



UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN RENEWABLE AND ENERGY- EFFICIENCY PROJECTS

AN IN-DEPTH STUDY OF GENDER
IN THE EEP PORTFOLIO



EEP

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EEP S&EA

The overall objective of the EEP S&EA is to reduce poverty through inclusive and job creating green economy and improved energy access and security in the Southern and East Africa regions while mitigating global climate change.

Disclaimer

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women and girls stand to benefit the most from the availability of sustainable, affordable and renewable energy sources.

As consumers and users of energy, women and girls benefit the most from clean, efficient energy solutions. In rural areas, where access to modern energy sources is lacking, everyday household activities such as cooking and cleaning can be labour and time intensive. The emissions from the use of biomass fuels present many health risks to the users. Sourcing biomass can also present safety issues for women. Clean and efficient energy products help to reduce health and safety risks and time saved on domestic duties, as well as the availability of affordable lighting, increases the time available for education; employment, income-generating activities, and social and political interactions. Similarly, women's participation in design, distribution, management and production of sustainable energy solutions, has been recognised as indispensable to realising the sustainable development goals.

Achieving significant development outcomes for women and girls, and society as a whole, requires a gender-differentiated approach to planning and implementing energy sector projects. The goal of gender-differentiated approaches to energy projects is for women and men to equally access, participate, and benefit from energy sector initiatives. This is particularly important as gender neutral approaches – those that do not differentiate between genders – typically reinforce existing gender-based discrimination or respond mainly to male priorities as the power and decision making is predominately with men.

The purpose of this study was to understand the extent to which projects funded by EEP have adopted gender-differentiated approaches and the results and challenges in doing so. The report shares the lessons learned from project developers related to planning, implementing, monitoring and reporting gender-related activities and outcomes and recommendations for how projects can maximise the benefits from a gender-differentiated approach.

The study was based on a survey of EEP projects, and interviews with a sample of project developers. A number of key themes were identified from the consultation:

1. Women are important contributors in the energy value chain, particularly in the sales force. Given that women are the target beneficiaries of sustainable energy solutions, such as clean cookstoves and biogas solutions, women can provide valuable inputs in the design, manufacturing, sales and distribution of these products. Women have had particular success in the sales and distribution of such products, in many cases, outperforming male counterparts. Being female and a sales agent selling to other women, lends to their credibility to promote and sell a cooking products. The benefit of women sales agents is that they can personally identify with the product and relay the product benefits more effectively to the customer.



"A recent study revealed that realising gender equality positively contributes to the global economy and that a balanced gender representation across all levels of an organisation leads to better organisational performance. Furthermore, gender equality is considered as an indication of a company's future growth."

2. Achieving the potential development impact of energy projects requires the use of gender mainstreaming approaches. While 12% of project developers surveyed considered their projects to be 'gender targeted', 48% considered their projects to significantly contribute to gender equality and/or women's empowerment but as a secondary objective. These projects are well positioned to contribute to significant development outcomes and real impact on the daily lives of many women and girls. However, to achieve these benefits, the focus on gender, even as a secondary objective, must be well planned, implemented and monitored. The majority of these projects (65%) are private, commercial ventures. While gender and development outcomes may be an understandable secondary focus of a commercial project there is clearly significant development potential in these projects.
3. Gender differentiated approaches have been seen to improve financial results. A recent study revealed that realising gender equality positively contributes to the global economy and that a balanced gender representation across all levels of an organisation leads to better organisational performance.¹ Furthermore, gender equality is considered as an indication of a company's future growth.² Thus there is emerging evidence to support the 'business case' for gender diversity and equality in energy projects. Within EEP portfolio, 34% of surveyed project developers reported that a gender-mainstreamed approach had a positive effect on financial performance. The remainder (66%) stated no financial impact or were not able to determine financial impact of a gender-mainstreamed approach. No projects reported gender-mainstreaming to have had a negative impact on business results.
4. Cultural and societal norms can be a challenge to an energy project fully realising its gender goals. Whilst women may want to purchase a clean cookstove or other clean energy sources, the 'purse strings' are controlled by their husbands who do not allow or see the benefit of changing the cookstove. Furthermore, the burden of unpaid household responsibilities typically fall to women. These societal norms often prevent women from seeking employment opportunities or participating in income generating activities as there is little time left after domestic responsibilities are taken care of. Some husbands are reluctant and even opposed to their wives earning an income.
5. Project developers need to understand specific constraints for women's participation in the workforce and design projects accordingly in order to realise the benefits. Particularly in rural areas, women are challenged by limited ability to travel. Also, some product demonstrations, such as solar lights for example, are more effective at night, when the benefits are more impactful. All these factors have considerable impact on the ability of projects to employ and retain women in the energy workforce. Such considerations need to be planned for as part of project design and implementation.

¹ [AfDB] Group (2016)

² [AfDB] Group (2016)



6. There is potential for project developers to strengthen the project design process to ensure that prospective gender benefits are realised. The majority of projects (51%) did not perform a needs assessment or analysis specific to the needs of women and girls related to their project objective. However, a large number of projects (83%) consulted with target beneficiaries, including women and girls, which helped to inform the product and project design. In some cases where gender emerged as a more significant concern than intended, these projects often tried to integrate gender objectives and approaches during the implementation phase. While it is never too late to incorporate gender considerations, earlier planning for gender helps ensure benefits are realised from the outset and helps to avoid gender-based project challenges. As a result, many projects recognised the need to incorporate gender as a key considerations from the very initial design phases of the project.
7. Projects would benefit from improved monitoring and reporting of gender-related outcomes. The study found that 49% of projects were actively monitoring the progress and results of gender related activities and outputs. Effective monitoring and reporting can help establish evidence to justify continuation of projects or to receive additional funding targeted at gender. The data established from accurate monitoring and reporting on the gender related aspects of a project can contribute significantly to the evidence base for gender in energy.

The gender study provides a number of recommendations to project developers on how to ensure a gender-differentiated approach in projects. These recommendations propose ways in which project developers can realise the business and development benefits of women's participation in the energy sector, in addition to the social, economic and development benefits of affordable, clean energy solutions for women and girls.

1. THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER IN EEP AND THE ENERGY SECTOR

"Progress has been made in recent decades to raise the level of gender equality but women are still much less likely to have access or control over productive and natural resources and have less access to modern technologies or financial services, and receive poorer education, training and technical advice. They are also more likely to suffer violence and exploitation, and receive lower pay for their work. Until these inequalities are eliminated, women, who make up the bulk of the world's poor, will continue to suffer disproportionately from poverty and be more likely to endure limited economic and social opportunities."³

(UNIDO, 2014: p4)

There is a large body of international literature which explores link between gender inequality and poverty. Women and girls stand to benefit the most from the availability of sustainable, affordable and renewable energy sources. Significant development outcomes can be gained from a gender-mainstreamed approach to planning and implementing energy sector projects. The benefits can be considered in two main categories: the benefits for women and girls as consumers or users of such energy solutions; and the benefits for women and girls as part of the production of such energy solutions.

The goal of gender-differentiated approaches to energy projects is for women and men to equally access, participate, and benefit from energy sector initiatives. This is particularly important as gender neutral approaches – those that do not differentiate between genders – typically reinforce existing gender-based discrimination or respond mainly to male priorities as the power and decision making is predominately with men.⁴

THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Two of the sustainable development goals relate directly to gender equality and affordable clean energy: the challenge is how to integrate gender equality into the pursuit of affordable clean energy and ensure that that benefits of affordable clean energy contribute to gender equality.



CLEAN ENERGY



GENDER EQUALITY

³ UNIDO (2014: 4)

⁴ Zambian Governance Foundation (2010)



Women actively participating in the production of energy

Women's participation in design, distribution, management and production of sustainable energy solutions, has been recognised as indispensable to realising the sustainable development goals.⁵ Despite this, the energy sector continues to employ mostly men, with women mainly being considered as the beneficiary or customer.⁶

"In order to support the active participation of women in energy production, it is important for energy projects to offer apprenticeships, mentorships and dedicated business incubation services for women."

One of the fundamental challenges that limits women's participation in the sustainable energy labour market is the gender norms and stereotypes that exists in many African societies. Gender roles and capability disparities have significant influence on perceptions that women are unsuitable to work in a sector that typically employs men.⁷

In order to support the active participation of women in energy production, it is important for energy projects to offer apprenticeships, mentorships and dedicated business incubation services for women. Innovative financial solutions that meet the unique requirements of women energy entrepreneurs can also improve their ability to invest in the energy sector.

Women as consumers and users of energy

In rural areas, where access to modern energy sources is lacking, everyday household activities such as cooking and cleaning can be labour and time intensive. This is especially true for women and girls who bear the bigger burden when it comes to performing subsistence activities. In the absence of modern energy sources, women and girls are primarily responsible for collecting biomass fuels for household use. The emissions from the use of biomass fuels present many health risks to the users. Smoke inhalation by women and girls from cooking on an open fire can pose serious health problems. Also, sourcing biomass can present safety issues for women. Women are particularly vulnerable to violence when they are forced to travel to remote areas or after sunset to source fuels.⁸

Considering the role of women and girls as the energy producers in households, they serve to benefit the most from access to clean energy sources. There are a large number of benefits for women from affordable, clean energy including improved health, and reduced time, labour and safety burdens associated with collecting biomass fuels. This increases the time available for education⁹; social and political interactions ; as well as more time available to seek and participate in employment and other income generating activities. Access to clean lighting solutions such as solar lantern, solar home systems and streetlights can also contribute to improved health and safety for women and girls.

In order to realise these benefits, it is important that women are consulted and given the opportunity to contribute to the development of energy products and services. At the same time, women beneficiaries should receive adequate training on how to effectively use products and services.

The following theory of change illustrates the logic which is used to describe the potential benefits to women and girls from taking a gender-differentiated approach to energy projects.

⁵ UNIDO & UN Women (2013)

⁶ UNIDO & UN Women (2013)

⁷ UN Women (2015)

⁸ ENERGIA/DfID (2006)

⁹ Danielsen (2012)



ACTIVITIES

Skills based training and education for women in the energy sector.

Proven business case and data to support the inclusion of women in energy production.

Innovative financial solutions to meet the unique requirements of women energy entrepreneurs.

Targeted information sharing to improve women's knowledge on energy.

Provision of apprenticeships, mentorships and dedicated business incubation services for women.

OUTPUTS

There is increased access to decent employment in energy that attracts, retains and promotes women.

More women are employed in energy projects, at all levels and across all parts of the production chain.

Women are able to take up entrepreneurial opportunities in the energy sector.

OUTCOMES

Women are active decision makers in energy planning and policy development.

Women entrepreneurs are technically skilled and have the necessary knowledge to actively participate in the energy sector.

Women enjoy increased financial independence from employment

ACTIVITIES

Women are consulted and contribute to the development of products and services.

Energy project design is gender responsive.

Women are trained on how to effectively use products and services.

OUTPUTS

Households have more disposable income from cost-efficiency energy solutions.

Women benefit from time savings, particularly from less time spent collecting biofuel.

Women benefit from increased productive time due to affordable household lighting.

OUTCOMES

Women have increased time for more productive activities such as income generation, education and social and political participation.

Women in particular benefit from improved health from reduced indoor air pollution.

Women are safer by reducing the need to travel to collect fuel.

ASSUMPTIONS

Social norm barriers for women entrepreneurs or workers in energy are removed or reduced;

Community including men are better informed about energy and gender and there is support from local stakeholders, community leaders and men for women's participation in the energy sector;

Energy planning and policy development is gender inclusive, participatory and responsive;

The importance of women in energy is understood across project developers;

Women are able to make decisions on the use of household income.

Figure 1: Illustrative theory of change for a gender-differentiated approach to energy project¹⁰

¹⁰ Adapted by KPMG from Yannick Glemarec, Y., Bayat-Renoux, F. and Waissbein, O., 2016. Removing barriers to women entrepreneurs' engagement in decentralized sustainable energy solutions for the poor. UN Women, New York, NY, USA. UNDP, New York, NY, USA. AIMS Energy Volume 4, Issue 1, 136-172.

Gender and EEP

Women are considered as key beneficiaries from increased access to electricity and to cleaner sources of energy, and their role as active participants in EEP project implementation is particularly emphasized. At the core of EEP programme is the idea that women's equal engagement in the planning, decision-making and implementation of the project design results in improved access to energy services, which will strengthen the development impacts on women and through them also to their families, communities and eventually the whole society.

