

ORVI Social Housing project wins IEA SHC 2022 Solar Award

Kassel, Germany, September 2022 - Orange River Vineyard (ORVI) Social Housing project in Aussenkehr, Namibia, is the winner of the International Energy Agency Solar Heating and Cooling Programme (IEA SHC) SOLAR AWARD.

ORVI's housing provides a simple, affordable, sustainable solar water heating option with locally built homes. **Ms. Helvi Ileka**, Centre Head, Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency of the Namibia Energy Institute, Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), and **Mr. Leonhard Eins**, Managing Director of Solsquare Energy (Pty) Ltd, received the award on behalf of the ORVI Social Housing project during EuroSun 2022, the International Conference on Solar Heating and Cooling for Buildings and Industry of IEA SHC and ISES held this year in Kassel, Germany.



Photo 1: SHC Solar Award recipients - Helvi Ileka, Namibia Energy Institute, Namibia University of Science and Technology and Leonhard Eins, Solsquare, Namibia. Photo 2: ORVI Social Housing project. Photo 3 from left to right: Ken Guthrie, Solar Award Committee Chair & Australian SHC member; Tomas Olejniczak, SHC Chair and Dutch SHC member; Bulent Yesilata, Turkish SHC member; Leonhard Eins, Solsquare, Namibia; Werner Weiss, Austrian SHC member. Onscreen: Helvi Ileka, Namibia Energy Institute, Namibia University of Science and Technology.

"The 2022 SHC Solar Award celebrates the substantial achievement and measurable impact of a social housing project using solar thermal to reduce energy consumption and costs. The recipient, the ORVI Social Housing project, is a perfect example of affordable housing that improved residents' standard of living, supported a national solar company, and annually saves energy and cuts greenhouse gas emissions – in this case, 120,000 kWh of electricity otherwise produced by old-coal-fired plants thus avoiding the release of 36 tons of CO₂ annually." *Tomas Olejniczak, IEA SHC Chairman*

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"This project is not only a success on the ground, but demonstrates how a long-standing, comprehensive training program such as SOLTRAIN can bring together local and international solar industries, research institutions from Europe and Southern Africa, and policymakers to create a framework for the widespread application of thermal solar systems." *Helvi Ileka, Namibia Energy Institute*

Project Impact

Aussenkehr, a settlement in southern Namibia on the north bank of the Orange River, is one of the hottest and driest places in the country. Up to 15,000 permanent and seasonal workers live near the settlement. And most work at the grape farms and live in traditional reed huts with no water, sanitary facilities, or electricity. Understanding the need for affordable, energy-efficient homes, ORVI developed a housing project to accommodate its employees. The 58 houses are made of precast concrete bricks and have potable water and electricity. With 40-50% of electricity consumption in low-cost housing projects used for water heating, solar thermosyphon systems for hot water preparation (2.1 m² flat plate collector and 160-liter hot water tank) were supplied and installed on every home by Solsquare Energy (Pty) Ltd., a Namibian solar company with support from the Austrian Development Agency-funded SOLTRAIN project. The hot water is used for showers, washing clothes, and cooking.

This project has significantly improved farm workers' standard of living. And it demonstrates how simple and affordable houses can be built locally and equipped with sustainable solar technologies. A project that should and can easily be replicated!

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IEA Solar Heating and Cooling Programme (IEA SHC), building on over 40 years of experience, provides a platform for member countries and international organizations to conduct collaborative RD&D work on solar thermal energy and solar buildings.



Namibia Energy Institute, Namibia Energy Institute, a national research institute at the Namibia University of Science and Technology, established with funding from the Ministry of Mines and Energy, supports the development and dissemination of knowledge, skills and good practices toward a safer, more secure and sustainable energy system in Namibia.



Solsquare had its humble beginnings in 2008 focusing on thermosyphon systems and slowly evolving into on- and off-grid solar PV technology. Today Solsquare is an Engineer Procure & Construct (EPC) company focusing on energy supply concepts, including heat, electric energy and fully off-grid systems.



SOLTRAIN is a regional initiative in six southern African countries on capacity building and demonstration of solar thermal systems. The project is managed by AEE INTEC.

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