



MAKING SMART ENERGY THE DEFAULT CHOICE

Emil Kotomin, May 2026

Reaching net zero on time requires hundreds of millions to change how they consume energy.

Adjusting thermostats, shifting consumption off peak hours, choosing efficient transport, reducing waste.

But for most – it's a non-starter.

Only 1 in 3 EU households fully understand their energy bill.

TO ACHIEVE MASS-ADOPTION,

SMART ENERGY NEEDS TO BECOME THE OBVIOUS CHOICE,

AND, EVENTUALLY, THE ONLY CHOICE THAT FEELS RIGHT –

THE WAY RECYCLING DID, BUT FASTER

AND ON A MUCH WIDER SCALE.

Four gaps in the way

Access

Renters in most European cities cannot install smart meters, choose their provider, or install solar without landlord consent. Landlords have no incentive to invest in infrastructure that lowers the tenants' bills.

Literacy

Dynamic tariffs, automated energy trading, and energy communities are already available but remain invisible to most.

Policy

Reaching mass adoption requires collaboration between energy companies, device manufacturers, and policymakers to make smart energy the preferred choice for most.

Culture

No social norm, identity marker, or mechanism currently makes wasting energy as uncomfortable as littering.

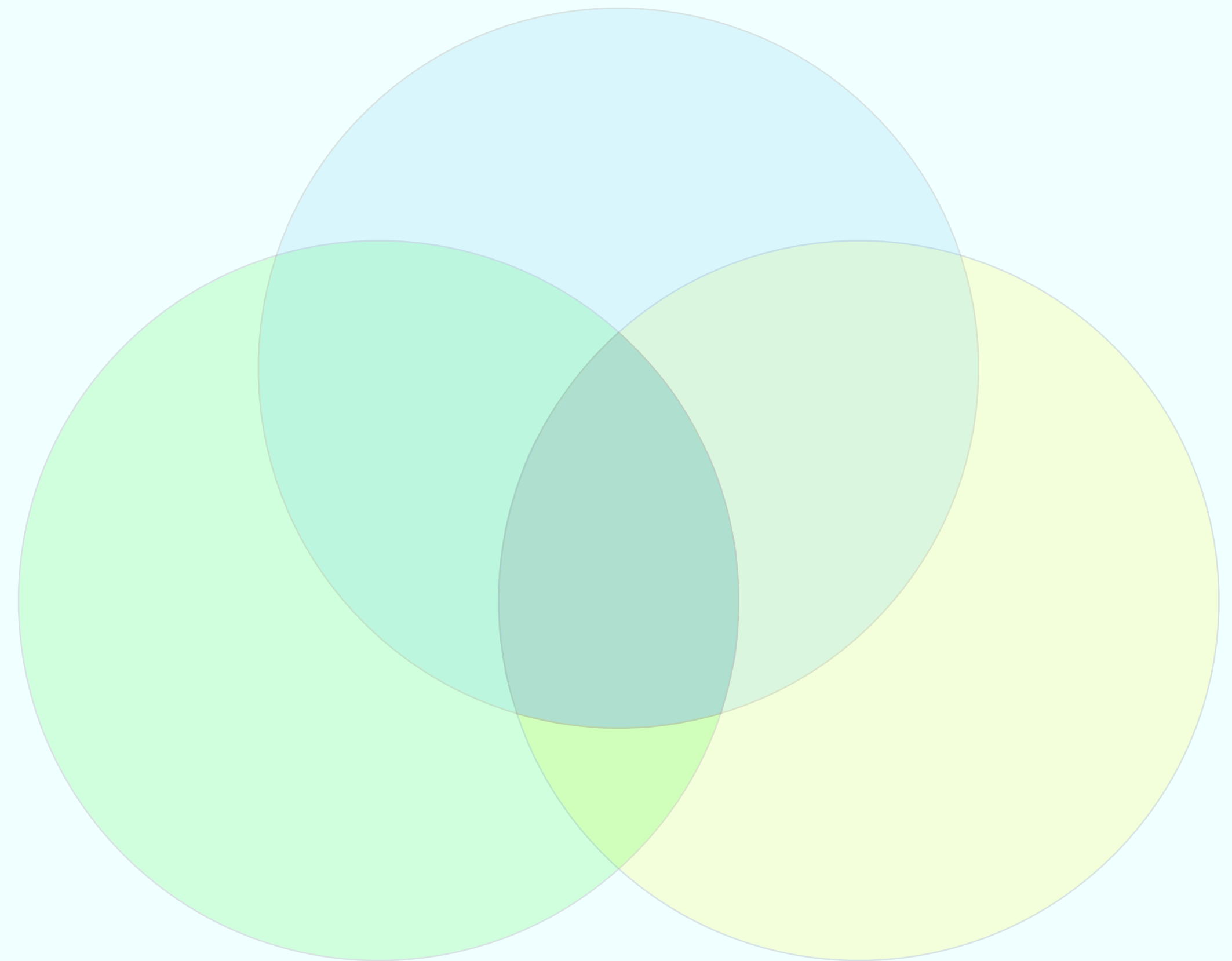
Consumers engage when the product is right

