

PEOPLE NEED ENERGY

Energy can reduce...

- Extreme poverty, by freeing up time spent gathering fuel and increasing income and employment through enterprises that depend on energy: workshops, sawmills, welding and metalworking, food processing, IT, manufacturing, etc.
- The number of people living with hunger: approximately 95% of the food we eat has to be cooked, and most foods need energy for processing of some kind. Hunger is related to poverty, so efforts to eradicate poverty should help eradicate hunger.
- Gender inequality, by reducing arduous tasks like collecting and carrying heavy loads of firewood and the drudgery of food preparation that is mostly done by women and girls.

Energy provides opportunities...

- For enterprise and for evening education as people have lighting by which to read and write.
- For communicating – powering our telephones, computers and access to internet.
- For people to live healthier, longer lives, by reducing indoor air pollution from household smoke, providing cool air when it is hot and warmth when it is cold. Fans, air-conditioners and heaters need power.
- For better health facilities, with vaccine refrigeration and modern hospital equipment, scanners, lab testing, operating facilities etc.

Electricity

Most people want electricity. An easy source of energy, it is invisible, and silent, it does not smell although if you touch it, it can burn or shock you. It can light up a house at the flick of a switch, warm us in cool weather, cool us in hot weather, keep crucial food and medicine cool, drive our computers and mobile phones. Electricity has mostly been generated by burning coal, natural gas or oil (known as fossil fuels) in a power station or generator. Now, renewable technology is starting to take over from fossil fuels. Photovoltaic or solar panels convert energy from the sun into electricity. Special turbines use the energy in wind and moving water to generate electricity. Other systems use gas produced from organic waste to fuel generators and the heat from incinerated refuse to produce electricity. Renewable energy is the future, especially in Africa which has sun, wind and big rivers!

Most electricity comes from large power stations which supply whole towns and regions. Power lines can run all over the country carrying the energy on a national grid - this is called a 'grid' supply.

Many governments have made universal electricity supply a priority. More and more people are being provided. However, especially in places far away from towns and cities, grid supply is still non-existent, or poor. In 2017, 96% of Kenya's rural population lacked access to grid electricity. If national supply fails people are suddenly in the dark, unable to run their businesses, equipment is damaged, produce wasted and security jeopardised. A back-up system is valuable, and the best source may be within your own town or village.

