

DENMARK

Case story: Nepal Energy Sector Assistance Programme - ESAP

Denmark has since 1999 supported the Alternative Energy Promotion Centre (AEPC) under the Ministry of Science and Technology in Nepal. The support is focussed on three main areas: 1) increased access to electricity produced from renewable energy sources (hydro and solar) to the rural population 2) increased use of improved cooking stoves among the rural population and 3) capacity development of the Centre itself. The rural activities are implemented through a solid network of NGOs and the private sector. The Centre is responsible for quality assurance, result dissemination and awareness raising. The activities are being implemented despite the running conflict in the country.

Over the years more than 100.000 households have benefited from the improved cooking stoves – resulting in improved health among women and small children due to significantly less smoke in the kitchens. In addition, a minimum of 30% reduction in fuel wood consumption has been obtained. The households pay a small amount for the construction of the stoves to a local stove builder trained by local NGOs. The materials except the iron rings are all readily available around the rural houses. The payback time is less than 4 months in average due to the reduction in fuel wood consumption.

More than 40.000 households have been equipped with solar home systems by the private sector. AEPC/ESAP supports the installation through a subsidy system, where distance from the grid is proportional to the size of subsidy. The individual household pays the majority of the investment. The main benefit of the solar home system is better lightning for studying children. Similar benefits are experienced by the villages which AEPC/ESAP has assisted in installation and financing of micro hydro schemes. Almost 3000 households are now provided with electricity from micro hydro and more are in the pipeline. The micro hydro scheme requires a village-approach and is therefore initially more time consuming than the solar home systems. However, the micro hydro is not only providing the individual household with light and the possibility of using the radio, it also provides electricity for machinery like grinding mills.