Companies like 1KOMMA5°, Enpal, Octopus Energy, Tibber et al, prove consumers will engage with smart energy when the product is right – dynamic pricing, home batteries, automated trading – all work and attract a growing customer base.

The imperative is to build on that momentum with the kind of institutional **backing that turns successful products into a mass-market standard** – regulatory incentives, cross-industry collaboration, public campaigns, and social nudges that move adoption from millions to hundreds of millions.

For smart energy to reach mass adoption, it needs to be 3 things at once

- **Effortless:** requiring no thought, research, or specialist knowledge, reaching people who would never have sought it out on their own.
- **Economically beneficial:** saving money – clearly and immediately.
- **A cultural norm:** part of how people see themselves, not something mandated by government or driven by social pressure.





Making it effortless

Public infrastructure as education

Free smart energy access – built into parks, transit stops, and public spaces – that benefits everyone without requiring an app, a sign-up, or any prior knowledge.

Plug-and-play energy generation

Programmes that let consumers benefit from renewables immediately, like [plug-in solar panels](#) sold in general-purpose supermarkets.

Plug-and-play energy management

Devices like the portable [Windfall](#) battery that let anyone, including short-term renters, participate in smart energy right away by charging when electricity is cheap and powering their homes when it is expensive.

Making it economically beneficial

Cost optimisation

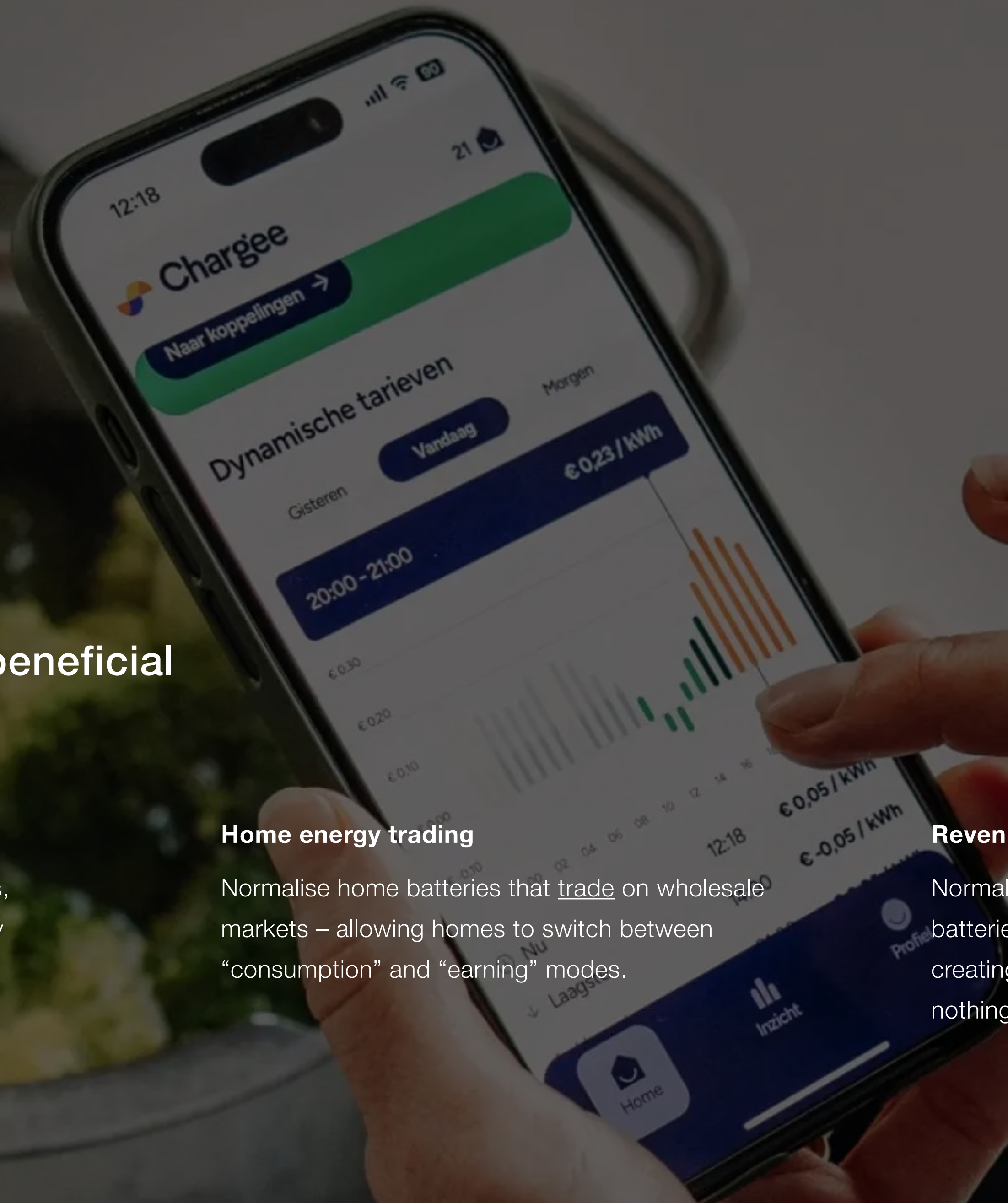
Make connecting EVs, batteries, thermostats, and renewable energy sources, automatically shifting usage to the cheapest and greenest power available – easy and a new standard.

