



Microgrid applications senegal

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Africa's vast energy poverty (600 million without access) and abundant sunlight (approximately 3,000 reliable, uninterrupted hours of sunlight each year) make the continent a perfect environment for successful solar microgrid projects. West African nations like Senegal are joining many African countries beginning to create their own renewable energy future, in which solar power will eliminate kerosene lighting pollution, reduce costs, and free villagers from traveling long distances just to charge their cell phones. In the longer term, solar microgrids in Senegal will provide access to enough reliable electricity to transform communities, creating a higher quality of life and economic growth.

Non-profit organization Solar Village Project is now bringing solar microgrids to Senegal. The organization, whose mission it is to help "Indian and African families improve their lives through access, acquisition, maintenance, and knowledge of solar power systems in homes with no other power source," is developing microgrid solar arrays for seven off-grid Senegalese villages in the Sahel and Littoral regions. The organization is installing solar systems in the seven villages, for a total of 3,000 people that currently have no electricity access. The array will give villagers access to electricity for lighting, phone charging, and radios.

Last year, the organization first expanded its mission into Senegal, implementing the Cisse Masse Solar Village Project, bringing light and power to over 300 people and all 50 homes in the village. Four of the new projects are near this first in Sahel. To support this work, the organization is currently undertaking a crowdfunding campaign to generate some extra finance for the projects, which will be installed over a two-week period in winter 2017.

"The lessons learned from our initial project in the Cisse Masse Village will undoubtedly guide us during this second round of projects," says Joe Kselman, Solar Village Project director and founder. "The Cisse Masse project demonstrated that the same approach we have used in India, distributing individual solar power systems to every home, works in Senegal too. We're excited to expand our reach for this next round of projects in Senegal."

Senegalese-American singer-songwriter Akon was born in the U.S. but grew up in Senegal. He has described the energy poverty in his early environment and the culture shock he experienced moving to "futuristic" America. Several years ago, Akon was touring Africa and experienced "culture shock" again seeing the limitations still in place from lack of lighting and power. He said in interviews that it made no sense to him to be going back 10-15 years later and still seeing that same environment, and he was moved to action.

Along with childhood friend Senegalese-American political activist Thione Niang and Malian entrepreneur Samba Bathily, he created Akon Lighting Africa in 2014 and has set up operations in several countries, including Senegal. According to Forbes magazine, ALA received a \$1 Billion credit line from China Jiangsu International and hit the ground running.



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To date, the initiative has funded more than 1,200 solar micro-grids and 100,000 solar street lamps within at least 480 communities in 18 countries. Akon continues to promote this project throughout Senegal and Africa, planning to reach his goals in 25 countries by 2020.

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