

Solar Energy-Related Engineering and Entrepreneurship in Emerging Market Countries

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Summary:

The talk will survey solar energy-related engineering and entrepreneurship in emerging market countries, with an emphasis on strategies for coping with the absence of a reliable electricity grid. Dr. Smestad examines the concepts surrounding solar energy availability in the developing world as the key to improving societal education, health, and standard of living in underserved populations. Case studies in photovoltaic (PV) installations illustrated the interrelationships between the technical, engineering, economic, marketing, and cultural aspects of these business endeavors; with parallels drawn between the rapid expansion of cell phone networks and distributed PV in developing nations. This is based on the idea of technological “leap frogging” and diffusion of ideas. Case studies presented will include Grameen Shakti’s successful social business model for renewable energy in Bangladesh, especially in photovoltaics.