



Energy Democracy In Africa

# Lesotho Case

Session: Lessons from International Experience

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**Energy Democracy and the Politics of Energy Transition in African Countries**

**Workshop on Mini-grids and Public Participation in Energy Decisions**

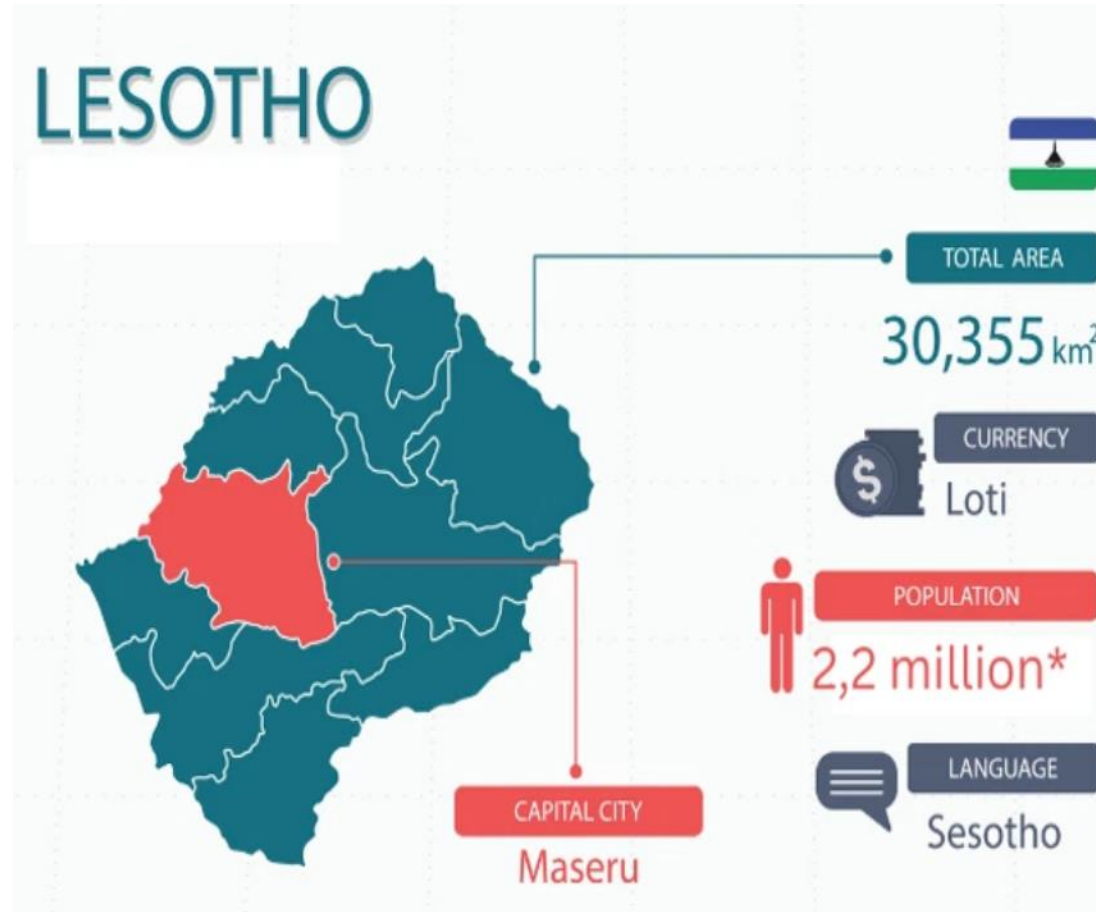
**Lusaka, Zambia 9-10 April 2024**

# Overview

- Lesotho Energy Context
- ENR-Demos research contribution
- Lessons learned from Lesotho Research
- Energy democracy futures



