

## 247 Senegalese Trained in Solar Installation

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Earlier this month, the Senegalese subsidiary of German consulting group Gauff Engineering marked a major milestone in their pioneering 300-village electrification project, graduating 247 young Senegalese through their five-day intensive photovoltaic (PV) operations, maintenance and remote supervision course.

These qualified trainees are to lead in the delivery of stand-alone solar power mini-grids to 300 rural villages, bringing electricity to 20,000 households.

Already, 3,000 households across 44 villages have been brought online with this revolutionary new solar power deployment, utilizing 150 mini-PV power stations in the central Kaffrine, Kaolack and Fatick regions, northerly Louga and Saint-Louis, and Kolda in the south. The project is financed by the German development agency Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau, delivered in partnership with the Senegalese Rural Electrification Agency (ASER) and Moroccan-Senegalese Company for Electricity, 40 executives from the two firms being qualified through Gauff's training.

As is the case across the African continent, rural electrification in Senegal lags severely behind the impressive over 90% access rates in urban areas. Yet showing foresight, prescience and political poise surpassing that of many of its fellow African nations, Senegal has managed to double its rural electricity access rates in the past decade up from 24% in 2012. The ultimate goal, integral to H.E. President Macky Sall's \$20 billion Emergent Senegal Plan, is to achieve universal electrification for the nation by 2025, ahead of or in line with every other MSGBC nation.

To date, almost \$100 million has been devoted by the government to this cause, joined by over \$75 million from the Green Climate Fund. Settlements less than 10km away from existing power lines are added to the country's central grid but those exceeding this distance and boasting over 100 inhabitants will benefit from the extraordinary cost-effective versatility of the stand-alone solar mini grids.

The Gauff project is not alone in this quest. Following H.E. President Macky Sall's removal of VAT tariffs on solar panels and associated technologies in 2020, America's Exim Bank stepped in to

finance the deployment of solar mini grids to 415 villages, providing 330,000 people with electricity access. The project is being carried out by American renewable tech exporter Wendy Lamont, due for completion by 2023 – just ahead of Gauff’s own 300 village initiative which is set to take 48 months. The race is on to reach everyone by 2025, several million Senegalese still lacking access to power, but with public-private partnerships thriving, international direct investment in development and visionary leadership from government, there is no longer any doubt that every effort will be made to light the nation in the next three years.

As H.E. President Macky Sall lines up to open the MSGBC Oil, Gas & Power 2022 conference hosted in Senegal this year, electrification is top of the cards amidst the country, region and continent’s green recovery, over 800 MW of gas-to-power potential to be tapped by billions of dollars’ worth of projects coming online next year. To complement the Gauff 300 village project, the Senegalese government is working with ASER and other concessionaires to lower rural energy tariffs, sometimes triple those achieved by the state utility SENELEC in rural zones through robust tariff harmonization programs.

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