Dreams May Come

I vaguely remember being a high school (secondary school) student in Jos, Plateau state, Nigeria. How I would gaze night after night through the window onto the illumination of the street lights on Zaria Road from my classroom night prep desk through the flicker of my kerosene lantern. I couldn't wait for term end to be carted off to the airport and forwarded to my home in Lagos. As a then 14-year old African child the seed had been sown of an awareness of a large problem.

Again, as a student at the University in Port Harcourt, in Choba village in the late eighties, there was more promise of darkness than light as electricity had become a luxury. Fuel generators had begun becoming a necessary staple at most homes in Nigeria.

By 1990, it was a foregone conclusion that this was a problem that I would dedicate myself to solving. Also, climate change had emerged as a new threat to our planet which is presently evidenced by rising sea levels and coastal flooding, extreme weather events, drought and insufficient access to drinking water, and risks of decrease in regional crop yields. ABOUT THIRTY YEARS AGO, the possibly problematic effect of heat-trapping emissions from burning fossil fuels and rain forests became headline news.

It had taken an era of aggregate science, and a major shift in attitudes, for that to occur. To be sure, Svante Arrhenius, the spearheading Swedish researcher who in 1896 previously evaluated the extent of warming from widespread coal burning, for the most part anticipated this as a benefit, both in farming abundance and "increasingly equable and better atmospheres, particularly as respects the colder locales of the Earth." In its closing, the article anticipated what's become the fundamental hindrance to handling destructive outflows: the wealth of non-renewable energy sources. "Coal and oil are as yet copious and modest in numerous pieces of the world, and there is each motivation to accept that both will be consumed by industry insofar as it pays to do as such."

Plenty is occurring with clean power technologies, with mounting growth in solar and wind frameworks and in performance of the batteries important to keep lights on when the sun is down and the air is still. In any case, the world stays in excess of 85 percent dependent on non-renewable energy sources to fulfill its hunger for energy. Gains in energy productivity and sustainable power source have been overwhelmed by rising interest for fossil fuels as poverty diminishes. In the U.S. furthermore, quite a bit of Europe, low-carbon nuclear power is in retreat as communities, reviewing past panics, press to close aging plants, and significant expenses impede the advancement of new ones.

In 2016, WiSolar was founded in South Africa and is currently the fastest growing solar electricity company in South Africa.

There are three problems with the current power situation:

1. Availability

2. Affordability

3. Environmental impact & Radiative forcing

In my journey I've seen genius and brilliance out of Africa. However, mainstream societal media has been engineered to publish negative and "unicef" stories out of Africa while Africa is deprived of tokens to execute or try out, the privilege of lab work, research or any form of incubation is typically reserved for the west. But costly, fast and furious for returns in Africa.

According to the Iea World Energy Outlook Report, providing electricity access to all by 2030 will require an annual investment of $52 billion per year equivalent to only 0.2% of global GDP. In 2016 alone over $270 billion was spent on fossil fuel consumption subsidies.

Would we be able to name the principle offenders? There are almost as many theories as there are proponents of one band or another. Among them: absence of essential research financing, poor media coverage, industry influence on politics, and uncertainty planting by those vested in fossil fuels or opposed to government intervention. There's likewise our "awkward brain"— my description for a group of human conduct attributes and normal practices that cut against getting environmental change right.

As recently as Monday 13th 2020 sea level rise, violent storms, and coastal flooding hit Sea Point, Cape Town with unprecedented ferocity leaving a destruction trail in its wake and bringing waves of foam along sea point shoreline.

Research by a variety of scholars and scientists underpins an overwhelming outcome: Climate change is unlike any ecological issue we've at any point confronted. We can't "fix" it the manner in which we've begun to fix the ozone opening or smog, with confined guidelines, constrained technological changes, and inequitable treaties. Climate change is too huge in space, time, and intricacy; the outflows that cause it are too focal a result of the effort of some 7.5 billion individuals now, and approximately 10 billion within several decades, to thrive on Earth.

While the numerical models are genuinely basic, three wide scenarios develop, which is portrayed in another book called Light of the Stars. The first situation is the "soft landing," in which a civilization and its planet transition easily to another, consistent state. The second is "die off," in which a planet's ecological conditions corrupt and populations drop steeply yet appear to endure. And there's a third scenario: collapse. "The population rises, the planetary state 'heats up,' and sooner or later the population crashes down to zero.

So, without the political and socio-economic framework and support for incubation within this geography, dreams may not materialize across environmental industries in Africa.

Credit: Tonye Irims