# Lesotho Context

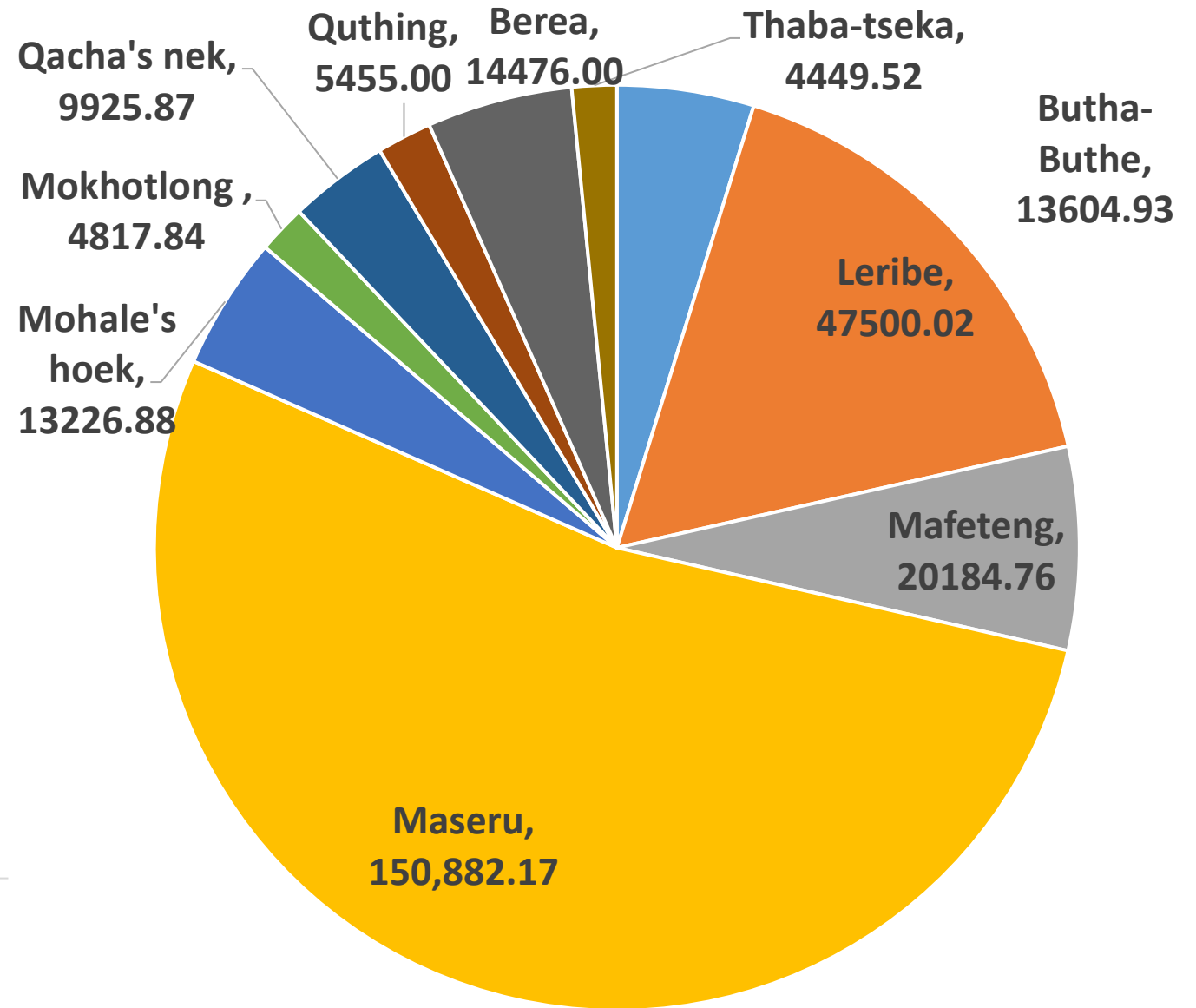
