



Anthony O. Ighodaro is founder and C.E.O. [KXN Nigeria Ltd.](#)

Founded in 1999, KXN Nigeria Ltd uses solar technology to solve people's needs for dependable energy and improved living standards. KXN Nigeria Ltd is a systems integrator; distributing, assembling, installing and maintaining equipment from some of the world's largest solar product manufacturers.

An interview by the Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE)

What motivated and prompted you to set up KXN Nigeria Ltd?

My wife and I relocated to Munich for two years, 1997 – 1999 when she went to Germany to help set up a telecoms joint venture. Moving from London, Munich was one of the best kept secrets – a beautiful city in the centre of Europe where the people had a zest for living and enjoyed a great quality of life founded on their love of the environment. It was like moving from “dial-up” to “broadband” – you had to live it to understand it.

At the end of the period, I contacted Siemens, headquartered there and possibly then the world-leading PV company, and took an introductory PV course. After the course, my family agreed that the business prospects were bright, as we had the Sun and social contacts in Nigeria, and access to technology and resources in Europe. The frequent and prolonged electricity outages in Nigeria would ensure a favourable reception.

Can you tell us a bit about the work of the African Renewable Energy Alliance (AREA), as well as your own particular role within its Steering Committee?

AREA's purpose is to accelerate the uptake of renewable energy across Africa. The membership of the network is self-selecting, free-of-charge and open to all. I think it has the potential of extraordinary leverage, because among its membership you see individuals whose names and roles in powerful organizations you know. Some AREA activities can be implemented within the budgets of those entities.

AREA is a platform for policy makers, representatives from business and the civil society to exchange information and consult about policies, technologies and financial mechanisms for the deployment of renewable energies in Africa. Founded in Ethiopia in 2009 by the World Future Council it now comprises over 250 members from 47 countries.

I am chairman of its Steering Committee of 12 people, coincidentally representing both the business sector and the Alliance for Rural Electrification (ARE). Other members include the director of ECREEE, Energy Regulator of South Africa, members of the Energy Commission of Nigeria, present and former members of parliament, colleagues from Kenya, Morocco and the AREA coordinator.

The Steering Committee is responsible for developing our strategy and weaning AREA from 100% dependence on World Future Council Foundation (WFC) funding, into a financially sustainable network. My role as chairman, as we transform into a registered NGO in South Africa, is to help support and guide, and to harness the momentum of my colleagues and their networks and our Coordinator to deliver our strategy.

In what way do you think ARE could benefit from having a relationship with the African Renewable Energy Alliance - AREA?

AREA is fast-growing and is likely to reach more Africa renewable energy practitioners directly. More “Calls for Proposals”, e.g. ACP-EU Energy Facility, and ECREEE’s “ECOWAS Renewable Energy Facility”, make the participation of local project partners obligatory. Project partnerships between ARE and AREA members could be facilitated through ARE initiatives. Manufacturers could develop distribution and new markets. Institutional members of ARE such as universities can find collaborators and assistance among AREA’s diverse membership.

ARE should develop and make the most of its position as a founder of AREA by ensuring that its members engage with AREA member and/or group events. This will yield more influence and opportunities to develop sustainable renewable markets.

The “Power Kick for Africa” initiative is a very positive and inspiring idea. Could you please explain how it works and how you became involved? What role can renewable energy play in enhancing community orientated sporting and social development in Africa?



The WFC came up with the idea of a “Public Viewing of the 2010 Football World Cup powered by Renewable Energy”. Scheduled for the Ghana vs. Germany match on June 23rd last year, and partnered by Energiebau Sunergy Ghana Ltd, who donated and installed the equipment, the event was held in an off-grid village, Oboadaka, one hour away from the capital. I was one of the AREA participants of the proceeding “Power Kick for Africa” workshop, who joined the villagers to watch the match. The event was outstandingly successful in the enthusiasm and press coverage it generated worldwide.

This year, building on the Ghanaian experience, we plan an outdoor event with a bigger audience in Nigeria, within the urban setting of Abuja (see overview). Clearly, a demand for rural television and public viewing is evident.

Finally, if you were told that all fossil fuels would be gone by the end of the year, do you think that renewable energy solutions could fill the gap in the market? Or would a serious change in our lifestyles be in order?

Actually, it would be impossible for renewables to fill the gap within one year. I estimate that it would take 14GWp (about the entire world production last year) of photovoltaics just to replace the electricity delivered by the 3,800 MW of fossil-fuelled thermal generator plants in Nigeria. In the medium to long term it should be possible and desirable to replace fossil fuels and, in the process, to create the jobs needed by the vastly expanded youthful world population.

The clever thing to do immediately would be to deploy smart-metering, energy efficiency measures, electric vehicle transportation, and suitably-sized renewable energy systems in order to live within our means with a sustainable quality of life. Standalone and mini-grids would provide resilient energy security amid the chaos and civil riots which could be unleashed in the event of such a fossil fuel catastrophe.

Thank you to Anthony O. Ighodaro for a really great interview!