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MOBILE-CONTROLLED MICROGRIDS PROVIDE SOLAR POWER TO RURAL AFRICA



Powerhive provides electricity to rural homes and uses its cloud-based platform to monitor and manage them.

Getting electricity supply to remote rural regions is a problem for many developing countries, and making that supply clean and renewable in an age threatened by global warming brings further complications. But one California-based company is offering a solution to power the world's 1.4 billion living without reliable electricity.

Powerhive uses renewable microgrid technologies to supply solar power to rural communities in the developing world. The company works with energy providers and utility companies to install new solar-powered, mobile-controlled electricity grids. They have also developed the cloud-based software Honeycomb to autonomously manage small-scale grid operations. Customers link to Honeycomb, paying using mobile or SMS, while the software keeps them and the power supplier up to date on their account status.

Powerhive also provides Asali, an electrical metering system designed to monitor the microgrids and collect energy data. The grids can power small groups of a few hundred homes and is cheaper than installing individual solar panels for every house.

The power company has sparked USD 20 million in 2016 to support its development in emerging markets, and has received the backing of renewable energy enthusiast and Oscar nominated actor Leonardo DiCaprio, who sits as an advisory board member.

The company's flagship project will bring reliable electricity to 90,000 people in western Kenya. How else can businesses democratize renewable energy?

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