

This piece of research was commissioned to identify barriers preventing people accessing electricity, and preventing them making a formal connection in particular. The aim of the project was to gather data on the use of electricity amongst the urban poor in order to inform future policy decisions on power sector reform.

Findings include:

- If innovative "official" solutions are put in place for electricity provision to informal settlements, the poor will respond
- There is a universal willingness to pay for metered supplies, households are prepared to pay for a good quality supply
- While connection costs do indeed present a barrier, it is the lack of availability of formal connections that is more important
- Relaxing the requirements for metered connections will reduce barriers, this requires the political will to address the barriers

Conventional wisdom suggests that people in informal (illegal) settlements cannot be supplied electricity without conveying a certain legitimacy to their settlement. With privatisation and the growth of innovative utility provision, there are options that allow for provision of electricity untied from implicit endorsement of settlements.

Conventional wisdom also states that the high cost of connection acts as a significant barrier to the poor getting access to energy. Whilst evidence from the research supports this view, it seems to suggest that, within the urban context, this is not the major barrier. The household surveys show a strong willingness to pay for metered supplies, among all groups including those in informal settlements. Their use of flying connections and other forms of theft are predominantly due to an inability to access metered supplies, due to current regulations and required documentation.

The project outputs present some conclusions and policy recommendations arising from this DFID funded research into factors preventing poor, urban households from accessing electricity.

The summary report is available to read here: [Energy In Slums - Summary](#)

The full report and other relevant documents are available to read on the project website www.gamos.org.uk/urbanenergy