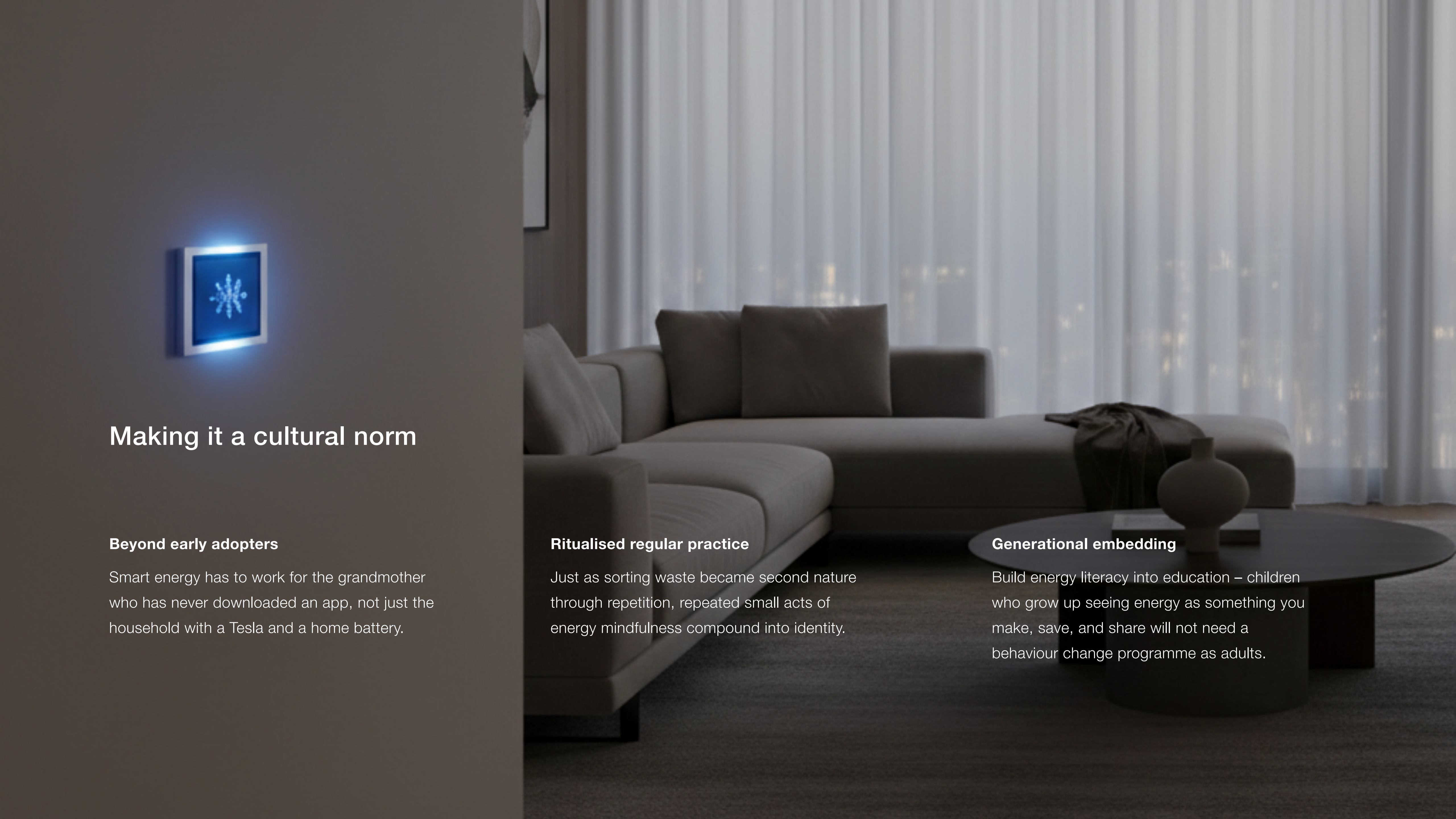
Home energy trading

Normalise home batteries that trade on wholesale markets – allowing homes to switch between “consumption” and “earning” modes.

Revenue from grid services

Normalise getting paid by grid operators to let home batteries help balance national supply and demand, creating a passive income stream that requires nothing from the consumer once it is set up.





Making it a cultural norm

Beyond early adopters

Smart energy has to work for the grandmother who has never downloaded an app, not just the household with a Tesla and a home battery.

Ritualised regular practice

Just as sorting waste became second nature through repetition, repeated small acts of energy mindfulness compound into identity.

Generational embedding

Build energy literacy into education – children who grow up seeing energy as something you make, save, and share will not need a behaviour change programme as adults.

The demand is surging, the bills are climbing, the waste is staggering, and every geopolitical shock reminds Europe of how exposed we are.

Smart energy gives consumers better value at lower cost, makes businesses more competitive, and may create entirely new markets.

It may also be the unifying project across the EU and our partners around the world – a rare initiative a farmer, a city renter, a business owner, and an eco warrior could all get behind.

An effort worthy of a nerd-friendly blockbuster.

All together now – the fixes

Free services as public education

From free device charging to smart public illumination – create visible, useful touch-points that educate without lecturing.

Universal access

Make it easy for *anyone*, including renters, to immediately participate through tenant regulation and accessible portable devices.

Make the economics undeniable

Make it easy for anyone to save money, trade energy and get paid by the grid.

Spread success

Surface and support proliferation of the best smart energy devices and adjacent services across the EU and partner states.

Positive messaging

Position smart energy as modern and financially savvy rather than virtuous.

Lasting cultural shift

Make the right personal choices and policy positions part of cultural identity – reinforced by energy literacy built into education from childhood.

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