

By Ibrahim Ruhweza

Solar water project excites Teso, Busoga

Proscovia Alimo, a 25-year-old mother of two in Atapar village, Kapir sub-county in Ngora district, had been fetching water from swamps and rivers. These unsafe water sources were shared by other area residents and livestock.

The result of this sharing was water-borne diseases, such as typhoid, dysentery and diarrhoea, which almost claimed Alimo's firstborn.

She said they breathed a sigh of relief when her village had a borehole, but it broke down and was never repaired.

"Sometimes, you would find cow dung floating in the river or swamp, but fetch the water because we had no option," she said.

However, the trend has since improved, with Alimo currently fetching water from one of the new taps opened by the water ministry and its partners. "This tap is the first of its kind in our village, we never had any hope of seeing it here," she told *New Vision* early this month.

The solar-powered system was launched by the ministry in 2024. Since then, Alimo's children have not suffered from water-borne diseases.

Godwin Atim, the acting chief of Atapar parish, said for a long time, most villages in the Teso sub-region had been depending on swamps and rivers for drinking water.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The £11m (about sh452.6b) solar irrigation project is jointly funded by the Government of Uganda and the UK through the UK Export Finance.

The initiative implemented through the water ministry, supports Uganda's commitment to enhance food security, empower rural farmers, and accelerate climate-resilient development.

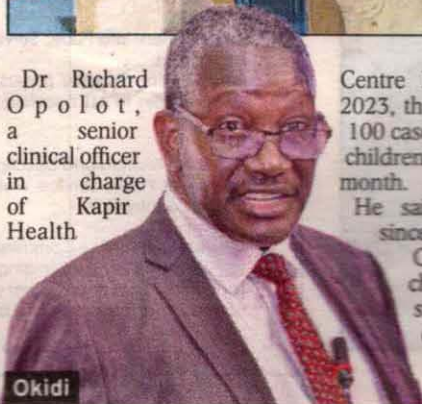
Dr Alfred Okot Okidi, the water and environment ministry permanent secretary, said Nexus Green Limited, a British renewable energy company with major operations in East Africa, is on schedule to complete installation of 450 solar-powered water supply and irrigation sites across Uganda by December this year.

Atim also testified that from the time her parish was connected to solar-powered water, cases of typhoid and domestic violence reduced by half.



Alimo, a 25-year-old mother of two in Atapar village, Kapir sub-county in Ngora district fetching water from a tap which is solar-powered

Dr Richard Opolot, a senior clinical officer in charge of Kapir Health



Okidi

Centre III, revealed that in 2023, they would record over 100 cases of diarrhoea among children aged six-ten each month.

He said such cases have since reduced by 50%.

Charles Ebiau, the LC3 chairperson of Kapir sub-county in Ngora district, said about 1,000 people in the community are

benefiting from clean water. He noted that the Government had drilled three boreholes, but they would dry up during the dry season.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Dominic Odoi, the LC1 chairperson of Matawa A village in Siwa sub-county, Tororo district, said he used to register about three cases of domestic violence per week.

However, by the beginning of this year, no case had been recorded. He admits that clean water has united and built families in different communities.

Annrose Athieno, a 51-year-old mother of ten, said in 2023 her husband battered her three times because she used to delay at water sources that were far away from home.

"My husband has beaten me over 20 times for coming late from the well. I still have some injuries," she says.

IMPROVED YIELDS

In Luuka district, farmers who have benefited from the solar-powered irrigation scheme have conquered markets with their crops.

Shaban Kifuba, a father of two in Waibuga sub-county, used to grow sugarcane and get poor yields. However, when he started growing tomatoes and eggplants under irrigation, yields were improved, especially in the dry season.

BETWEEN THE LINES

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