GPA
GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR ACTION

Workshop on Enabling the Investment Ecosystem for Energy Access in Displacement and Fragile Settings

15 April 2026 | Nairobi, Kenya

Purpose of the Workshop

The GPA workshop, co-developed and co-facilitated with senior sector leaders at the Access to Energy Institute (A2EI), Energy Peace Partners, NORCAP, Practical Action and Energy Savings Trust, convened a group of 65 humanitarian and development actors, government officials, energy companies, funders, finance providers, and refugee-led and local organisations to **identify key issues hindering energy access in displacement and fragile settings and co-create concrete solution pathways**.

The workshop objectives were:

- Learning from recent successes, challenges, and failures: Creating an open and safe space to share in-depth experiences from different locations.
- Building partnerships in key thematic areas: Engaging the private sector, developing demand-site support programmes, and fostering inclusive, integrated energy planning and investment.
- Developing actionable solutions: Addressing critical issues regarding finance, technical assistance and ecosystem strengthening, while seeding ideas for collective work.

Key Insights

Participants worked across three breakout themes: **(1) Market Systems Development in Displacement Settings**, **(2) Business Models and Finance**, and **(3) Inclusive Local Financing**.

Key insights highlighted that displacement settings are currently hindered by siloed humanitarian efforts, short-term funding cycles, and an over-reliance on aid, which distorts long-term market development. To achieve sustainable scale, the sector must transition towards public-private partnership frameworks—utilising blended finance and Energy-as-a-Service (EaaS) models—while actively integrating displaced populations into national electrification planning to leverage local financing.

Some lighthouse projects, – such as Renewvia's 2.5 MW mini-grid serving refugees and host communities in Kakuma and Kalobeyei in Northern Kenya and UECCC's refugee-inclusive national energy subsidy demonstrate proof of concept. What is needed is more intentional pipeline building to meet energy needs in displacement and fragile settings at scale. Ultimately, unlocking institutional investment requires overcoming investor risk aversion through predictable off-taker agreements, targeted de-risking guarantees and the aggregation of humanitarian, public, and community energy demand.

Next steps

The key emerging actions are:

1. **Project Pipeline Building:** Systematically defining and packaging energy access funding and investment opportunities for resource providers. This includes working directly with companies and investors on market entry and structuring around specific business models (e.g. UN/INGO generator replacement, local household and productive use loads, public institutions) and assessing potential for demand aggregation.
2. **Convening, Advocacy & Matchmaking (M300)**: Leveraging market opportunity and pipeline insights to convene, matchmake and advocate for channeling M300 financing into these opportunities. Advocacy should target procurement barriers within UN

agencies that currently block EaaS models. The GOGSFE 2026 can be used as a critical milestone for this effort.

3. **Local Area-Based Energy Masterplans:** Developing and operationalising local area-based energy masterplans with local and national government leadership. These plans must transcend short budget and political cycles, shifting away from "shopping lists" of disconnected projects toward structured, bankable investment plans delivered by the private sector with public sector support (building on momentum of the Shirika Plan and other similar inclusive policy frameworks).
4. **Local Investment Support**: Increasing intentional technical support for local and refugee-led micro enterprises to improve investment readiness (e.g. financing, bookkeeping, business models, technology expertise). This includes routing larger donor capital through specialised local financial intermediaries to deliver smaller ticket sizes. Furthermore, high-level advocacy is needed to operationalise refugee IDs, helping to overcome rigid KYC bottlenecks that currently prevent displaced people from accessing formal credit and PAYG technologies.

One-Year Vision

Participants shared an idea of what they would like to be true in one year's time. The GPA Secretariat and partners can consider advancing a few concrete suggestions (depending on the resourcing available), as follows:

- **Project Map:** Create a global tracker to monitor activities and locations, accompanied by a "lessons learned" prospectus that maps different business models, tracks partnership impacts, and uses standardised KPIs to differentiate customer segments (e.g., UN agencies versus communities).
- **Market Development Framework:** Establish a shared framework and a step-by-step transition pathway from humanitarian aid to market-driven systems. This includes creating practical resources that define common terms, actor roles, and clear investment narratives.
- **Targeted Investor Network:** Build a data-sharing network to lower information costs for new investors. This will support pipeline building by directly engaging a curated list of commercial and impact investors.

Contact

If you would like to be involved in taking forward actions forward with the GPA partnership ecosystem, please indicate your interest by filling in this form. For any other queries, please contact energy.gpa@unops.org.

About the GPA

The Global Platform for Action (GPA) in Sustainable Energy in Displacement Settings is the global initiative accelerating SDG 7 in forced displacement and fragile contexts. The GPA Secretariat, hosted at UNOPS, is advised by key humanitarian and development organisations, and supported by the IKEA Foundation and the European Union's Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO), with in-kind support from NORCAP and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) through the Transforming Energy Access (TEA) platform.

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