

# STS Conference Graz 2014

## Special Session 1: Social justice and Diversity

Rural health electrification –organizational and socio economic implementation supported by recurring monitoring

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In 2013 31 remote rural health posts were equipped with stand alone PV systems for lighting and solar fridges in close cooperation of the Amhara National Regional State Bureau of Health (ANRS) in Northern Ethiopia and the Provincial Government of Lower Austria (PGLA). Lighting chiefly serves the local health workers and midwives during nocturnal deliveries and other urgent consultations while solar fridges help keeping the cool chain of vaccinations.

ANRS and PGLA agreed on a recurring monitoring of the installed systems to keep hold of their further functioning; regular visits aim at updating information on the current state of the systems and at thereby providing a data base for decisions on further measures required to maintain the functionality of the PV systems.

While the monitoring is ongoing first results stress the importance of training on PV maintenance for the concerned health workers, their empowerment and the clear definition of responsibilities within the organizational framework of ANRS. The monitoring – rather socio economic than technical in nature - has thus proven to be a reliable key for engaging both donor and local agency in a sound collaboration to the end of supporting and improving rural health provision by means of Photovoltaic.

- The monitoring focuses on the socio economic situation in the health posts equipped with PV offgrid installations and takes the organizational framework into account.
- It aims at a close collaboration of donor and receiving local agency in order to promote feasible upkeeping of the existent PV systems and to develop innovative ways of further upgrading.
- The learning process of the donor and PV providing enterprises from industrial countries is equally regarded as crucial

### Results:

- Lasting functionality of rural health electrification in impoverished areas strongly relies on high sensitivity to the socio economic and organizational framework conditions encountered in the respective health centers.
- Empowering the exclusively female local health workers and providing them with relevant training concerning the correct use and maintenance of the PV systems is a key figure for these systems' functioning.