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These papers will be presented at the *Strategies to Overcome Poverty and Inequality Conference* to be held at the University of Cape Town from 3 until 7 September 2012. The 2012 conference will focus on understanding the experiences and causes of inequality, and particularly on considering practical strategies – policies and actions – that are aimed at significantly reducing inequality and poverty in both the short- and long-term.

There will be a host of experts in the social, economic, labour and health fields and will include contributions from Trevor Manuel (Minister in the Presidency, National Planning Commission) and Dr Mamphela Ramphele.

Energy Access: where are we going in Africa?

Alison Hughes and Gisela Prasad, Energy Research Centre, University of Cape Town (gisela.prasad@uct.ac.za)

Access to energy has been on the development agenda for several decades, focusing on electrification and other clean fuels such as LPG. Nevertheless, access to electricity and modern fuels remains low in Sub Saharan Africa. Traditional biomass, particularly woodfuel, remains a predominantly rural fuel, although charcoal use is high in many urban centres. One major problem with burning biomass in open fires is the smoke, which seriously affects health.

Poverty is the largest barrier to the use of modern fuels and appliances. The availability and cost of biomass compared to other alternatives influences fuel choice, and is a barrier to the uptake of other modern fuels in many rural communities.

This has been demonstrated in South Africa, where despite access to electricity and a portion of Free Basic Electricity, households in rural communities continue to use large quantities of biomass to meet their energy needs. This paper examines the continued use of woodfuel in rural areas, looking at changes in energy use in two Mpumalanga communities since electrification.

It looks at alternatives to traditional woodfuel use for these communities in terms of

energy cost and access to modern fuels, and explores the opportunities for and costs of modernizing woodfuel use.

Leveraging carbon revenue for poverty alleviation

Peter Atkins and Gisela Prasad Energy Research Centre, University of Cape Town
(gisela.prasad@uct.ac.za)

Poverty alleviation projects in developing countries can attract additional funding – from the carbon offset market – if they can prove that they reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This paper describes how a poor community generated greenhouse gas reductions, converted these into carbon revenues and then recycled most of the revenue back into the community. A voluntary carbon registry, specialising in poverty alleviation projects, assisted with selling the carbon credits.

The project, Umdoni Gel Stoves, is a 'fuel-switching' project which makes use of bioethanol gel, supplied under the South African government's Free Basic Alternative Energy policy, and using donor-supplied gel stoves. The project sees poor households partially displacing coal, wood, paraffin and dung fuel sources with cleaner burning bioethanol gel (a by-product of the local sugarcane industry).

This results in: reduced paraffin fire threat and indoor air pollution; less time spent collecting firewood; reduced household expenditure on energy; retention of dung on croplands with the associated improved soil fertility; creation of sustainable village businesses selling and distributing the bioethanol gel; and, lastly, reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

Seventy percent of the carbon revenue goes to the community and is being used in ways determined by them whilst the remaining thirty percent covers project management and registry fees.

Note to journalists

**For full programme visit
For accreditation please
RSVP**

www.carnegie3.org.za
kemantha.govender@uct.ac.za or 021 652
5627

Parking

Accredited media will have access to all sessions of the conference.

Updates

Plenty of free parking will be available near the venue (on the south side: P5, P4 and P17) Key sessions will be recorded and webcasts can be accessed via the conference website or UCT's youtube site. Daily blogs and links to media reports will also be placed on the conference website.

Conference venues

The main conference will be held in the Leslie Social Science Building on UCT's upper campus.

All evening events will be in the Baxter Theatre on Rondebosch Main Road. (Please note that media wishing to attend the Impumelelo Social Innovation awards ceremony should contact Impumelelo directly at (021) 424 6360 or info@impumelelo.org.za

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