

Energy as a derivative right. Discussing Locel-H2 project results.

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Contrasting energy poverty is the SDG of the 2030 Agenda with a strategic instrumental value. Indeed, access to energy is a precondition for social justice, economic development, combating poverty and gender discrimination, access to food and water and the right to health. 800 million people among sub-Saharan Africa and rural Asia have no access to the grid and remain in a state of structural deprivation (IEA2023). The energy island concept has been used to identify those communities completely disconnected from the grid or in remote areas where it is difficult to assume the implementation of national or subnational infrastructure.

For these specific areas, the implementation of decentralized solar-based energy systems is considered to be particularly effective in combating energy poverty, strengthening the autonomy of communities and their development capacity while, at the same time, mitigating the impacts of climate change. Goals that are at the heart of the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want and supported by international, particularly European, cooperation programs. The European project LoCEL-H2 (Low-cost, Circular, plug and play, prosumer Energy system for off-grid Locations including Hydrogen) fits into this scenario. The project aims to test, in off-grid communities, a clean energy system that combines photovoltaic with batteries together with an innovative hydrogen production system for kitchen use. It can be considered as a technological projects informing social policies in the global south.

The presentation aims at giving insights about energy justice in vulnerable contexts, highlighting the intersection of technology, policy, and energy culture. Research results are based on ethnographic observations, incorporating focus groups and face-to-face interviews, addressing the topic of energy as a “derivative right” underpinning and enhancing other fundamental and primary rights.