"EEP promotes inclusive and gender-sensitive energy policy, and encourages gender-sensitive consultations to take into account the women's particular needs and abilities to pay in the design of tariffs and payment modalities."

The position of women in the energy markets and the critical impact of energy poverty on the lives of women is acknowledged throughout the programme and gender mainstreaming is integrated through targeted actions and policy dialogue as well as communication. In practice, the means to promote these objectives include sharing of lessons learned and other information as well as providing business advisory services for both male and female entrepreneurs. In terms of policy development, EEP promotes inclusive and gender-sensitive energy policy, and encourages gender-sensitive consultations to take into account the women's particular needs and abilities to pay in the design of tariffs and payment modalities.

WHAT IS GENDER MAINSTREAMING?

To ensure that men and women can equally access, participate, and benefit from development projects, and that gender inequalities in activities and outcomes are reduced or eliminated, gender differences need to be considered during the entire project cycle - from design and implementation to monitoring and evaluation. This strategy is known as gender mainstreaming.

The United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) defines gender mainstreaming as:

"[Gender mainstreaming] is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programmes, in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality"

Many donors and multi-lateral agencies consider gender mainstreaming a key strategy for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women in their development programmes.



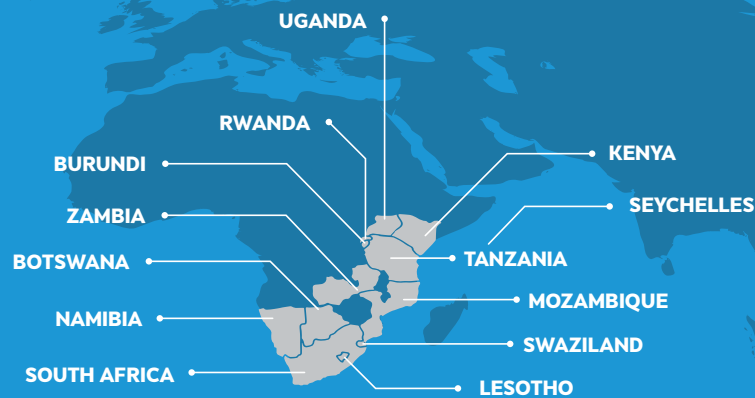
EEP has set three principles to be applied as gender mainstreaming actions:

- **Equal participation of women and men is ensured from planning to implementation both at overall programme level and individual project level**, measured by specific gender-disaggregated indicators, required in the projects' progress reporting.
- **Emphasis is paid on increasing women's project development and management skills by encouraging women's, women's groups' and female entrepreneurs' participation in activities such as business advisory support.** Through this, women's equal access to funding, information and skills is ensured and they will be empowered to become energy entrepreneurs.
- **Gender equality has been included among the project selection criteria.** In the latest EEP calls for proposals, the gender aspects were particularly highlighted and the project's contribution to gender aspects was required to be explained in the proposal, referring to ways in which the project aims to support equality between men and women.

In addition, gender-disaggregated data on economic benefits, including jobs and income generation is collected from the projects and reported semi-annually in public M&E reports. In the evaluation stage, apart from the potential commercial viability (scale-up and replication potential) and strong sustainability of the proposed projects, emphasis is placed on the assessment of the use of participatory gender-sensitive co-creation methods addressing the energy needs of the end-users on household and community level, and the increase in women's access to energy particularly for productive uses and income-generating activities.

From the sustainability perspective, capacity building and training of women as means to empowerment are important considering the limited duration of EEP projects and future prospects of the female workforce. By offering specific Business Development Support to the projects at the end of the project period, the objective is to enhance the organizations' ability to self-sustain and scale-up their processes with the ultimate goal of reaching more households and providing more beneficiaries with access to renewable energy.

2. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE GENDER STUDY



Over the past six years EEP has funded over 220 projects aiming to provide sustainable energy services to the poor and combat climate change. To qualify for EEP support, projects should demonstrate high innovation in delivering energy services, facilitating technology transfer, encouraging cooperation and ensuring local stakeholders' participation in projects.

The gender study intended to explore the achievements, challenges, and opportunities in achieving gender equality through the projects in EEP portfolio. The study sought to identify themes across the portfolio related to challenges and share best practices where projects or international literature provide innovative or recommended approaches to ensuring gender mainstreaming in energy projects and contributing to gender equality across the portfolio.

The gender study therefore intended to:

- Explore the extent to which gender mainstreaming is being done in current and completed projects
- Identify the achievements, challenges, and opportunities related to gender mainstreaming
- Use global leading practices to inform how to strengthen gender equality and increase benefits from a gender focus



Approach

The study consisted of three data collection methods:

- Desk top review of project documents
- Interviews with selected projects
- Online survey across the broader EEP portfolio

Twelve project developers were interviewed for the study. These projects were selected as it was based on reported or demonstrated success in their gender approach to date. A total of 50 project developers responded to the survey.

These results were provided from all countries in the ESA region and for all energy project types, with no one country or type of project providing a number of responses or interviews that would be statistically significant in terms of the results of the survey.

Framework of analysis

The framework of analysis was designed to evaluate the gender related components of projects funded by EEP. The framework of analysis was twofold and considered the project lifecycle as well as the institutional arrangements of the organisations executing those projects.

