



# Health Electrification Champions

This profile is part of a series sponsored by the Health Electrification and Telecommunications Alliance (HETA) on diverse champions for health facility electrification (HFE) in sub-Saharan Africa. In sharing these profiles, HETA aims to highlight health, electrification, and digital connectivity or telecommunications professionals in HETA countries who have helped accelerate electricity and digital access in healthcare facilities while also supporting the inclusion of women and youth.



*“There is no greater happiness than seeing people’s joy once their homes are connected.”*

## Kathia Ajebo

Kathia Ajebo is the Head of Orange Energies in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a business line of Orange, the telecommunications company, and Chair of the Board of Directors of the Congolese Association for Renewable and Decentralized Energy (ACERD). With over 22 years of management and leadership experience, she has played a key role in rural electrification, reaching over 50,000 households throughout her time at Orange DRC.

### How did you come to work in the health electrification sector?

I was appointed Head of Orange Energies and mandated to chair the ACERD by Orange DRC on January 18, 2021. This new challenge allowed me to leave the telecommunications department, where I had experience in distribution. I familiarized myself with the renewable energy sector to leverage our organization's expertise in favor of energy inclusion.

### What is your role in health facility electrification (HFE)? How does your role in HFE impact the community and stimulate economic growth?

As the Head of Orange Energies, my mission is to build partnerships and use technology as a

strategic tool to improve energy access in the DRC. The goal is to make clean, affordable energy accessible to as many as possible through digital technologies (such as digital payment with Orange Money), in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This is partly possible thanks to Orange Smart Energy, a digital pay-as-you-go platform that facilitates access to energy for households across the DRC.

### What motivates you in your work?

My motivation lies in increasing the rate of access to electricity in the DRC, which has considerable practical implications for individuals, significantly improving their quality of life and economic opportunities. Access to energy can improve health and safety, promote educational opportunities, create jobs, enable the use of household appliances, improve communication, and empower women. For example, electrifying health facilities reduces indoor pollution as electricity reduces reliance on kerosene lamps and wood stoves, which can cause respiratory problems and other health issues. There is no greater happiness than seeing people's joy once their homes are connected.



## Share an accomplishment related to HFE that you are most proud of.

The launch of the Anchor-Business-Community mini-grid project in the Bagira community in Bukavu (Kivu, DRC), which will connect approximately 600 homes by the end of 2024. This achievement is particularly significant because it directly contributes to improving patient safety and working conditions for healthcare professionals. It exemplifies the core principles of HFE—designing systems that optimize human well-being and overall system performance. The installation of the mini-grid, which provides off-grid power to rural communities in Bagira, has brought significant positive changes. The strength of this project lies in its support for the socio-economic development of the community, improving the quality of healthcare, increasing security levels, and enabling people to use mobile phones, televisions and the internet. It also contributes to improving children's education and helping their parents generate a stable income. This reliable and clean source of energy fosters a sense of community progress and optimism for the future.



## Do you have any advice for women and youth pursuing a career in energy, health, telecoms, or digital innovation?

It's all about attitude: When your passion guides you to your work, the challenges you face automatically lead to results. It's also essential to never stop learning. By actively participating in a professional association, you continually expand your knowledge, stay connected to industry developments, and maintain your passion for your career. This approach ensures that you remain engaged, motivated, and prepared to take on new challenges, reducing the risk of burnout and promoting long-term professional growth.

In addition to this advice, it is crucial to pursue relevant training in your field, develop technical and soft skills, build a professional network and support community, seek mentorship, set clear goals, be open to opportunities, stay resilient, and prioritize your well-being. By following these tips, women and youth can more effectively navigate their careers and make meaningful contributions in the fields of energy, health, telecommunications, and digital innovation.



## What are some untapped actions that the energy sector could focus on to accelerate progress in equitable HFE?

Massively accelerating the deployment of mini-grids can provide rural communities with access to energy. In addition, digitizing renewable energy distribution in rural areas would help scale up HFE progress. For example, Orange Smart Energy allows energy producers to map, manage, animate, and collect payments from their customers remotely, whether they live in cities or in off-grid rural areas.

**About HETA** | The Health Electrification and Telecommunications Alliance (HETA) is a USAID Global Development Alliance and Power Africa's flagship initiative for health facility electrification and digital connectivity in sub-Saharan Africa. Our mission is to catalyze public-private partnerships and sustainable business models that increase access to reliable, renewable energy and digital connections for 10,000 health facilities—vital improvements to support equitable access to lifesaving care across the region. Together with diverse partners from the public, private, and social sectors, HETA is making it easier and less costly to invest in the systems that power healthcare and productive uses of energy. To learn more, please contact [HETA@abtglobal.com](mailto:HETA@abtglobal.com).

