Energy: power that transforms lives
Energy Power

Today, billions of lives have been enhanced by technologies powered by modern energy – from kettles to lamps, cookers to boilers, home computers to mobile phones.

For many, energy has changed lives - providing access to technologies we take for granted.

“Development does not start with goods; it starts with people and their education, organization and discipline.”

E F Schumacher,
Founder of Practical Action.

Energy Poverty – the facts

A quarter of the world’s population live a life burdened by the lack of access to modern energy – energy that’s needed to transform lives.

One in five people (1.3 billion) lack access to any form of electricity.

Two in every five people (2.7 billion) still cook on open fires, exposing themselves and their families to potentially deadly smoke fumes.

One billion people are served by health facilities that are completely without electricity.

More than 50% of children across the developing world attend primary schools with no access to electricity.
Energy Access

At Practical Action, we believe technology justice is vital to developing a just and sustainable world; and that everyone has the right to access the energy they need to lead a decent quality of life. Working with communities we are developing renewable energy technologies using natural resources such as water, wind, sun and waste, which are available in even the smallest and most remote communities.

Our Approach

Practical Action works with communities to build on people’s knowledge, skills and experience to create locally appropriate, affordable and long-lasting practical solutions.

Our approach is to achieve total energy access for all. Whether generating electricity from small scale wind generators, solar panels, or micro hydro systems providing power to homes, workshops, schools, and hospitals. Producing biogas from animal dung that’s burnt to generate energy for cooking, lighting, and laundry, or finding better, cleaner ways of cooking using fuel efficient stoves that reduce the needless deaths from smoke inhalation, or cutting time spent collecting firewood.

These solutions will help meet the needs of millions of people - without power from these simple technologies, energy access will continue to be a distant prospect for millions of people.
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<th>Energy powers education</th>
<th>Energy saves lives</th>
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<td>Bringing light to isolated communities means knowledge and education are no longer denied to children. More time is available to spend in the classroom, and with solutions such as solar powered lamps children can study in the evenings at home.</td>
<td>Using improved cooking stoves, enhances people’s comfort and wellbeing. Improved stoves and other smoke reducing technologies such as chimneys or cleaner fuels, are reducing indoor smoke levels and preventing millions of needless deaths each year from smoke inhalation, and reduce the drudgery of hours spent collecting wood fuel.</td>
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<th>Energy provides healthcare</th>
<th>Energy creates livelihoods</th>
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<td>Electricity generated from appropriate technologies like micro hydro power can transform health care provision for isolated communities. From refrigerated vaccines; sterilising implements and safely delivering babies, to performing surgical operations and powering vital medical equipment, means people receive the vital health care they need.</td>
<td>Electricity generated by solar panels can run computers giving isolated communities access to information on animal welfare; agriculture techniques and healthcare – vital information that can help improve people’s livelihoods. Energy can also help people irrigate their agricultural land; provide power to process and preserve crops; power carpentry tools; or refrigerate provisions at the local store.</td>
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Case study Bondo, Malawi

Powering Transformation

In the rural, isolated area of Bondo, Malawi the needs of the people were clear – no means for storing medication or vaccines at the clinic, no light to deliver babies at night - putting lives at risk, no facilities to perform lifesaving operations, no light to enable studies after sunset, and no power to run the mill to grind maize. But Bondo’s natural resources made it the perfect place to build a micro-hydro system.

Harnessing the power of the fast-flowing rivers that tumble down steep hillsides to Lake Malawi, Practical Action worked with villagers to build a micro-hydro power house. A turbine generates 80KW of electricity, that can bring vital power to two schools, 440 households and small community businesses. It will bring light to the health centre, providing a safer environment to deliver babies’ and the facility to perform vital surgical procedures. Electricity is transforming the village.

“Bringing power to the people of Bondo saves lives. The number of children being immunised is remarkable. With electricity the centre can now keep vaccines in a fridge, mothers can give birth in the light at night, and children can study in the evening.”

Sister Chanakira at the Medical centre.
Energy poverty to the debate

Practical Action is committed to total energy access, because we know from our work on the ground energy is a powerful solution to poverty. We believe that access to modern energy can transform lives. But achieving total energy access for all requires local, national and international action.

Practical Action is proud to partner with the United Nation’s Sustainable Energy for All initiative which is bringing together governments, private sectors, and communities, to enable Universal Energy Access by 2030.

Through our experience, we are bringing the people living in energy poverty to the debate, ensuring the voices of the poorest people get heard to achieve outcomes that genuinely meet their needs, and change their lives. Practical Action’s annual ‘Poor people’s energy outlook’ report draws on the links between energy access and earning a living in poor countries around the world.

What can I do now?

If you would like to help us provide energy access to poor people, please make a donation via the details below

Donate online now, visit: www.practicalaction.org/donatenow or by telephone on 0800 3891624

Find us online, just search for ‘Practical Action’

or visit www.practicalaction.org/energy

Practical Action, The Schumacher Centre, Bourton on Dunsmore, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV23 9QZ.

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While the stories in this leaflet are true, names and photos have been changed to protect the identity of individuals.


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