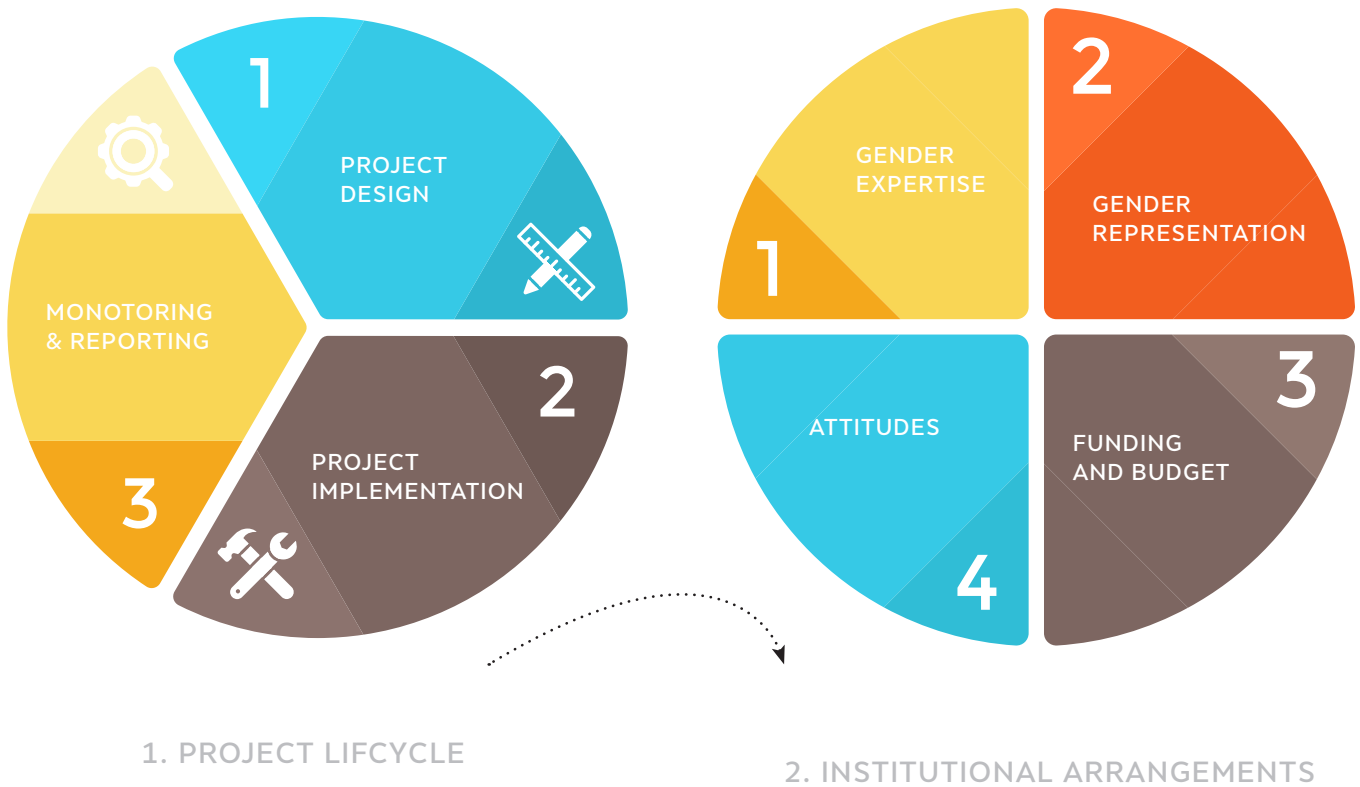


Figure 2: Framework of analysis for gender study

PROJECT LIFECYCLE	INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS
<p>PROJECT DESIGN</p> <p>To what extent was gender considered during project design? Did the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a needs assessment or analysis specific to the gender imbalances or experiences of women and girls with respect to the project implementation area? • Refer or consult gender mainstreaming guidelines, checklists, tools or case studies during design of the project? • Develop specific indicators to measure impact or involvement of women? 	<p>GENDER EXPERTISE</p> <p>What resources did the organisation have with specific experience or expertise related to gender? What training or immersion courses had relevant project roles had related to understanding gender in energy projects? Was expertise related to gender in-house or were consultants out-sourced to advise?</p>
<p>PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION</p> <p>To what extent was the execution of the project responsive to gender? Did the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement as designed? • Realise the project gender objectives? • Determine and promote the potential benefits of the project for women and girls? • What were challenges related to gender and how were they overcome? 	<p>GENDER REPRESENTATION</p> <p>What is the organisation's gender ratio among employees? Are women represented in senior management and decision making roles? Does the organisation have a gender policy?</p>
<p>MONITORING AND REPORTING</p> <p>To what extent was the impact or involvement of women monitored and reported? Did the project:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data relevant to women and girls? • Use emerging results to fine tune or revise the approach? 	<p>FUNDING AND BUDGET</p> <p>To what extent was there budget available to support a gender-differentiated approach? Were financial resources sufficient to achieve intended gender goals?</p> <p>ATTITUDES</p> <p>What are the attitudes towards women in the organisation?</p>

3. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The results of the study, including interviews, survey and document review, have been compiled into a number of key themes:

- Women are important contributors in the energy value chain, particularly in the sales force
- The potential development impact of energy projects may be enhanced further through increased use of gender mainstreaming approaches
- Gender differentiated approaches have been seen to improve financial results
- Cultural and societal norms can be a challenge to an energy project fully realising its gender goals
- Specific constraints for women's participation in the workforce need to be understood and planned for in order to realise the benefits
- There is potential to strengthen the project design process to ensure that prospective gender benefits are realised
- Projects would benefit from improved monitoring and reporting of gender-related outcomes

Women are important contributors in the energy value chain, particularly in the sales force

The benefits for women as consumers of clean energy are clearly evident. However, women also play a crucial role in the production and development of affordable, sustainable energy solutions. Women's participation in design, distribution, management and consumption of sustainable energy solutions, has been recognised as indispensable to realising the sustainable development goals.¹¹

Despite this, the energy sector continues to be a largely male dominated industry, with women only representing a small proportion of the workforce.¹² Moreover, the productive role of women is often neglected when planning and designing energy initiatives, which often focus only on the woman as the beneficiary or customer.¹³ One of the fundamental challenges that limit women's participation in the sustainable energy labour market is the gender norms and stereotypes that exists in many African societies. Gender roles and capability disparities have significant influence on perceptions that women are unsuitable to work in a sector that typically employs men.¹⁴ Furthermore, it is difficult for women to manage work with domestic duties when the disproportionate burden of household responsibilities falls to women.¹⁵ This often results in women being discouraged from joining the workforce. These cultural challenges are discussed in more detail in later themes.

¹¹ UNIDO & UN Women (2013)

¹² UNIDO & UN Women (2013)

¹³ UNIDO & UN Women (2013)

¹⁴ UN Women (2015)

¹⁵ Glemarec et al (2016)

" Project developers should encourage women by providing skills development training to ensure that they are equipped to participate in the workforce."

