



Electrify Africa

Providing Energy Access in sub-Saharan Africa

An opportunity to alleviate poverty and spur growth

The situation:



589 million people in sub-Saharan Africa—68% of the population—do not have access to electricity or other modern energy services and roughly 30 African countries face endemic power shortages. This hampers services in health and education, profoundly limits economic development and disproportionately affects women. Businesses cannot grow, jobs cannot be created and poverty cannot be eliminated without affordable access to proper lighting and reliable safe power. This lack of energy access is a major barrier to eradicating poverty in Africa, yet there is a way to change this. Providing access to reliable and affordable energy is one of the most powerful development multipliers—giving those trapped in subsistence lifestyles the means to work their way out of poverty. The opportunities for Africa in the energy sector are enormous. Leaders need to prioritize increasing energy access and seize these opportunities so that Africa can fulfill its potential and lift itself out of poverty.

Why energy access is crucial for poverty reduction:



A lack of access to modern energy traps millions of people in poverty and limits economic growth in a number of ways. For example:

- Electricity access is crucial for the storage of vaccines, anti-retroviral and other lifesaving medical drugs, as well as the operation of modern lifesaving medical equipment. Yet 30% of health facilities in sub-Saharan Africa, which serve an estimated 255 million people, are without electricity.
- A lack of access to modern energy contributes to the high use of inefficient and often highly polluting fuel sources for indoor cooking and heating, which contributes to more than 3 million premature deaths, mainly of women and girls, each year—more deaths than from malaria and HIV/AIDS combined.
- Electricity can greatly improve education outcomes and assist with the retention of pupils and good teachers. Students in Sudan were able to improve their exam pass rates from 57% to 97% after 1 year with electric lights. Yet today in sub-Saharan Africa, 90 million children will go to primary schools without electricity.
- Roughly thirty African countries face endemic power shortages and nearly 70% of surveyed African businesses cite unreliable power as a major constraint. 16% of the turnover of informal sector enterprises without a backup generator are estimated to be lost because of power outages. This energy deficit limits economic growth on the continent and hampers the provision of public services.
- For those few with access to electricity in sub-Saharan Africa services remain twice as expensive when compared to other regions. These inflated costs are damaging for consumers and governments who are forced to spend disproportionate amounts of their income on a low quality electricity service that they could otherwise spend on improving livelihoods and wellbeing.



What needs to be done to increase energy access in sub-Saharan Africa?



1. Governments and leaders need to prioritize the energy issue—putting plans and supportive policy frameworks in place to increase energy generation and access as well as directing more finances towards the sector.

2. Companies need to invest in providing for this huge African demand.

Opportunities to invest in providing energy access are increasingly available:

- 26 African states have committed to support the goal of providing universal energy access by 2030 and are putting supportive legislative structures in place to reduce investment risk and spur public and private business investment.
- As of 2010 only 0.6% of Africa's geothermal energy had been harnessed; less than 2% of its wind energy had been exploited; only 7% of its hydropower potential has been harnessed; and Africa had hardly even scratched the surface of its gas or solar potential.
- Modern advances in technology—such as mobile payments, online accounts, off-grid energy products and satellite technology—mean it is much easier for companies and governments to design effective regulatory frameworks to increase energy access in a cost effective and enforceable way that supports local markets and sustainable development.
- 7 out of 10 people do not have access to electricity, yet annually the continent spends \$10 billion on kerosene fuel to deliver poor quality lighting services, and businesses cite the existing minimal amount of power available as unreliable which is a major constraint to growth. It is clear there is significant demand for modern, reliable, safe, energy sources that people are both willing and able to pay for.

The impact of energy access in Africa:



Many countries and companies are already investing in fulfilling Africa's energy infrastructure demand, and such investments have brought dramatic successes on the continent. Morocco increased rural electrification levels from 18% in 1995 to 95% by 2009—equivalent to over 1.9 million household or over 35 thousand villages. When electricity access rates in Kenyan health facilities increased from 62% in 2004 to 74% in 2010 and the country was able to increase the number of facilities with incubators for newborn babies from 38 to 62, the neonatal mortality rate (probability of the baby dying in the first 28 days after birth) dropped dramatically from 40 to 28 per 1000 births. In Sudan the simple provision of electric lighting to children saw students improve their pass rates from 57% to 97% after 1 year. Energy access has had a transformative effect on all those who have gained access helping to eliminate poverty and supporting economic development.



The Call to Action:

Current efforts aren't enough—without new and additional policies to increase and expand electricity access in sub-Saharan Africa by 2030, 48% of the total population will remain unelectrified. There is still a huge need to invest in fighting energy poverty. The first step in doing this is getting governments to work together to prioritize universal energy access in efforts to tackle global poverty. You can tell leaders to prioritize energy access to fight global poverty by going to www.one.org/us/energy

Key Facts



Nearly 7 out of 10 people in sub-Saharan Africa do not have electricity access



In Sub-Saharan Africa 90 million children will go to primary schools without electricity and 255 million people are served by health facilities with no electricity access



Students in Sudan were able to improve their pass rates from 57% to 97% after 1 year with electric lights



Africa has yet to harness the majority of its natural energy capacity

2030

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Countries like Thailand and Morocco have shown that you can increase electricity access by over 70% in a little over a decade