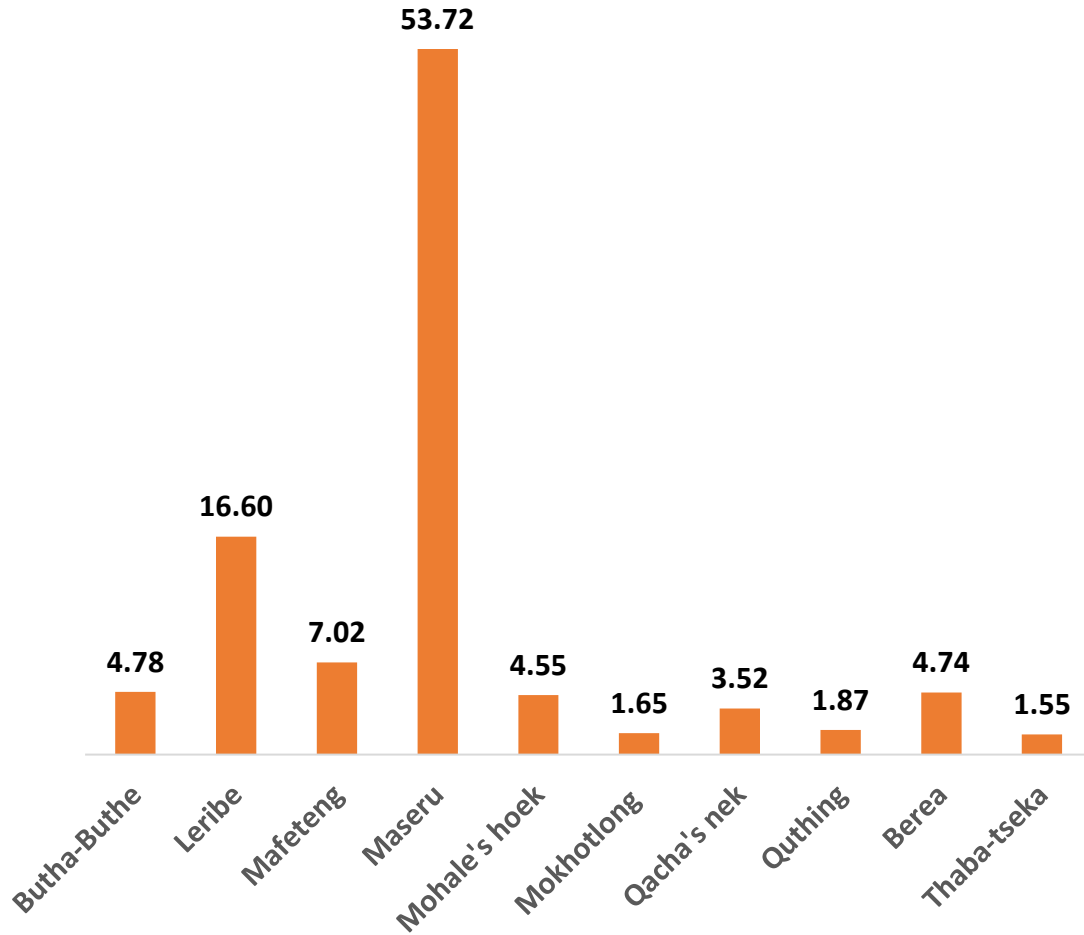


