

Change you can see: the sustainability and intersectionality of providing solar lights to off-grid Filipino communities

According to the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, there are still 127 to 130 million people in Southeast Asia who are living in a state of energy poverty. In the Philippines itself, 2.4 million people live off-grid, according to data from the Philippine Senate Committee on Energy.

Energy poverty is defined as the lack of access to electricity and as a result, having to resort to baseline technologies such as kerosene lights for light. Although these baseline technologies may be a temporary solution, at the end of the day, these are inefficient and do not tackle the root causes of the issue. Energy poverty is caused by several factors such as insufficient infrastructure, little to no investment in the electrification of off-grid communities, and inadequate public policy. One of the main effects of energy poverty is a lack of economic productivity and a direct link with literal economic poverty. Energy poverty also impacts access to education and impedes the health of off-grid communities as baseline technologies such as oil lamps emit toxic fumes that harm the body over time.

One Million Lights Philippines (OML PH) aims to improve the quality of life of Filipinos by providing clean, safe, and accessible solar-powered lights to impoverished, off-grid communities and disaster-stricken areas around the Philippines. We replace toxic, hazardous, and costly kerosene lamps with solar-powered lights that are clean, safe, and affordable. By doing this, we help our beneficiaries save more money, become more productive, and lead healthier lives. We will be focusing not just on SDG 7 but also on SDG 1, SDG 4, SDG 8, and SDG 11.

Through the valuable insights that panelists will share at this side event, OML PH aims to raise international awareness about renewable energy solutions in the Philippines and their intersectionality with several SDGs. Moreover, we hope to foster collaborative strategies to further enhance access to sustainable energy which will impact other aspects of life of the off-grid communities that OML PH distributes to.

Guest speakers for this side event will be announced soon.