However, based on this study women's participation in the renewable energy labour market has shown many benefits, particularly across the EEP portfolio of projects. Given that women are the target beneficiaries of sustainable energy solutions, such as clean cookstoves and biogas solutions, women can provide valuable inputs in the design, manufacturing, sales and distribution of these products. Women have had particular success in the sales and distribution of such products, in many cases, outperforming male counterparts. Being female and a sales agents selling to other women, lends to their credibility to promote and sell a cooking products. The benefit of women sales agents is that they can personally identify with the product and relay the product benefits more effectively to the customer.

There are therefore many benefits for projects which recognise the crucial role of women in the energy labour market. Project developers should encourage women by providing skills development training to ensure that they are equipped to participate in the workforce. Projects can also capitalise on the insight, experience and value offered by women regarding sustainable energy by including women at the product design stage. This study found that female sale agents that do really well usually have the support of their husbands, which is another consideration for project developers in the recruitment of women into the sales force.¹⁶



CASE EXAMPLES OF WOMEN IN THE EEP ENERGY VALUE CHAIN

1. Prior to the implementation of some EEP funded projects, the majority of the sales agents employed were men. After realising the benefits women brought to the project, more female sales agents have been recruited.
2. Survey findings related to gender representation in energy projects revealed that 34% of projects have a 50% and above female workforce.

¹⁶ Based on study interview feedback

The potential development impact of energy projects may be enhanced further through increased use of gender mainstreaming approaches

While 12% of projects considered themselves 'gender targeted', 48% considered their projects to significantly contribute to gender equality and/or women's empowerment but as a secondary objective. These projects are well positioned to contribute to significant development outcomes and real impact on the daily lives of many women and girls. However, to achieve these benefits, the focus on gender, even as a secondary objective, must be well planned, implemented and monitored.

The majority of projects indicated that gender considerations were focused at the beneficiary level (e.g. the household or the customer). A further 45% and 38% focused on women in the sales and supply chain/distribution levels respectively, and often in addition to a focus on women at the beneficiary level. While there is a risk of bias in the survey responses, in that those who have an interest and focus on gender were more likely to respond to a survey request on gender, these results do show the significant potential for gender transformation among energy projects, even where gender is considered a 'secondary focus'.

When asked about the benefits of their project for women and girls, the majority of projects stated multiple benefits:

- 16% stated employment as the benefit to women from their project
- 16% stated access to clean energy
- 14% stated income generating opportunities
- 46% indicated multiple benefits, or all options, including reduced energy costs, improved safety, access to energy, income generation, employment, improved health outcomes, time saving from energy efficiency and skills development and training

The majority of the responding project developers (65%) were from private, commercial ventures. There is clearly significant development potential in these projects. While gender and development outcomes may be an understandable secondary focus of a commercial project, project developers should be supported as much as possible to design and implement projects in such a way to help fully realise the developmental benefits of these initiatives.

Gender differentiated approaches have been seen to improve project financial results

There is wide consensus among interviewees, that planning a gender-differentiated approach for a project was 'the right thing to do' given the significant benefits for women and girls from affordable, clean energy sources. However the economic or business benefits of a gender-differentiated approach have been less recognised to date.

"Furthermore, gender equality is considered as an indication of a company's future growth."

A recent study revealed that realising gender equality positively contributes to the global economy and that a balanced gender representation across all levels of an organisation leads to better organisational performance.¹⁷ Furthermore, gender equality is considered as an indication of a company's future growth.¹⁸ Thus there is emerging evidence to support the 'business case' for gender diversity and equality in energy projects.

Within the EEP portfolio, 34% of surveyed projects reported that a gender-mainstreamed approach had a positive effect on financial per-

¹⁷ [AfDB] Group (2016)

¹⁸ [AfDB] Group (2016)

formance. The remainder (66%) stated no financial impact or were not able to determine financial impact of a gender-mainstreamed approach. No projects reported gender-mainstreaming to have had a negative impact on business results.

"Proving the business case for gender and showing how an investment in gender will result in financial profitability is essential to help organisations realise the benefits of gender mainstreaming in the energy sector."

Cases in which women have consistently proven successful in the workforce need to be identified, studied and documented, to help add to this body of evidence. This will serve as confirmation of the financial viability of having a gender differentiated approach in energy projects.

Proving the business case for gender and showing how an investment in gender will result in financial profitability is essential to help organisations realise the benefits of gender mainstreaming in the energy sector. It is therefore important for renewable energy projects to contribute to through gender-differentiated monitoring and reporting of business results.



SUCCESS STORIES

One project, a clean cookstove initiative in Kenya, has found that a female sales agent will make, on average, \$100 more than a male sales agent throughout her career, and that over 75% of all of senior sales agents (those with consistently high sales over a number of months, who get extra rewards, privileges, and support) have been women.

There are additional development gains to involving women in income generating roles in the energy value chain. As found in the above project experience, women tend to reinvest their earnings in the family, using earnings to send their kids to better schools, or for home improvements (re-investment into the house).

EXAMPLES OF HOW CULTURAL AND SOCIETAL NORMS CAN BE A CHALLENGE IN EEP FUNDED PROJECTS

1. In the case of human-generated power that required foot paddling to generate electricity, the traditional attire for women presented restrictions. Women dressed in traditional attire had challenges participating in these types of energy generation initiatives. However, one woman was able to turn this around by wearing pants. This allowed her to paddle freely and generate electricity. This gained interest among the community and actually increased her business, as a woman wearing pants was seen as a novelty. However, in other communities, it may not be acceptable for women to wear pants, and therefore would not be able to participate in this kind of initiative.
2. Another challenge is the societal norms around the role of women. It found was that whilst women have the enthusiasm and motivation to become clean energy distributors, the men in their lives can restrict their ability to participate. For example, one project reported that during training, some women arrived later than the scheduled times because they had to wait until their husband would not notice their absence. Men often prevent women from completing the training or from working. Some projects had overcome this challenge by specifically engaging with men to increase their awareness of the benefits to them, their wives and their households from their wives' participation.

"While clean energy typically benefits women more, cultural and societal norms may prevent women's access to clean energy."

