

LET THERE BE LIGHT! Biogas system helps schoolchildren in Tchaéta



When students from the Freiberg University of Mining and Technology came to us in April 2016, we had no idea what biogas systems could possibly have to do with education. As part of their work on the Enactus Freiberg project, the students told us about their plan to erect a biogas plant in the small village of Tchaéta in Benin in order to provide the school building with light in the evenings as it is too hot to hold lessons there during the day. Having a gas system like this would not only provide light, but also the added benefit of fertiliser for the local agricultural industry.

The students were very convincing and won us and other German companies to their side with the sustainability of their plans, and began to build the first prototypes using materials that would be available in the village. During this time, they kept in constant contact with the village elders to explain the benefits of the system. “If the elders don’t agree to the project, it could easily fail”, the project leader told us.

As a presence on site was crucial here, the project team travelled to the site in Benin multiple times – a trip not without its dangers – before a technician and a student arrived to construct the system in December 2016. After 11 days of hot and sweaty work, the villagers and students were finally able to erect the system. We are honoured to have been able to support the project by paying for the team’s flight costs, and by helping the students to optimise the system further in 2017. The team has since acquired new partners in Benin that are following the example of Tchaéta and helping their villages achieve a higher standard of living.