

Human capital development in higher education: a long-term, integrated approach for achieving SDG7

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Human capital will be a vital part of achieving universal energy access. As a still nascent sector, training providers have not always yet fully responded to this the needs of the off-grid energy sectors. Furthermore, amidst the various donor support programmes directed at the off-grid energy sector, skills development is often the least common form of donor technical and financial assistance. The Transforming Energy Access (TEA) Programme sets out to transform and accelerate access to clean and affordable energy in Africa through supporting skills and enterprise development. This paper reports on experiences from the TEA Learning Partnership (TEA LP), a long-term higher education-energy sector collaboration that aims to deliver increased human capital for the energy access sector through the development of responsive, needs-based training and capacity building initiatives. It does this in collaboration with nine universities in eight African countries and the energy sector in these countries. The paper addresses three key areas of human capital development. Firstly, an assessment of the skills and capacity needs expressed by the off-grid energy sector. Secondly, the TEA LP approach to linking competency development in higher education to the needs of the off-grid energy sector. Thirdly, the importance of adopting a 'leave no one behind' strategy in human capital development to achieve better outcomes. These activities for human capacity building are expected to contribute to building a generation of skilled individuals that will develop the innovative solutions required to scale the sector.