

It is widely acknowledged that buildings contribute a considerable proportion of global GHG emissions in their construction and use, making them a key contributor to global climate change. It is however the case that only limited attention to this reality is seen in architectural design, more so in sub-Saharan Africa, where a business-as-usual approach still predominates. This is ironic given the effects of climate change are already evident in the region; seen in changed weather patterns, with longer, hotter and drier seasons, and less predictable rains. The consequential increase in demand for climate modification equipment places additional demands on already stretched resources. While much of electrical energy produced across much of sub-Saharan Africa is from renewable sources, the penetration of this energy is still extremely low, with many towns still lacking formal electrical connections. Thus the business as usual approach may have consequences to the future growth patterns across the region.

Contemplating the responsibility of architects, landscape architects, urban designers and urban planners have in curbing GHG emissions, this paper reflects on how these professionals could respond to the challenges posed. As detail, focussing, for example, on relative costs, showing the cost differentials between biomass and modern fuels, given the prevailing costs in both countries. It explores specific cooking energy consumptions for different fuels, which highlight characteristics of different fuels and appliances.

The paper discusses the influence each may have on cooking behaviour and looks for trends evident among different consumer segments found within the urban environment. Finally, the paper discusses those issues that appear to be acting as barriers to the adoption of modern energy and improved cooking practices.