

Community microgrids lilongwe

Firewood usage as cooking fuel in a typical household at Sitolo (image credit: H. Vallecha)

Mthembanji Solar PV installation (image credit: H. Vallecha)

Village women cooking their meals on charcoal stove (image credit: H. Vallecha)

Women watering their fields through Direct Solar Pump (image credit: H. Vallecha)

Featured image, top: Sitolo solar PV power plant, Sitolo, Mchinji (image credit: H. Vallecha)

Malawi is one of the least electrified countries in the world. Only 18% of Malawi's 18.14 million inhabitants have access to electricity (11.4% provided by the grid network; 6.6% provided through off-grid energy solutions).

The Africa Director of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Ahunna Eziakonwa says she is impressed with the impact that the Sitolo Solar Mini-Grid has had at Sitolo in Mchinji where solar electricity is powering maize mills and enabling people to open up various business.

Eziakonwa who is on four-day visit in Malawi, toured the 80 kilowatt solar mini-grid at Sitolo Village in Traditional Authority Ndawambe in Mchinji on Monday.

The mini-grid generates power via solar and connects 816 customers, including houses as well as 94 businesses and social institutions such as schools and health facilities at Sitolo, Ndawambe and Molosiyo villages.

Electricity from the mini-grid has enabled people in the villages to open businesses including maize mills, salons and shops which sell cold drinks.

With the electricity, people are also able to cook using electric stoves while learners study even during the night.

One of the community members Annie Nyedwa said she shas benefited a lot from the solar power since the mini-grid was commissioned in 2019.

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