



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

Focus: Wasting Electricity

The rise of urban areas has brought with it an increased demand for electricity generation and supply.

Most of the electricity generated in Zambia is hydro -- meaning that water is used to turn the turbines that produce electricity.

The Zambia Electricity Supply Corporation (ZESCO) in 2012 started distributing energy saving bulbs. These bulbs were distributed for free. In fact, the corporation allowed customers to exchange their ordinary bulbs for the energy saving ones.

The distribution of energy saving bulbs is continuing.

The spokesperson for the electric company said that many of the people have received the energy saving bulbs and most appreciate the benefits of these bulbs -- namely they reduce a customer's electric bill because they burn more efficiently than standard ones.

The use of the energy-saver bulbs has a small, but positive impact on global warming.

The Weekly Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

The Problem: The High Rate of Electricity Consumption

As the population and income rise, so does the use of electricity. In Zambia, electricity use continues to climb because of a rise in the standard of living. As incomes rise, more and more people are connecting to the national grid.

This means the utility company must generate more electricity to meet the needs of its customers.

Today, most of the power is supplied to the country from hydro-electric dams; however, there's a proposal by Mamba Coal Mine to start generating electricity using coal.

This will be bad for the environment and for people. The burning of coal sends vast amounts of carbon into the atmosphere and contributes significantly to global warming.

For people, coal can cause an assort-

ment of health issues -- including breathing problems.

So, this is worth keeping in mind when using electricity. In fact, one of the contributing factors to high electricity demands is waste.

When lights and other electric devices are left on when not in use, it requires the electric company to generate power that is then wasted. It also means the person who left the electric devices on -- is going to pay a higher electric bill even though they're not benefiting -- this, too, is a waste.

To reduce electricity consumption there is a need to consider initiatives that promote lower use of power -- such as replacing standard light bulbs with energy saving ones. Also, consider switching off electrical appliances, such as televisions and radios, when they are not being used.

Activities for Journalists

What can you do to reduce the use of electricity? Bear in mind that when there is increased demand for electricity there is pressure to produce more and more. Today, Zambia meets its electricity needs with hydro-power, but as demand goes up, the country may have to consider non-renewable sources – such as coal.

One of the keys is to not waste electricity and finds ways to conserve.

The initiative taken by ZESCO to exchange ordinary light bulbs with energy saving one is a great move. These energy-efficient bulbs use up to 80 percent less electricity than standard ones, but are capable of producing the same amount of light. This means less water is used in the generation of electricity. It also means an increased flow of water to communities – and reduces the need to use coal or another fossil fuel to generate electricity.

Many energy saver bulbs last up to ten times as long as a traditional bulb. Typically, an energy-saver bulb should last about six months – compared to about one month for a regular bulb.

When you use ordinary bulbs your electricity bill will be higher. For instance, the ordinary bulbs cost around two Kwacha while the energy-saving bulbs are freely provided by ZESCO or if you

should to purchase one in a store – it's still cheaper than a standard bulb – costing just one Kwacha.

An interesting fact about energy saving bulbs: six energy saver bulbs in your home will use an equal amount of energy needed to light one incandescent light bulb.

Use your radio station to help your community understand that incandescent bulbs are bad for the environment and that energy-saver bulbs are cheaper and better for the environment.

Interview some people from your area who have electricity in their home. Are they using energy-efficient light bulbs? If so, why? If not, ask them why not.

If they use the energy-saver bulbs ask them if they can tell a difference between the ordinary bulb and the energy-saving bulb.

Interview the ZESCO spokesperson and get them to describe the benefits of energy-saver bulbs.

Useful Link

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