

Call for action to African Rural Electrification Agencies from the AEEP's Young Leaders in Energy Access

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Energy Access

Energy is the root of development and is linked to job creation for the youth through catalyzing small businesses. Promoting sustainable energy can also provide a foundation for future growth and job creation. Aligning energy access challenges with other development challenges is critical in achieving sustainable development goals. It has the potential to create many new jobs as well as new business models and opportunities.

The youth can be enabled/inspired in several ways to become energy leaders in the energy access space. Recognising their crucial role in achieving clean energy access, we as Young Leaders in Energy Access hereby call on the African Rural Electrification Agencies to take action on the following areas:

- a. **Accelerating energy access:** this will lead to more job opportunities for youth in rural areas through the productive use.
- b. **Hands-on training** in working with renewable energy technologies e.g. solar assembly, improved cooking technologies focused on empowering young entrepreneurs to start income generating enterprises in the renewable energy sector.
- c. **Promoting Education in Sustainability:** Current curricula shall be modified by introducing and/or promoting renewable energy to the students, which in return, better prepares them for easier adaptability to transition to working life.
- d. **Energy Business competitions:** Competition always encourages innovation for new ideas and concepts e.g. Solar Pay-As-You-Go as a financial innovation, eliciting greater interests and kick-starting new business models.
- e. **Energy entrepreneurship grants:** Enabling the youth to participate or access grants will pave way for innovative ideas in energy thus offering job opportunities. This will also encourage pilot projects with alternative solutions.
- f. **Policy for energy enterprises:** There should be favorable policies which foster energy entrepreneurship among the youth.
- g. **Local communities' involvement:** this will result in job creation especially if there is a longer-term engagement, increased sense of ownership of the projects which enhances its management of the project.
- h. **Gathering of information and scouting of projects:** easier access to information and project opportunities will reduce transaction costs and facilitate more projects, thus creating jobs.
- i. **Raising awareness:** create awareness about energy issues for people living in rural areas, this will lead to better understanding and better use. It will also lead to better selection of projects.

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