standard of living [56], then the present rural electrification paradigm must be urgently changed to: "*Increasing the access of the rural poor to electricity-based services*". This set of services includes health, clean water, education, food preservation, entertainment and the possibility of engaging in productive activities.

Under this perspective, current PV rural electrification activities represent a landmark of the transition period into a new rural electrification scheme to substitute the old one with better results. However, the *new electrification* requires among other things, a new culture for electricity supply and use in rural areas, an *ad hoc* legal framework, new business practices within the electrical sector, innovative financial mechanisms, new and better technologies and appropriate institutional schemes. Thus, the actual value of programs and projects currently underway has to be weighted not only in terms of the number of PV users in rural areas, but also in terms of the benefits PV installations are bringing to the population. Also important to gauge the effectiveness of current PV rural electrification projects is the relevance of the lessons learned from them, which will allow the implementation of improved schemes for successful project replication.

This new paradigm for rural electrification should in turn be embedded in the broader concept of rural energy supply, which calls for a timely supply of useful energy in a variety of forms, so that people can have better opportunities to improve their own quality of life, to foster local economic development and to protect the environment.

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