



Mali-Folkecenter provides light and electricity for two new villages in the Sikasso region.

Mali-Folkecenter has installed PV systems in two new villages, Falani-Fadia and Tinankolomba which are located in the South of Mali, in the Sikasso region. The project was financed by the Morila mining company, after they received a request from the populations of the villages for solar installations similar to those done in Koumantou municipality in the frame of MFC's Danida project. The installations include four public square lighting systems (each with 1x50 W solar panel), three mosques (each with 2x50W panels for lighting and PA systems for the call to prayer), one maternity clinic (1x50W panel for lighting), two meeting rooms (each with 1x50W panel for lighting), and two battery charging stations for eight batteries (each driven by 8x50W solar modules with a total of 400W). Mali-Folkecenter was chosen for this project because of its experience and reputation in Mali, especially for building capacity of the local people on operation and maintenance of the systems which is so essential to long term operation.



Figs. 1 & 2. Making the electrical connection of a 50W panel for the solar lamp post. The lamp post can provide lighting from dusk until midnight for meetings, village celebrations and improved security.

MFC's arrival in Fadia was welcomed by all its inhabitants. The village chief and the imams took care of the official welcome, and the village chief even invited the MFC team to visit his first wife's house.

The first day was spent with meetings and discussions about the PV installations, mainly between the village elders and the technicians from MFC concerning details about placing of the systems. Also a representative from Morila was present, giving his opinions and approval. After that, the installations could begin with the help of many of the young people from Fadia, who were anxious to learn about the new technology, and how to operate and maintain it. These young people would eventually make up the maintenance committees in the villages.



Fig.3 Young people from the village assist in raising the solar lamp post. The young people trained by MFC form the village maintenance committee, which is responsible for operation & maintenance of the systems and ensure real sustainability. Fig 4. Mounting the solar panels in the frames for a battery charging installation.



These installations will provide huge benefits for the 800 inhabitants of the two villages. The fact that they now have light after sunset means more hours of the day, which means more time for activities, when the daily work is finished.

The battery charging station will give the inhabitants the possibility of charging their own batteries for different household uses and will enable them to charge the batteries for a very low price in the village, which is much more convenient than taking them over large distances by bicycle, donkey cart or bush taxi to the nearest charging station. It also generates revenues for the village, provides some jobs for young people, and can stimulate economic activity generally through provision of modern energy services.



Fig. 5. Putting the frames in the concrete foundations for a battery charging installation. Fig. 6. setting cable duct into the concrete to allow secure and longlasting electrical connections.

The electrification of the rural areas is also an attempt to decrease the urbanisation, by making the villages more attractive to young people. This will prevent many of them from a life in the slums in the big cities. Participation of young people in all village affairs is crucial and the feeling of responsibility for the project has to be enhanced to make sure it is rooted in the community. Therefore, a major factor for these kinds of projects to be successful is the communication between the parties involved. In this case the communication between the village, local authorities and MFC was very important for success of the project.

For other information on Mali-Folkecenter's activities, please go to www.malifolkecenter.org.

