



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

IN-DEPTH STUDY III  
GENDER IN THE EEP PORTFOLIO /  
SUMMARY REPORT



**EEP**

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT  
PARTNERSHIP / SOUTHERN AND EAST AFRICA

The Energy and  
Environment Partnership  
Programme Southern and  
East Africa  
**PHASE II**

30 JUNE 2017

# THE IMPORTANCE OF GENDER IN EEP AND THE ENERGY SECTOR

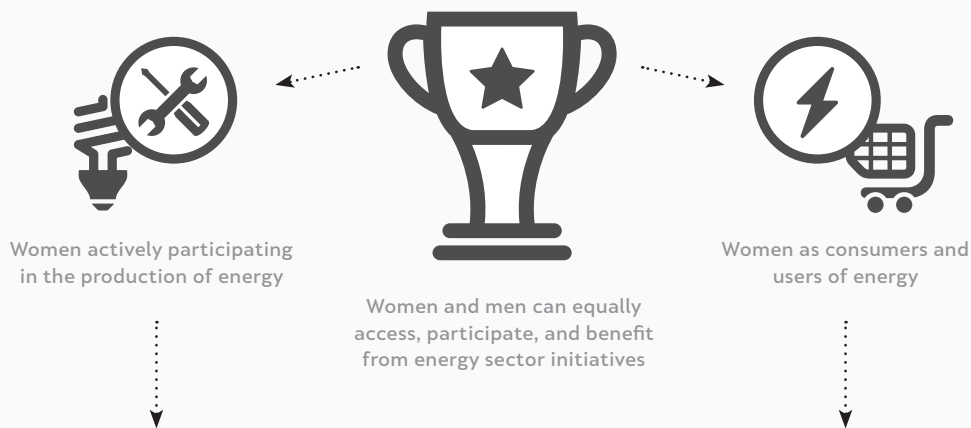
Women and girls stand to benefit the most from the availability of sustainable, affordable and renewable energy sources.

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."

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.



**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

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.

**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.



# RESULTS OF THE EEP GENDER STUDY

The study was based on a survey of EEP projects, and interviews with a sample of project developers

The purpose of EEP in-depth study was to understand the extent to which projects funded by the EEP have adopted gender-differentiated approaches and the results and challenges in doing so. The report intends to share 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 results of the study:

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 agents selling to other women, lends to their

"Gender differentiated approaches have been seen to improve financial results."

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.

2. Achieving the potential development impact of energy projects requires the use of gender mainstreaming approaches. While 12% of project developers 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 gen-



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

<sup>1</sup> [AfDB] Group (2016)

<sup>2</sup> [AfDB] Group (2016)



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.

"Gender equality is considered as an indication of a company's future growth."

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.





# 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.
- 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.
- 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 communities to understand the reception to products and technologies. This testing applies to the use of women in the workforce too.
- Project developers should make use of the readily available internet resources on gender mainstreaming, such as checklists and guidelines.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## 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

This material has been funded by the Governments of Finland, the UK, and Austria. The views expressed do not necessarily reflect the donor governments' official policies.

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## Published by EEP S&EA

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The EEP S&EA programme is funded by:



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