



Capacity building in East-Africa to foster decentralised energy access: launch of Micro-Grid Academy first test course

24 Jan 2018, Nairobi – The first Micro-Grid Academy (MGA) course started last week on 15 January in Nairobi, and is currently training 40 local and international students. Beginning with a pilot trial, the MGA aims to fully launch a series of capacity building activities on decentralised renewable energy solutions to foster energy access in East-Africa, contributing to progress on UN SDG7. The project is coordinated by RES4Africa, in partnership with Enel Foundation, the national Kenyan Utility (KPLC), Strathmore University, AVSI and St. Kizito Vocational Training Institute, endorsed by EACREEE.

The MGA is a new capacity building platform located in KPLC Institute of Energy Studies & Research in Nairobi, that provides theoretical and practical training on energy access and decentralised renewable energy solutions to young East-African and international technicians and engineers. A real 30 kW mini-grid will be installed on-site in the next months to enhance the training possibilities.

The first MGA pilot course (January 15-25) gathered 40 students from Europe and East-Africa and is currently hosted in KPLC, Strathmore University and St. Kizito VTI premises. The course includes lecturers from KPLC, Strathmore University, UN Habitat, St. Kizito VTI, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Columbia University of New York, State University of New York, Sapienza University of Rome, Sigora and GIZ. The pilot MGA was sponsored by Tecnologie Solidali.

Access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy would positively impact all sectors of the economy in Sub-Saharan Africa, from health and education to female empowerment and business development, including job creation. Investing in distributed electricity generation can deliver efficient, clean, reliable and cheap energy to rural communities, given the region's low electrification rate, its vast size and its abundance in renewable energy resources. Fostering rural electrification and energy access through decentralised renewable energy applications also requires extensive capacity building to support local ownership for sustainable projects in the long run.

“Capacity building is one of the key enablers of economic development in Sub-Saharan Africa, and with this purpose the Micro-Grid Academy aims to foster knowledge transfer at the highest level, providing lectures and on-site training while bringing together local and international experts and students for a true knowledge exchange” reaffirmed Andrea Micangeli, Renewable Energy Systems Professor at Sapienza University of Rome, during the MGA presentation at the RES4Africa RES-EXPO conference in Nairobi on 23– 24 January 2018.

An inaugural site visit and certification ceremony took place at MGA premises in Nairobi on 22 January 2018 to formally introduce the project and its future course cycles. The aim is to organise a variety of theoretical and hands-on courses in the next 3 years gathering 300-500 African and international students and teachers in a holistic micro-grid training programme. In order to properly kick-start the project and make the MGA fully operational, there is a need for financial coverage both for the mini-grid implementation phase and for the 3-years training activities. RES4Africa is currently seeking support of both public and private funding entities.

Please visit MGA website: <http://www.iesr.ac.ke/index.php/mga>

To subscribe to Micro-Grid Academy please email: microgridacademy@kplc.co.ke

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