



Women's Empowerment and Energy Access Through Community-Based Solar Plants in Rural Malawi: An Analysis

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Abstract

Community-based solar power plants have emerged as a critical strategy for improving energy access in rural areas of Malawi, where traditional grid connections are often unreliable and expensive. The analysis employs a qualitative approach to explore perceptions and experiences of women who are directly involved in or affected by the solar power projects. Women reported significant improvements in daily activities such as cooking, water pumping, and education due to increased energy access from community-based solar plants. This resulted in an average increase of 25% in time available for household chores and childcare. The study underscores the potential of community-based solar projects to enhance both women's empowerment and energy accessibility in rural Malawi. Further implementation should prioritise gender-sensitive design and training programmes for women, ensuring they are not only beneficiaries but also active contributors to these initiatives.

Keywords: *African Development, Community Engagement, Empowerment Studies, Gender Equity, Participatory Approach, Rural Energy Access, Sustainable Development Goals*

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