

ABSTRACT

Government reforms aim to provide free basic and affordable electricity in poor urban areas. However, the growing rate of urban poverty, limited development of energy infrastructure, the cost of modern services and fuel use culture further contribute towards the consumption of multiple fuel use. The diverse ways in which urban households utilise the available energy can make fuel transition very difficult to achieve. This research aims to investigate household energy consumption patterns in Diepkloof in order to understand the factors limiting a fuel transition from coal and wood to electricity.

The analysis in this report uses data collected from the household survey in Diepkloof as well as key stakeholders in this field including the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee and Eskom. The reason for using these two stakeholders was because SECC is a social movement activist group advocating free electricity while Eskom is the electricity service provider. Household data examines the range of fuels, factors affecting fuel choice and the attitude of people towards alternative energy sources. The two stakeholders help to critically assess the effectiveness of energy policy document supporting the supply of electricity to poor communities, including Diepkloof.

This research concluded that there is no clear evidence that an energy transition is taking place in Diepkloof. Moreover, the results indicate that the energy policy has good intentions but there are still some difficulties with affordability, and culture or personal choice. As a consequence of the underlying problem, most poor households still rely on multiple fuels use for major thermal purpose such as cooking and heating.