 3000 rural households and businesses in Kyenjojo. Currently, three communities lack access to electricity. By mid-2019 this will change. Tiger Power is building a solar power plant in each village backed up by on-site hydrogen production and storage. The technology keeps a black-out from happening and supplies electricity to the community, pollution- and fuel free.

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