

Solar Lamp workshop in Nyakrom, Ghana

From the 5th February to the 6th March 2007, Dr. Sam Essiamah, Chairperson of our Association "School Forests for West Africa e. V. "within the network " School Forests for West Africa – Children's Forest Worldwide" undertook a working trip to Ghana in order to organise a Solux-Solar lamp workshop together with experts from Solux e.V.

The solar lamps project was supported by BINGO Lotto Foundation of Lower Saxony, German Development Agency (DED) Regional Station in Goettingen and Partner Schools in Germany.

Purpose of the trip:

The Main purpose of the working trip was to accompany two solar experts (Mr. Waetzig and Mr. Barchewitz) from SOLUX e. V. to Ghana to organise and carry out a Solux-Solar lamp workshop. The involvement of the solar experts was promoted by "Senior Experts Service (SES) through the Federal Ministry of economic cooperation and development (BMZ). With the introduction of the solar lights, teachers and youngsters in Ghana were to be motivated as multipliers to work in the school forest project under the Motto „**Tree Planting for solar lamps** “. Nevertheless, this subproject adapts itself absolutely into the education for sustainable development and opens new perspectives for the population and the main project in the area of Environment protection, environmental education and global learning.

Schools involved in the project were visited within the period and a pipe-borne water was installed on the school compound of a partner school, Nyakrom Presbyterian Primary School. New schools were admitted into the project. An environmental centre being established at Ochiso/Ghana was also visited.

Another essential component of the trip was to win other cooperation partners for the project partner in Ghana. Talks were held with the German Embassy and the Energy Commission both in Accra, the Manager of the "Kakum Nature Park" in Cape Coast as well as businessmen in Accra and Kumasi.

Realization of the solar workshop in Nyakrom:

The workshop began on 19th February with eleven participants at Nyakrom Sec-Tech High School. Since it was not possible for Mr. Wärtzig, the instructor, to train many youngsters in several Workshops within a short time, the Partner Association in Ghana „Youth and Environmental Club,“ limited the number of participants to eleven with teachers in the majority. Teachers from Ghanaian schools with partner schools in Germany were preferred, so that they could later train the youngsters in workshops to assemble and repair the lamps themselves.

The provincial town "Nyakrom" in the central region was selected for the workshop because it lies close to the Ochiso environmental plot and is centrally located to other places with partner schools. Two journalists present at the beginning of the Workshops reported on radio and in the newspapers.

There were some difficulties in running the workshop due to failure of electricity supply. However, this problem is not only limited to Nyakrom, but occurs in the whole country. The electricity at the time was rationed because of low water level recorded in the Akosombo dam, due to lower amounts of rainfall believed to be caused in part by the massive deforestations. The time is therefore ripe for the government to search for alternative energy, in particular solar energy.

In spite of the difficulties, the Workshop was successful. The Workshop ended on the 2nd March after two weeks of intensive training. Mr. Wärtzig succeeded in training teachers and youngsters who had no previous knowledge about electronics to mount the solux solar lamps with simple tools (see photos). The Workshop reached its climax with a final celebration on the 2nd March which was attended by public personalities like Omanhene of the Agona Nyakrom Traditional Area, Nana Okofo Katakya Nyakoh Eku X, District Chief Executive, District Education Manager, etc. and the media. Each participant of the training workshop received an assembled solar lamp and a certificate which were distributed during the ceremony.

Few pictures on the Workshop are to be inferred on this homepage.

[\[Workshop\]](#)

Advancement of the solar project

The workshop at the Nyakrom Tech-Sec high school should be developed into a solar-lamp Centre to bundle up the activities of the solar project there. To achieve this, one needs constant supplies of spare parts of the solar lamp to carry out further Workshops. This is an important strategy of the project to train the participants further in the solar technology as well as to widen the introduction of the lamps in practice.

The young participants interested to open their own sales and repair shops should be supported with micro-credits since the demand for solar lamps is great. The media reports on the Workshop, the strong recommendation of the lamps by the German Embassy as well as the energy crisis in Ghana have contributed to the high demand.

Ghana has a predominantly young population and invests heavily in education and health care. In March 2007, 50 years of independence were celebrated. Ghana knows no armed conflicts and is therefore progressing steadily in her development. However, the energy crisis is pressing the government to think about the use of nuclear energy. This is because electricity from Akosombo dam, the main source, has to be rationed as a result of the low water level caused by many factors including deforestation.

Ref. www.ghanaweb.com : General News of Wednesday, 11 April 2007:
[Government opts for nuclear energy](#)

Solux e. V. represented by Mr. Barchewitz in cooperating with our association has developed a small, inexpensive LED-solar lamp (LED -50; €21,00 each) which will enable school children do their homework in the evening hours from 18:00 o'clock, to read and to communicate among other things. It concerns about 500 pupils and their families in Nyakrom/Ghana in the first project phase. We anticipate a "breakthrough" for the solar technology in the communities which will in turn provide jobs in the established solar workshop. This is because a survey conducted with 527 pupils showed that approx. 60% of them had no electric light in their homes although the provincial town has electricity. In addition, it was found out that in this region alone in Ghana there were more than five million kerosene lamps in use which could be substituted with solar lamps in stages. The lamps for the children involved in the project should be paid for by cost sharing between the parents / families through micro-credits and the Association in Germany. The centre with its staff should undertake the repairs.

It is intended to expand the project after evaluation of the data within the first half of the year. The main objective is the introduction of the project nationwide with the motto „ **a solar light for every school child** “. In so doing we anticipate a sustainable sensitization of the population about the use of regenerative energy and a real improvement of the quality of life for the school children.

The broad discussion on the world energy reserves and on the climate change sensitizes us for this subject. However, only practical work and the direct involvement of the so-called developing countries could turn things around for the better.

The solar-lamp project idea finds at the moment a positive resonance since it involves three important components namely school (education), school children and women (solar lamps acquisition for the family through micro-credits).

The use of solar lamps will be worthwhile since solar energy is a future energy for the Africa continent. We therefore wish to use this opportunity to request for support from interested sponsors who want the good of school children in Ghana and Africa at large.

Please contact us for more information about the Project

GEZ: The Board of Directors