- Lesotho is a small, mountainous, and landlocked country, surrounded by its much larger neighbor, South Africa. It has a population of almost 2.3 million and nominal gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of \$1,045.9 in 2022.
- It is a lower-middle-income country.
- Lesotho is mostly highlands, with its lowest point 1,400 meters above sea level.
- The unemployment rate has stagnated at 22.5%, and 32.4% of 2,200,000 population live below the poverty line, More than 70% of the population lives in rural areas and engages in agriculture.
- Lesotho continued to reel from the global impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the War in Ukraine and other crises

# Households connection disparities

Households with electricity

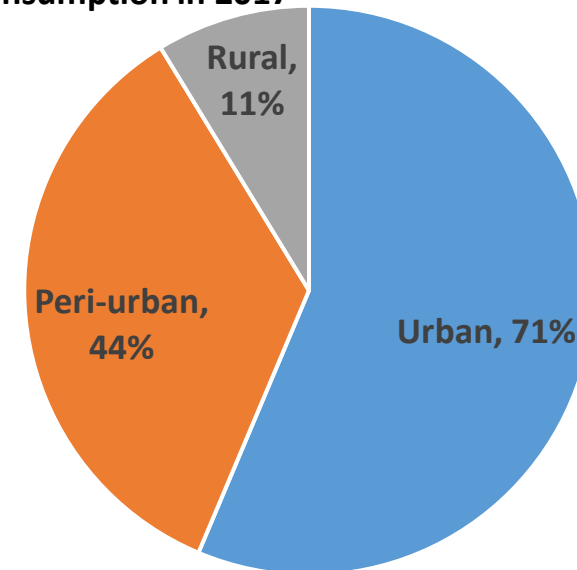
Households with electricity



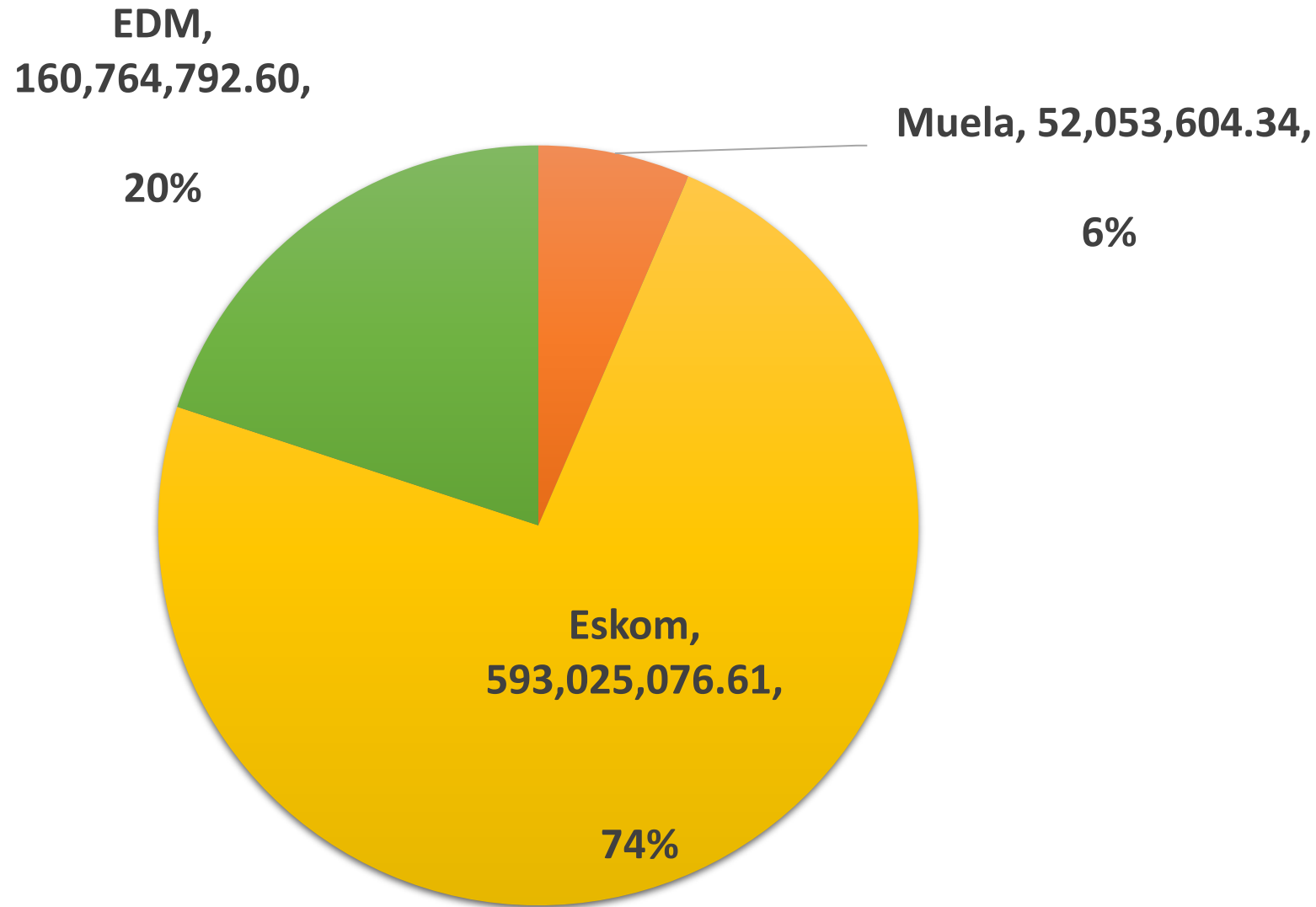
# Demographics and Energy Situation



- The recent electricity generation capacity of Lesotho used to be 74.7MW – Muela is being repaired/maintained