Cultural and societal norms can be a challenge to an energy project fully realising its gender goals

Cultural and societal norms can be a challenge to a project fully realising its gender goals. This is particularly evident in rural settings where gender roles are more traditional, and women and girls are disproportionately responsible for domestic duties and have limited influence on the household purchases.¹⁹

While clean energy typically benefits women more, cultural and societal norms may prevent women's access to clean energy. For example, women and girls benefit from clean energy because they are more exposed to pollution produced by traditional cookstoves and the health problems that come from this exposure. Whilst women may want to purchase a clean cookstove or other clean energy sources, the 'purse strings' are controlled by their husbands who do not allow or see the benefit of changing the cookstove.

"Some husbands are reluctant and even opposed to their wives earning an income."

¹⁹ UNIDO & UN Women (2013)



Furthermore, the burden of unpaid household responsibilities typically fall to women. These societal norms often prevent women from seeking employment opportunities or participating in income generating activities as there is little time left after domestic responsibilities are taken care of. These gender roles can be exacerbated by a woman's partner or spouse preventing her from accessing employment. Some husbands are reluctant and even opposed to their wives earning an income. More so, if the woman is earning a higher income than the man. Consequently, although women are interested and willing to actively participate in energy sector, they can face societal and cultural constraints to doing so.

It is therefore important that projects take societal norms and culture related to gender into consideration as part of project design and implementation, particularly where women are intended to be the consumers or workforce for the project. Project developers would need to understand the specific cultural norms of their target market, through consultation with women and men or other research. Projects may then need to plan their implementation accordingly. For example, a project may want to include an activity to consult with men on the benefits for the household of clean energy or women's participation in employment in order to mitigate this barrier.²⁰

²⁰ [AfDB] Group (2016)

Specific constraints for women's participation in the workforce need to be understood and planned for in order to realise the benefits

Additional constraints to women joining the energy workforce include the many travelling limitations they experience. Especially in rural areas, women are challenged by restricted mobility. Women in rural areas have not been encouraged or have no experience with operating a motor vehicle. These opportunities and facilities are not readily available to them, further restricting their movement.

"Security concerns associated with women travelling alone and the traditional gender perceptions that women should stay at home and be responsible for domestic duties also discourage women from seeking employment."

Many of the employment opportunities available in the clean energy sector rely heavily on the ability of travel, especially in sales and distribution. For companies covering a wide geographic area, mobility is a key consideration when in employing sales agents. Also, some product demonstrations, such as solar lights for example, are more effective at night, when the benefits are more impactful. This requires sales agents to work and travel at night, which is difficult for most women. Security concerns associated with women travelling alone and the traditional gender perceptions that women should stay at home and be responsible for domestic duties also discourage women from seeking employment.²¹

"Projects reported that women often have confidence issues. In many cases, even though women are more technically qualified and competent to do a task, they allow the male employees to take the lead or tell them what to do."

Uneven sharing of the household responsibilities and childcare mean that women cannot be away from the home for lengthy periods at a time. One of the biggest barriers to women participating in the energy value chain are household obligations. A number of interviewees noted that for the female agents to do well, they usually require the support from their husbands or families. Without this support they sometimes struggle to perform at the expected levels. Budding women entrepreneurs are often limited by their husbands. Some entrepreneurial programmes requires upfront capital investments and this presents a challenge for women who have limited control over household finances.

Projects reported that women often have confidence issues. In many cases, even though women are more technically qualified and competent to do a task, they allow the male employees to take the lead or tell them what to do. All these factors have considerable impact on the ability of projects to employ and retain women in the energy workforce.

It is therefore important for project developers to develop innovative practices to mitigate these challenges to women's participation in the workforce. Consultation with women is important as the challenges vary by country and community.

²¹ Glemarec et al (2016)

EEP PROJECT APPROACHES TO ENCOURAGE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE WORKFORCE

Some options that have been used in EEP funded projects include:

- Providing flexible work hours and schedules so women can manage the household around their employment
- Putting women into pairs with another woman or man to mitigate safety concerns
- Prioritising women for office-based employment opportunities or where travel is limited
- Providing empowerment training to boost women's confidence in their new role
- Providing access to capital for women entrepreneurs to get started or providing links to other organisations, such as microfinance organisations, which can assist

There is potential to strengthen the project design process to ensure that prospective gender benefits are realised

Although gender was not the stated as the primary focus of most energy projects in this study, women were often the primary target market and beneficiaries of the project outputs. The majority of projects (51%) did not perform a needs assessment or analysis specific to the needs of women and girls related to their project objective. However, a large number of projects (83%) consulted with target beneficiaries, including women and girls, which helped to inform the product and project design.

Given that gender was not considered as a primary consideration, most projects did not consult a gender expert during the design of the project. Although some organisations (15%) had teams composed of people with gender experience and qualifications, many project developers stated a lack of gender expertise in their organisation. Some projects (21%) used gender mainstreaming guidelines, checklists, tools or case studies to support and inform the design of the project.

"While it is never too late to incorporate gender considerations, earlier planning for gender helps ensure benefits are realised from the outset and helps to avoid gender-based project challenges."

In some cases where gender emerged as a more significant concern than intended, these projects often tried to integrate gender objectives and approaches during the implementation phase. While it is never too late to incorporate gender considerations, earlier planning for gender helps ensure benefits are realised from the outset and helps to avoid gender-based project challenges. As a result, many projects recognised the need to incorporate gender as a key consideration from the very initial design phases of the project.

Budget is another element of project design. A very small number of project (2%) stated a specific budget for gender related activities. The majority of the survey respondents (51%), stated that gender activities were part of the overall project budget. However many survey respondents (49%) stated that there was no budget for gender related activities. This can occur when



CASE STUDY FOR ADDRESSING THE ENERGY NEEDS OF BOTH MEN AND WOMEN

BioLite has recognised the need to address needs and requirements of both men and women. Since women are generally responsible for cooking in the households, they and their children disproportionately suffer the health effects of cooking on open fires. But it is the husbands that typically control the purchasing decisions for consumables. So the unique features of their cookstoves is that it appeals and engages to both men and women and brings value to both genders. Because the cookstove generates electricity, men tend to like the stove. Men can benefit from the electricity generated by the cookstove to charge their mobile phones for example. By understanding the needs of both genders, sales can be increased through appropriate marketing and product design for greater success.

gender is not sufficiently planned during the design phase as the design should inform allocation of budget. The majority of those surveyed (36%) said that their budget was insufficient to realise the gender goals the project had set, with 26% 'not knowing' if the budget was sufficient enough. Both these responses point to the importance of ensuring that budgeting processes are aligned with project design processes.

