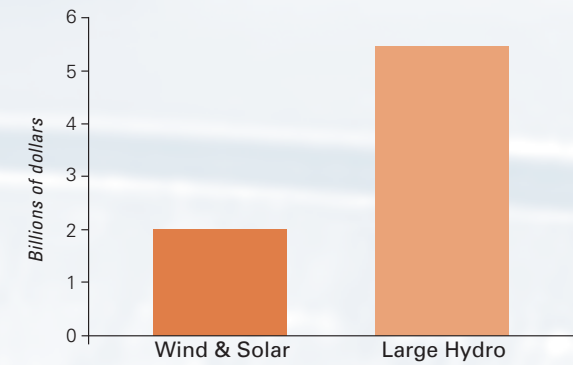


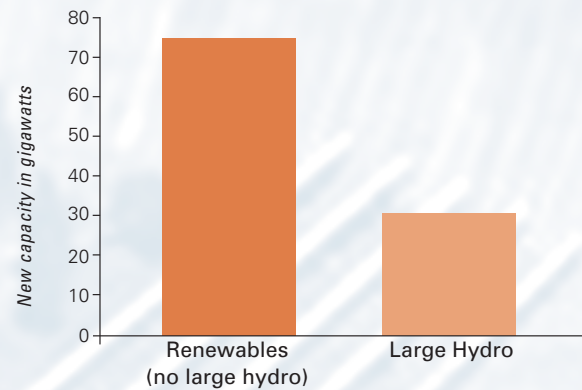
# The World Bank's Big Dams: A River of Ruin

In the past 65 years, the World Bank has funded some 600 dam projects for a total of approximately US\$100 billion (in current terms). These dams have caused untold environmental destruction, sowed corruption, displaced more than 10 million people, and impacted hundreds of millions more. This graphic will help you navigate the Bank's dam building over the decades.

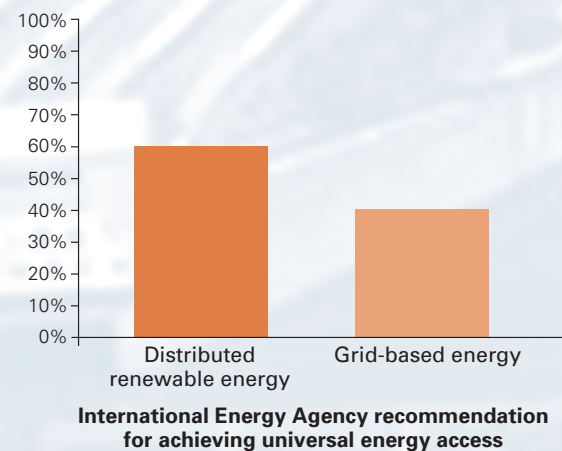
## WORLD BANK ENERGY LENDING GOES AGAINST THE TIDE



World Bank energy sector spending, 2007-12



Global energy priorities, 2012



International Energy Agency recommendation for achieving universal energy access

**1950s:** Bank-supported **Kariba Dam**, the first mainstem dam on the Zambezi, left 58,000 people in Zambia and Zimbabwe impoverished, and major irreversible degradation of a pristine natural habitat. The huge project sets off a decline of the Zambezi Delta. Today, the Bank is considering support for two more damaging Zambezi dams.

**1974:** As Bank-supported **Tarbela Dam** (Pakistan) begins to fill, a series of technical failures nearly causes the mammoth dam to breach, putting millions of people downstream at risk of a massive flash flood. Efforts to repair and stabilize the dam almost doubled the cost of the project. Today, the Bank is considering funding for a number of Himalaya dams that would have similar risks and high costs.

**2012:** Although it declined to support the controversial **Gibe III Dam** in Ethiopia, the Bank chooses to support the project through the back door by funding the transmission line that will enable Ethiopia to sell the dam's electricity to neighboring countries.

**2013:** The World Bank decides to limit its support for coal projects, and step up lending for large dams instead. The Bank makes the **Inga 3 Dam** on the Congo River a symbol for a new generation of proposed mega-dams.

**1978:** World Bank works with the military dictatorship in Guatemala to build **Chixoy Dam**. More than 400 indigenous people were massacred to make way for the project. Survivors have still not received reparations for their losses.

**1979:** World Bank support for **Yacyretá Dam** on the Paraná River creates what has since been termed "a monument to corruption." The project's cost spiraled from \$2.5 billion to \$15 billion, as corruption inflated every aspect of the project. The huge reservoir displaced 40,000 people and flooded a unique environment, causing extinction of numerous species.

**2005:** The Bank's first "high risk/high reward" dam, **Nam Theun II** in Laos, decimated fisheries, reduced clean water supplies, and eroded fertile riverbanks that support food cultivation to 120,000 people. More than 6,300 indigenous people were resettled for its reservoir. The project has led to widespread deforestation, and devastating consequences on the area's biodiversity. Despite World Bank rhetoric of benefit sharing with affected communities, the project mostly rewards Laos' ruling elites.

**1994:** Under pressure from a global grassroots campaign, the Bank withdraws from **Sardar Sarovar Dam** in India's Narmada Valley, which displaced 240,000 mostly indigenous farmers.

**1995:** World Bank withdraws from the \$1bn **Arun 3 Project** in Nepal, which was opposed by local engineers who argued that smaller scale projects were better suited for meeting local needs. After Arun, the Bank sharply reduces its involvement in dam projects for many years.

**2000:** The **World Commission on Dams** (WCD), which was created by the World Bank and IUCN, finds that "in too many cases an unacceptable and often unnecessary price has been paid to secure [the benefits of dams], especially in social and environmental terms."

**2003:** Ignoring recommendations of the WCD, the World Bank decides to start financing large dams again through what it terms a **high risk/high reward strategy**. Over the coming decade, the Bank supports more than 20 mainly mid-sized dam projects.