



How EmPowering the Future Policy Brief Aligns with Mission 300

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KNOWLEDGE PLATFORM ON INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT POLICIES



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Mission 300 is a large-scale initiative, led by the World Bank Group (WBG) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), that aims to connect 300 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa to electricity by 2030. Its focus areas include grid expansion, mini-grids, and standalone solar solutions, alongside policy reforms, infrastructure investment, and private sector mobilization.

The INCLUDE Knowledge Platform has undertaken a comprehensive research initiative titled “(Em)Powering the Future: Opportunities for Youth in a Just Transition in Africa,” which presents findings from the collaborative programme “A Green and Just Future for Youth in Africa.” This research aims to strengthen the evidence base on low-carbon transitions (LCT) in Africa by examining the energy sector’s complexities to identify opportunities for youth employment and address systemic barriers hindering an inclusive transition.

In light of the ambitious Mission 300 initiative—which seeks to connect 300 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa to electricity by 2030—our research offers critical insights to ensure that this massive electrification effort is both equitable and inclusive:

Key Takeaways for Mission 300



1. Energy Access Must Be Equitable

- The policy brief highlights that energy poverty exacerbates gender inequality, youth unemployment, and rural underdevelopment.
- Mission 300 should prioritize energy access for marginalized groups, ensuring that women, youth, and informal businesses reap the full benefits of electrification.
- Electrification should not just focus on expanding supply but also ensure affordability and sustainable access for rural communities.



2. Electrification Should Drive Youth Employment & Economic Growth

- Renewable Energy Job Creation is Critical: Mission 300 must ensure that electrification translates into green jobs for young Africans.
- The brief emphasizes the Role of TVET and Skills Training: which should be integrated into Mission 300’s implementation strategy.
- Support for Micro-Enterprises: Many young people in Africa operate in the informal sector. Electrification must cater to small businesses by ensuring access to affordable energy.

3. Infrastructure Alone Is Not Enough – Build Sustainable Ecosystems



- Public-private partnerships (PPPs) should go beyond financing infrastructure and also facilitate employment and entrepreneurship in the energy sector.
- The policy brief warns that, without local ownership, large-scale renewable projects may replicate the inequities of the fossil fuel industry.
- Mission 300 should enforce local content policies to ensure youth, women, and small businesses are involved in supply chains.

4. Strengthening the Role of Communities in Energy Decisions



- Mission 300 already engages local communities, but this can be strengthened by:
- Encouraging meaningful participation of youth and women in decision-making.
- Supporting locally-led advocacy for renewable energy access.
- Ensuring that electrification projects align with the economic and social needs of different regions.

5. Tracking Social & Economic Impact Beyond Connection Numbers



- The policy brief warns against “bean counting”, where success is measured only by the number of people connected.
- Mission 300 should track youth employment rates, entrepreneurship growth, and improvements in quality of life as key success indicators.
- Electrification should lead to stable, long-term, and well-paying jobs, rather than just short-term construction roles.

How Mission 300 Can Use These Insights



Challenge

- Energy poverty is not just about supply; affordability and access gaps persist
- Green jobs are not guaranteed unless linked to skills development
- Large-scale energy projects may benefit elites over local communities



Solution from EmPowering the Future

- Integrate subsidies and social protection for the most vulnerable groups (youth, women, informal workers)
- Integrate TVET reform into electrification efforts, ensuring skills for solar, mini-grids, and maintenance
- Ensure local ownership regulations for new energy projects

- Many electrification projects fail to engage marginalized youth and women
- Short-term energy infrastructure jobs do not translate into long-term employment
- Include youth-led and women-led organizations in project design and implementation
- Support green entrepreneurship and develop career pathways in the renewable energy sector

Final Thoughts

Mission 300 has the potential to transform Africa's energy landscape, but true impact will come from ensuring that electrification efforts create jobs, foster inclusive growth, and empower marginalized communities.

INCLUDE is an independent knowledge platform funded by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs since 2012. Through Research, Knowledge Exchange and Policy Dialogues, INCLUDE promotes and facilitates evidence-based policymaking on inclusive development, with a focus on Africa.

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