- About 45.4.0% of households have access to grid electricity, and these are concentrated mainly in urban areas.
- About 60% of households are in rural areas and depend on biomass for cooking and space heating.
- Tracking SDG 7 (100% target by 2030) - Business-as-Usual Scenario: 68.4% will have access to electricity. 50% will have access to clean cooking technologies
- Sustainable Development Scenario: The big question is “What do we need to do to achieve accelerated universal access by 2030?”
- **Household Energy Consumption in 2017**



# Electricity Purchases Expenses (in Maloti) from 'Muela, EDM, and Eskom 2022 - 2023

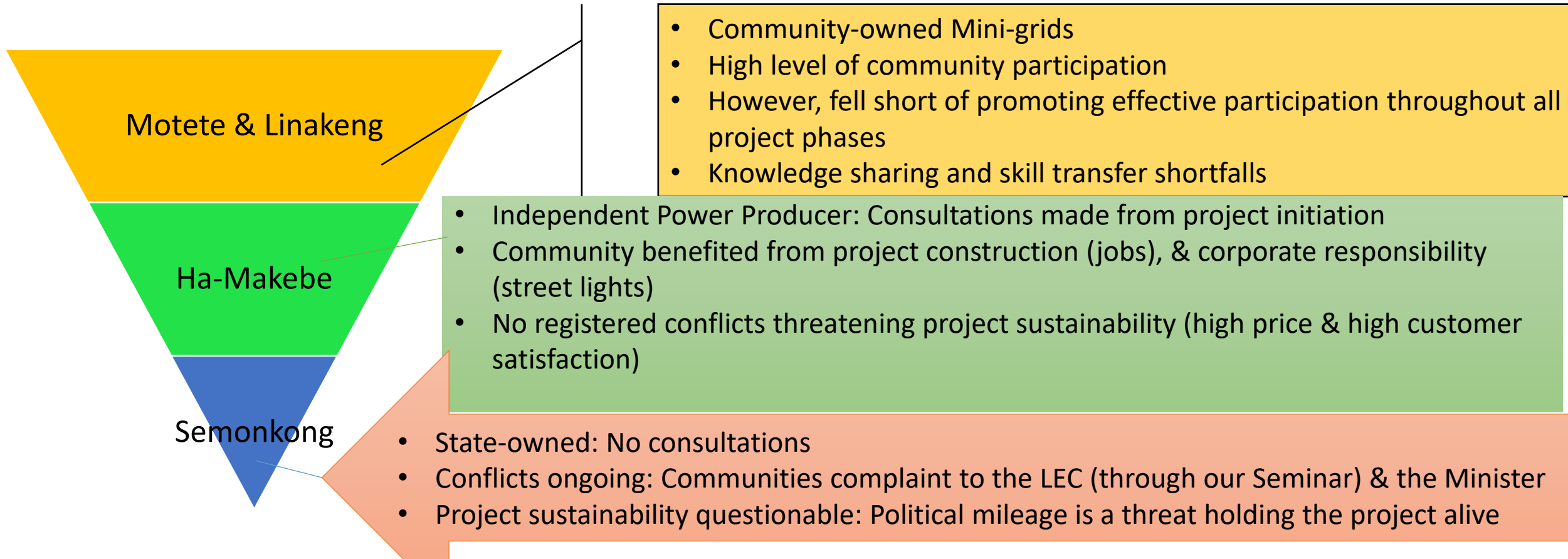


Electricity purchases (in Maloti) 2022-2023

■ Muela ■ Eskom ■ EDM ■

# ENR-Demos Research findings on mini-grids

- The National University of Lesotho (NUL) Energy Democracy team researched on energy democracy in Lesotho.
- The team established three types of Minigrids with different citizen participation levels and sustainability prospects.



