



Godfrey Kime / Kasese, Uganda

Mayor of a major Ugandan city who has instigated and oversees an ambitious 100% renewable project for the city and the surrounding district





INTRODUCTION

Godfrey Baluku Kime is the Mayor of Kasese, a city in Uganda with a population of 126,000 inhabitants. Kime has spearheaded an ambitious programme to shift his city and the wider district of Kasese to 100% renewable energy by 2020. Kime is motivated by the need to boost energy access in the region to improve living standards, increase public health and bolster the local economy. He is also responding to the deforestation caused by reliance on solid fuels for power and the obvious impacts of climate change that threaten the water supply and cultural identity.

Kime says, “my desire to set a 100% renewable goal was strongly motivated by the alarming climate-induced degradation of the snowcapped Rwenzori Mountains, from which the communities here derive their livelihood, water supply and identity. The people of the Rwenzori ‘Banya rwenururu’ get their name from the snow ‘Esyonzururu’. Without the snow, our name will be no more thus”.

PROJECT

The ambitious programme was launched in 2012, which is when Kime officially adopted the 100% renewable target for Kasese district. The aim is to transform the energy supply in the city of Kasese and the surrounding district. "I want to bring access to clean energy services for all domestic, productive and social needs in both rural and urban areas by 2020" says Kime. Only 7.6 % of the 135,000 households in the district have access to the national electricity grid so the district's ambitious target is being achieved by adopting a wide variety of different renewable sources including biomass, solar, geothermal and micro hydroelectric technologies.

Kime has helped Kasese develop a holistic approach and a suite of policies to deliver their 100% renewable vision. Renewable energy access has become a key deliverable for all government funded projects and institutions - including schools, health centers, markets and other public infrastructure.

Similarly, the Kime guided the district council to pass a policy providing tax-breaks for all renewable energy related businesses. The council is also providing traineeship for the installation, maintenance and distribution of renewable energy technologies.

To ratchet up national efforts to drive innovative solutions to energy access, climate impacts and other development challenges Kime is working with a range of stakeholders including universities, businesses and NGOs. He has helped to foster a partnership between the international NGO WWF and local local entrepreneurial business Bare Foot Power Uganda Limited - a social enterprise distributing solar lighting and charging systems to poor people in developing countries.

Kime says, "these kinds of collaborative efforts are allowing local businesses provide loans for small-scale solar in mountain villages - allowing the rural and urban population to invest in their own renewable energy solutions."



RESULTS

Kime's 100% renewable energy vision for Kasese has quickly earned the support of the national government, civil society organizations and the Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu Kingdom. "They have witnessed the project providing energy access for the first time to tens of thousands of people by harnessing off-grid solutions like solar. I can proudly say that the initiative has already benefited 26.8% of the residences in the Kasese district - including homes, schools, municipal services and small businesses." Today renewables are estimated to be supplying

26.8% of the total 146,000 household in the Kasese district with energy.

Renewable energy is helping to improve the daily quality of life as energy access rises. In the past 97% of the local population relied on charcoal and firewood for cooking which caused noxious fumes leading to health issues, particularly for women. Similarly, 85% of locals relied on kerosene for domestic electricity production, which is an expensive and inefficient fuel and imposes a significant financial burden on poorer families.

Kime explains that “solar for lighting and biogas for cooking has replaced the traditional Tadoba and the 3 stone method of cooking - reducing indoor pollution as a result.” At the same time, “the deployment of relatively cheap domestic solar systems is providing electricity for the many of the poor, freeing up money for other daily necessities like food and clothing.”

As a result of the increasing electrification rate many residents of Kasese have the power to run their own radio and TV sets for the first time, 26% of locals are using their solar systems to do this. Important lines of telecommunication in the district are opening up and becoming increasingly reliable due to the roll-out of solar phone charging facilities and solar run computers with internet access. Residents are increasingly able to access new forms of entertainment, each other and the outside world.

Biogas systems and energy saving stoves are improving community relations. “Conflicts as a result of groups searching for firewood have reduced, while the time spent to collect firewood is being used for other, more productive work”.

There are new jobs available for locals as the renewable energy sector expands in the region. Kime explains, “several clean energy businesses have been started since 2012, they sell solar equipment, construct solar hubs, build Biogas systems, improve cook stoves and deliver mini hydro projects. The number of businesses in our green economy has increased from 5 to 55 since 2012 – at least 1,650 people have been trained in the process. The tourist industry has also enjoyed growth, as our camps and lodges get access to electricity we are able to attract more visitors.”

“This isn’t just about local development, we are taking an active role in fighting climate change, that threatens our very identity with its assault on the glaciers of the Rwenzori Mountains. So far our efforts have saved an estimated 80,000 trees and the people of Kasese know that this, along with abandoning inefficient fossil fuels, means they are having a real impact in the fight to tackle climate change and preserve our heritage.”



CONCLUSION

“People’s support for renewable energy solutions in Kasese has rapidly increased in an extremely small amount of time, people have on several occasions expressed to me their appreciation for the initiative which in only 3 years has yielded remarkable results”

“Kasese’s journey towards 100% renewable energy by 2020 is happening right now. This bold project is empowering communities and improving livelihoods. It is setting a great example for other districts and municipalities to follow in Africa and in the rest of the world”.

Nonetheless, Mayor Kime emphasises the need for sustainable funding of renewable energy technologies and appeals for support from the national government, civil society and the private sector. Sustainable financial support for the programme and finance mechanisms for individual households – especially those living on less than \$1 a day - need to be ensured over the years in order for the 100% renewable vision to be realized.



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Other materials

Photos coming soon