August 2014 Solar Academy Successfully Held

Condensed Matter Group successfully completed the August series of Solar Academy that was held at the Department of Physics from 18th to 28th August 20

Figure 1Some of the August 2014 solar academy participants installing a solar cell. For more photos see the August 2014 solar academy photo gallery.

14.The T1/T2 level of Solar PV training attracted a record 62 participants drawn from the private sector, government and training institutions. The sudden growth of interest in the training is pushed by the Government's requirement of licensing solar PV installers, contractors and vendors for them to qualify to undertake any installation, contract or vending of solar PV systems. More notable is the government's schools laptop project which has necessitated the installation of solar power in schools that are far off from the grid. Among the group that was trained is Rural Electrification Authority (REA) who brought on board 15 regional heads from across the country. However REA still has over 50 personnel to be trained and their request is awaiting our clearance to train them. Others were from Kenya Power, Mombasa Cement, Savannah Cement, Sameer Group and many private enterprises. The presence of manufacturing industries in the training shows how solar pv and more so efficient energy usage has gained popularity with the objective of cutting down cost of production.

As much as the numbers that attended the training were more than double the numbers ever handled, quality was not compromised and in fact it was the best training offered ever since we started in 2012. To

cope with the large numbers and maintain quality, two trainers (Dr Waita and Dr Simiyu) were always present in the training to offer complementary lectures and practical guidance to the participants. The training was also restructured to cater for the feedback received from previous participants to include more hands on practical which the participants really appreciated.

Since the group started the training over two hundred technicians have been trained in T2 and are awaiting to be trained in the advanced T3 solar pv that includes grid connected and hybrid systems and large offgrid installation. The mandate to train T3 has been left exclusively to universities to offer and it is an opportunity we need to take up as soon as possible.