# ENR-Demos Research in Lesotho: Lessons

- The Lesotho team has also brought together communities, energy project stakeholders and companies to a seminar.
- The seminar created a platform for the stakeholders to consider citizen participation in various types of solar energy mini-grids.
- It also promoted energy justice by facilitating corporate responsibility on the part of stakeholders, e.g. Telecommunications companies (Vodacom Foundation) benefiting from community land - use for erecting network towers and electricity purchase transactions.
- The team has also produced blogs and videos published under the ENR-Demos website regarding the participation dynamics in the three mini-grids discussed earlier.

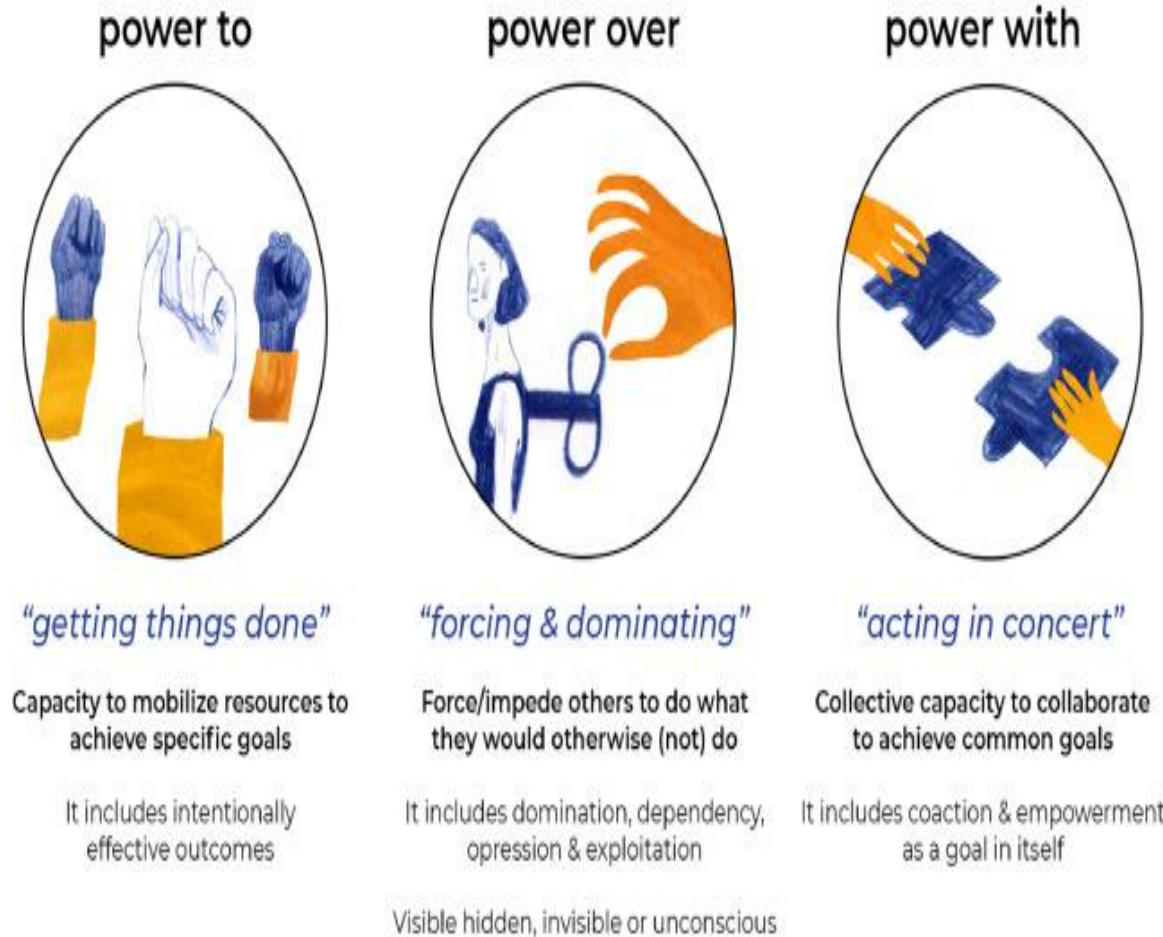


# Case Lessons

- Citizen participation is underrated but crucial to the success and sustainability of mini-grid projects. Eg Semonkong vs Ha-Makebe. Motete and Linakeng (more consultations –initial stages, towards commissioning-more public questions). Quantity vs Quality = happy medium
- The NUL team developed a policy brief informed by the research findings. The team organized a series of meetings to share the policy brief with policymakers and invited stakeholders to a seminar. The policy brief recommended the development of an Integrated Master Plan, Setting a threshold of local participation in tendering for prospective mini-grids.
- The Master Plan is being developed with the support of the European Union
- The Department of Energy indicated that the upcoming tender will consider local participation.
- The policy brief recommendations have been considered - although the credit was not attributed to the team by the policymakers.

# Case Lessons 2

- The team is working on the next working paper with a tentative publication revolving around transitions and additions in energy. People have cultural beliefs and patterns which if not accommodated may inhibit success....biomass
- The team is in the process of collaboration with civil society organizations to ensure effective lobbying and advocacy of overall recommendations around Lesotho's energy transition.
- The team has established an "Institute for Policy Research and Dialogue" – SIRD. The Research Institute is unique model in the country - The think-tank is composed scholars in Lesotho and civil society activists.