"Additionally, prior to the design phase, it is recommended that projects conduct a needs assessment and/or local consultation, differentiated for gender, for the intended area of implementation."

Using the readily available internet resources on gender mainstreaming, such as checklists and guidelines, projects can design for and realise the benefits of gender mainstreaming earlier in their project. Additionally, prior to the design phase, it is recommended that projects conduct a needs assessment and/or local consultation, differentiated for gender, for the intended area of implementation. This could help to accurately direct initiatives within the target areas, validate assumptions, identify some of the potential challenges for implementation and get important feedback on the potential demand for a product or supply of labour.

Lessons learned and recommendations for incorporating gender in the project design:

1. Ensure that the design of the products and services is informed by women. This can be done by setting up focus groups specifically and exclusively with women. Women are typically more comfortable speaking among other women. Often times, men will dominate the focus group and women's perspective can be lost. It is important to create a safe space for women to share their thoughts on the product or service. Survey findings showed that 83% of projects completed interviews and/or focus groups with target beneficiaries prior to implementing their project.
2. Projects noted that consulting a gender expert during the project design stages would be a significant help in providing support and guidance in terms of knowing what and how to measure gender outcomes. However, only 17% of projects involved a gender expert in the project design process.
3. Cost and availability was often cited as the reason for not including a gender expert during the project design phase. Survey results show that 45% of projects stated they had no budget for gender related activities. Lack of time to appropriately consider gender was also stated as a barrier to a more gender-inclusive project. The realities of a project developer's context were summarised by one interviewee:

“Being a start-up, a huge amount of focus and effort goes into survival. This involves just working out your basic business model and making things work. The main concern for the business is ‘can we sell products, can we pay our bills, and do we have finances in place to make it through another year?’. It's only natural that a lot of issues such as gender equality, they are in our hearts, they are in our spirit, that's how our approach works, but they just haven't yet been addressed in an institutional and thorough way. For gender, good intentions are not enough, more rigorous policies and procedures is required.”

Projects would benefit from improved monitoring and reporting of gender-related outcomes

"It is important that the project design phase considers the availability of data when developing gender indicators. Baseline data is extremely important and a good way to test what data is available."

Effective monitoring and reporting of gender related outcomes is a key consideration for energy projects. The data established from accurate monitoring and reporting on the gender related aspects of a project can contribute significantly to the evidence base for gender in energy. In some cases, effective monitoring and reporting can also help establish evidence to justify continuation of projects or to receive additional funding targeted at gender.

Considering that many projects did not include gender from the design phase of the project, survey findings found that 45% of projects do not have gender specific indicators and/or gender disaggregate indicators. Only 38% of projects had baseline data.

Additionally, while all sample project proposals stated gender goals and indicators, only 64% reported on gender in progress reports. More broadly, among survey respondents, only 49% said they were actively monitoring the progress and results of gender related activities and outputs. Projects found that either data was insufficient to monitor progress against the original gender goals, or too costly or time-consuming to track and report.

DATA GAPS REPORTED BY PROJECTS

Only 34% survey respondents said there was sufficient data available to understand gender progress and results.

Some of the gaps in the data include:

- Education and employment statistics for women
- Qualitative and quantitative data of increased empowerment of female entrepreneurs and customers
- Number of women starting up in renewable energy business
- Women's interest in using products
- Gender disaggregated behavioural study for households
- Health data and health impacts on women using products
- Gender-disaggregated behavioural study of decision making for energy product purchases in households

It is important that the project design phase considers the availability of data when developing gender indicators. Baseline data is extremely important and a good way to test what data is available. National statistics are often lacking or delayed and in some instances not useful at a project level. Both quantitative and qualitative data should be considered as well as the project's sphere of influence. Proxy measures can be developed or less costly data collection methods can be designed as alternatives. On a national level, project funders and donor organisations should help advocate for gender-differentiated statistics and research to support ground-level projects.



4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The gender study provides a number of recommendations to project developers on how to ensure a gender-differentiated approach in projects.

These recommendations propose ways in which project developers can realise the business and development benefits of women's participation in the energy sector, in addition to the social, economic and development benefits of affordable, clean energy solutions for women and girls. The report also provides recommendations for how EEP can further support project developers in the achievement of gender mainstreaming in projects.

For project developers

- Prior to the design phase, project developers should conduct a needs assessment and/or local consultation, differentiated for gender, for the intended area of implementation. Project developers should ask questions on how women and girls are currently impacted by the energy issues or products their projects seek to address in order that the design can be tailored specifically to gendered needs. In particular, project developers should ask questions about potential barriers to using products or participating in the workforce in order that risks can be mitigated. For example, it might become apparent that cultural norms restrict women's participation in employment. To help counter this, project developers can plan specific awareness sessions with men in the community to challenge some of these norms and increase understanding of the benefits to men, women and the community when women have access to such products and/or participate in employment. Consultation with women in communities can help to identify any unanticipated secondary outcomes, whether positive or negative, and allow project developers to plan accordingly.
- Other studies relevant to the country or community will be helpful inputs to the design phase. For example, if there are high levels of gender-based violence in the country and communities, an understanding of this can help project developers adjust their messaging around product development and sales accordingly. For example, products which reduce the time spent collecting fuel, which is often done at night, over long distance or alone, can be marketed from a safety perspective. Other studies on the development challenges within a country or community, not just specific to energy, can help project developers better understand their target market and plan accordingly.
- Project developers should ensure that the design of products and services is informed by women. In addition to the consultation and research suggested above, project developers should consider including pilot phases and testing with real women in real



"Project developers should improve the monitoring and reporting of gender-related outcomes, particularly related to proving the impact of a gender-differentiated approach on business results to help demonstrate the business case for gender and showing how an investment in gender is financially viable."

communities to understand the reception to products and technologies. This testing applies to the use of women in the workforce too. Piloting women in the workforce at the start of a project can help to identify issues in recruitment and deployment. It can allow for training to be modified based on lessons learned in order to address any challenges.

