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For those who lived in the heart of Luanda during the nineties, city-wide blackouts were more frequent than expected, serving as background for stories of both collective disappointment and resilience, from borrowing a small generator from neighbors during a wedding or birthday party to doing homework at the kitchen table with candlelight. The population who lived in the capital city was fortunate enough to experience electricity, even if it included the regular blackouts, some lasting for many consecutive days.

While urban areas have witnessed improvements in electricity access since the end of the civil war in 2002, the story takes a different turn in rural and peripheral regions. Today, the struggle for affordable and sustainable energy persists, impacting the lives of millions. In this two-part blog series, we delve into the challenges faced by rural communities and explore initiatives aimed at transforming the energy landscape in Angola.

The Lingering Challenge:

Despite a growing economy and peace reigning since 2002, access to electricity remains a hurdle in Angola. Official data indicates that less than 45% of the population enjoys electricity, with rural areas facing even greater hardships, relying on wood and charcoal for energy needs. In these areas, women bear the brunt, engaging in unpaid domestic work and seeking alternative cooking fuels. Agriculture, a significant employer, grapples with low productivity, contributing to elevated food insecurity levels.

UNDP's Energizing Efforts:

Enter the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), wielding TRAC 2 Funds to bolster energy access in Angola. With only 42.7% of the population currently connected to the grid, UNDP's ambitious aim aligns with the national goal of reaching 50% coverage by the end of 2022. The Renewable Energy enabling actions in Angola (TRAC 2 Programming) pilot project is a beacon of hope, seeking to attract investments and bridge the energy access gap.

Systems Thinking Unleashed:

Understanding the intricate energy landscape in Angola requires a holistic approach. The UNDP's AccLab team employs systems thinking and mapping to navigate the complex web of initiatives, public and private actors, and their interconnections. This innovative approach lays the foundation for initiatives grounded in a profound understanding of the challenges at hand.



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Collective Intelligence Unleashed:

UNDP, alongside the Regulatory Institute for Electricity and Water Services (IRSEA) and the Angolan Association for Renewable Energies (ASAER), orchestrates workshops bringing together public and private stakeholders. Through systems mapping tools, participants collectively unravel the energy system's complexities, identifying challenges, roles, and opportunities. The first-hand insights generated contribute to informed decision-making for sustainable energy solutions.

Mapping the Energy Landscape:

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