- Two papers are in the pipeline: Energy Security to capture regional anxieties as Muela gets maintained and Eskom is load-shedding. 2 Power Politics of energy to draw in communities, regulators and IPPs perceptions as mini-rid footprint grows – see diagram



Illustrations: Maria Fraaije

# Future Research forays Lesotho Energy Transition

- **Oncoming policy brief on Fostering energy security through enhanced collaboration and accountability in Lesotho.** We are going to get together with key stakeholders: LEWA, LEC, DoE (CIA and FBI not communicating led to 9/11). Do not coordinate or blame passing. LEC has specific and enduring problems, Incumbent players (LEC) –and significant impact. IPPs are not the problem; they get handed bad deals....infrastructure and the cost of doing business.
- **Regulatory and Policy Framework: 4 pronged issues to fix- 1. Processes: 2. Proportionality. Procurement: 4. Fairness & Equity** -A key policy objective is to protect the poor and disadvantaged groups. Hanging questions: When will grid tariffs be cost-reflective? Why should mini-grids be market-driven while the grid is not? Is the market option factoring in issues of ability to pay?
- **Community engagement:** 1. Communities with grid connections vs those with off-grid. 2. Intersectionality's – inclusiveness – Gender and Youth. Real Decentralization- Local government and economic growth. 3. Dead spot communities (Isolated villages). 3. Multidimensional poverty and inability to pay. 4. Community cooperatives – stabilizing and working them. 5. Politics infrastructure nexus – neo-patrimonial verandah and airconditioner politics – normative state and prerogative state. 6. Civil society engagement and energy - useful and essential 7. Cultural beliefs, Norms and Energy use.
- **Regional political economy.** Energy security and sovereignty (Lesotho Highlands Water Project phase II and Treaty re-negotiations – impact on energy generation). Lesotho is importing all energy from Eskom- and EDM-Mozambique (more expensive) – Muela is undergoing repairs.
- **Development Programming** – lower level -robust consultation and skills transfer - ongoing process capacity building, projects' contracts management and people management skills. Higher level – water food, climate change and energy nexus, Energy democracy = people doing/living democracy
- End/fin.