- Project developers should make use of the readily available internet resources on gender mainstreaming, such as checklists and guidelines. Some such resources are included in this report that will assist project developers. In addition, project developers should consider using a gender expert during the design stage of projects.
- Project developers should consider providing skills development training for women in the project organisation and the project workforce. These trainings should include both skills specific to the project, such as sales and product demonstration, but broader skills such as decision making, problem solving and leadership skills. The softer skills may help empower women in the project to pursue managerial and leadership roles within the project organisation, in addition to helping them become more effective in their current roles.
- Project developers should develop innovative practices to mitigate some of the challenges to women's participation in the workforce. These could include flexible work

hours, pairing with other women for safety, and/or facilitating access to capital, which have been successful strategies in other EEP projects. These practices should also be informed by the consultation with women in target communities as part of project design.

Projects should collect exit interview data from women that leave the workforce to understand if there are common challenges to women in participating in employment with the project.

- Project developers should improve the monitoring and reporting of gender-related outcomes, particularly related to proving the impact of a gender-differentiated approach on business results to help demonstrate the business case for gender and showing how an investment in gender is financially viable. While gender-differentiated data is frequently a challenge at national and/or local levels, project developers should consider alternative or proxy measures to collect data and inform project activities. Both qualitative and quantitative measures should be considered. For example, project developers could survey the workforce on an annual basis to understand how certain issues, such as working demands, may impact men and women differently. Projects should collect exit interview data from women that leave the workforce to understand if there are common challenges to women in participating in employment with the project.

For EEP

In order to strengthen the focus on gender in Phase III of EEP, the following recommendations are made:

- A common challenge experienced by project developers was lack of gender-differentiated or readily available data to measure the progress and results of gender-related activities. EEP should partner with other initiatives in efforts to work with national and international governments and development partners to understand availability of existing data and help advocate for the data that would support project developers. EEP can facilitate connections to research organisations where additional data is considered to be important to being able to measure results. EEP should also collect and share relevant research papers on the impact and approaches of similar projects on women and girls and share across the EEP network.

EEP can use the survey from this project as a baseline by which to measure an increased focus on gender across projects funded by EEP.

- In order to help project developers to identify measurable gender-differentiated approaches, EEP should consider providing additional tools to project developers, such as checklists and guidance documents. These documents can be based on international guidance and tailored to the lessons learned of this study and the successes and challenges of current EEP-funded projects.



- EEP could consider holding a workshop with project developers for example in connection with a Knowledge Exchange Forum in the early stages of Phase III to help develop gender-differentiated results frameworks for projects. Projects could explore the specific 'theory of change' or logical framework of the outcomes for women and girls that they expect to achieve from project activities. This workshop could be facilitated by a gender expert to help solve common challenges and share leading practices from other similar projects.
- EEP should continue to build on the momentum of this gender study with future tracking and reporting on portfolio-level progress and performance with respect to gender equality. EEP can use the survey from this project as a baseline by which to measure an increased focus on gender across projects funded by EEP. Future studies such as this one could also be based on differentiated samples to understand trends and themes by e.g. country, project type, gender of project developer. EEP could consider whether the current Programme framework and current indicators on gender need refinement and/or further alignment with UN's Sustainable Development Goals.
- Finally, EEP should consider ways to encourage and support more female project developers. EEP should consider supporting the development of the skills of female project developers through sharing of lessons learned and mentoring with other project developers.

5. RESOURCES FOR PROJECT DEVELOPERS

The following resources can be found through internet searches and provide useful reference points for project developers seeking to ensure a gender mainstreamed approach.

Tools/ Guidelines

ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, 2011. Mainstreaming Gender in Energy Projects: A Practical Handbook.

[Online] Available:

https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/sites/ppp.worldbank.org/files/documents/Energia_Mainstreaming_gender_in_energy_projects_A_practical_Hand_book.pdf

The World Bank, 2009. Mainstreaming Gender into Extractive Industries Projects- Guidance Note for Task Team Leaders. Extractive Industries and Development Series #9.

[Online] Available:

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTOGMC/Resources/eifd9_gender_guidance.pdf

United Nations Development Programme- UNDP, 2007. Gender Mainstreaming: A key driver of development in energy and environment- Training Manual. Environment and Energy Group, Bureau for Development Policy.

[Online] Available:

http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/Sustainable%20Energy/Gender_Mainstreaming_Training_Manual_2007.pdf

Zambia Governance Foundation, 2010. Gender mainstreaming toolkit for civil society organisations in Zambia- Volume 2: Gender mainstreaming in projects, programmes and policy engagement work.

[Online] Available:

<http://zambiagovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GenderMainstVoll.pdf>

Checklists

United Nations Development Programme- UNDP, 2007. Gender Mainstreaming: A key driver of development in energy and environment- Training Manual, Environment and Energy Group, Bureau for Development Policy.

[Online] Available:

http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Environment%20and%20Energy/Sustainable%20Energy/Gender_Mainstreaming_Training_Manual_2007.pdf

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), 2014, Guide on Gender Mainstreaming Energy and Climate Change Projects. Vienna, V.14-07088—December 2014.

[Online] Available:

https://www.unido.org/fileadmin/user_media_upgrade/What_we_do/Topics/Women_and_Youth/Guide_on_Gender_Mainstreaming_ECC.pdf



Zambia Governance Foundation, 2010, Gender mainstreaming toolkit for civil society organisations in Zambia- Volume 2: Gender mainstreaming in projects, programmes and policy engagement work.

[Online] Available:

<http://zambiagovernance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GenderMainstVoll.pdf>

Training Manuals

ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, 2011. Mainstreaming Gender in Energy Projects: A Practical Handbook.

[Online] Available:

https://ppp.worldbank.org/public-private-partnership/sites/ppp.worldbank.org/files/documents/Energia_Mainstreaming_gender_in_energy_projects_A_practical_Hand_book.pdf

Ministry of Energy Mozambique, Embassy of Norway in Mozambique, Norad and ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy, 2012. Mainstreaming Gender in the Energy Sector: A Training Manual.

[Online] Available:

<http://www.energia.org/cms/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Mozambique-Manual-Mainstreaming-Gender-in-the-Energy-Sector-Training-Manual-final.pdf>