

Late Developers:

Gender Mainstreaming in the Energy Sector

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1. Introduction

Since the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, gender mainstreaming has become both a goal and a methodology for achieving women's equality. It enables influencing policy processes so that policies and programmes reflect better women's needs and priorities and that these are supported by a more equitable distribution of resources. In the South, gender mainstreaming has taken a foothold in many sectors of the economy particularly those strongly associated with women, such as health, education, forestry and agriculture, but curiously enough not energy, despite in the South, energy at the micro-level being women's business+, in the sense that the gender division of labour at the household level generally allocates the provision of energy to women¹.

Policy makers do not recognise the existence of gender needs in energy services and as a consequence women's energy needs tend to be marginalised in policy documents (Clancy, 2000) (Mensah-Kutin, 2006). Energy planning is implemented in a *gender-neutral* way, in other words it is assumed that energy policies benefit women and men equally. What we find in reality is that energy planning is *gender-blind*, that it fails to recognise that needs of men and women are different (ENERGIA, 2008). Such a planning approach misses issues that are of relevance to women and inadvertently discriminates, usually against women². For example, a policy to promote the use of electricity by small enterprises neglects the fact that many of women's traditional income generating activities use process heat (such as, food preparation and processing, beer brewing, and pottery) (Woroniuk and Schalkwyk, 1998) for which electricity is not the cheapest option. Whereas a more *gender-aware* policy for small enterprises would promote a form of energy more compatible with process heat generation, for example, an effective distribution networks for Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) (Karlsson, 2003).

During the preparations for Beijing, a number of women working in the energy sector realized that if progress was to be made with getting gender and energy onto the international agenda, a very focused, practical and global networked approach would be needed. These women came together in 1995 to establish ENERGIA³, the international network on gender and energy. After the Beijing Conference, women and men began to advocate the need to engender energy policy (see for example, (Annecke, 2003)). Most of the initial activity primarily took place at the international level.

This paper describes an approach to gender mainstreaming in the energy sector undertaken by ENERGIA in selected countries in Africa. It begins with an explanation why gender mainstreaming has been so late to develop in the energy sector: that energy seen by social scientists as too technical to be of relevance and the background and daily work of

¹ This is not to say that gender issues do not occur in energy at the household level (see for example, CLANCY, J. S. (2002a) Blowing the smoke out of the kitchen: Gender Issues in Household Energy. SPARKNET.

² This situation arises because in data gathering exercises related to energy it is usually men's voices that are heard.

³ www.energia.org

engineers and economists working in energy has little linkage with social policy. The second part of the paper describes a theoretical framework for the development of a gender sensitive energy policy. The third part of the paper describes the approach ENERGIA took in gender mainstreaming in the energy sector, including the development of a set of tools, such as gender goals, suitable for engendering energy policy.

2. Why is gender mainstreaming so late in the energy sector?

There are a number of factors which influence the gender-blindness of energy policy. Two of the most significant are: women's social position and the attitude of energy institutions to gender issues. These two factors are of course linked. Women's control over their own lives is generally less than that of men; men tend to dominate decision making within households, in communities and organisations. Policy makers tend to be men and energy institutions and organisations both in the public and private sector, as well as civil society (such as NGOs dealing with energy) tend to be male dominated, particularly in the professional posts (Clancy et al., 2006). Similarly, the large-scale industries and agriculture, which are important energy customers for utilities, are also dominated by men in senior positions. This male dominated structure results in men talking to men about energy issues. As a consequence, the forums where the issues identified, agendas are set and any potential solutions proposed tend to have an inadvertent male bias.

The energy sector is seen as being dominated by men aged 50 and above, with economists and engineers being the dominant professions (Clancy, 2001). Although many economists and engineers would accept welfare and efficiency approaches to meeting women's energy needs, they find meeting equality or empowerment goals through energy policy more difficult to accept. While many are not against gender equity, these professions often do not see the relevance of gender to their work (Christian Michelsen Institute, 1999). Some consider that equality of the sexes is a matter of local culture and political concern (Skutsch, 1998): 947) while others consider that equality objectives cannot be reached through individual projects but through education and social movements.

Women are universally under-represented in political decision making bodies at the international, national and local level ((UNDP, 2008)⁴ and the energy sector is no exception. Although more recently women have held posts as Minister of Energy, for example, in Zambia, South Africa, Uganda and Botswana. In International Development Agencies, at the beginning of the new millennium, women have headed two departments with significant energy portfolios. Where women hold such positions, gender tends to play a higher profile role in energy policy formulation and implementation. Within energy companies, women are in the numerical minority and not in senior or technical positions. For example, in Botswana, all oil company CEOs are men (Sengendo, 2008). In part, this can be attributed to the small numbers of women graduating with appropriate qualifications suitable for a career in the energy sector, for example, degrees in fields of science and engineering. Data from Nigeria, where the oil sector is an important employer, shows that in 1997/8 the number of women compared to men graduating in engineering and technology was 39:424 and in sciences 164: 655 (Maduka, 2004). These figures are representative for the 1990s in Nigeria although they are not untypical for developing countries in general. However, perhaps it is not only that the numbers of women in influential positions in energy institutions have to change but that the men also have to be more gender sensitive.

Based on experiences in other sectors, such as forestry and health, it could be expected that

⁴ Although UNIFEM reports significant improves in women's representation in public office however it recognises that this alone is not enough to produce gender-aware policies (UNIFEM (2008) Progress of the World's Women 2008/2009: Who Answers to Women? Gender and Accountability. IN UNIFEM (Ed. *Progress of the World's Women*. New York, UNIFEM.)

participatory approaches might be more inclined to reflect gender needs in energy. At the local level, participatory approaches by governments in energy planning are not the norm (Nour, 2008). Indeed, energy planning is often implemented in a paternalistic, top-down manner in which needs are assessed by professionals (Skutsch, 2005): p37). However, even if village level energy planning was to materialise, women's scope for influencing decision making also needs the skills to participate in such activities as well as men's willingness to allow them the space to contribute. In other words gender roles and relations still could prove a barrier to women's participation.

As a consequence of the lack of women's influence in decision making, the sorts of issues that tend to enter the public arena, and hence form the basis of policy responses, are men's issues (for example, the need for irrigation pumps) whereas women's issues (for example, the need for drinking water) are overlooked. Women can increase their influence within the household and community by improving their economic status. However, women's income generation activities tend to lie in the informal sector which do not lead to large cash surpluses. Although women's contribution to household income can be significant, in some circumstances women might not even have control over major purchases (Clancy, 2002b). Their enterprises are hindered by lack of access to information and time constraints, as well as cultural restrictions, for example, on mobility, which can prevent their participation in training to improve their skills. In addition, this invisibility to officialdom means that another route of contact between women and those involved in policy making is constrained. In short, women lack both a formal voice in the community and an informal voice through participation in the various institutions and organisations linked to the energy sector. This invisibility is compounded by the lack of gender disaggregated data on energy use and needs, the consequences of which can be summed up as:

No data - no visibility; no visibility – no interest (Huyer and Westholm, 2001)

The lack of gender disaggregated data has been attributed, in part, to policy makers and planners being unaware of the significance of gender in energy planning (ENERGIA, 2008) as well as not knowing either about the availability of gender tools or how to use them (Clancy, 2000). There is a general limited capacity for mainstreaming gender in energy policy and programmes at the national level (ENERGIA, 2008).

The experience with the energy policy in Botswana is illustrative of the situation in respect of gender mainstreaming in the sector⁵. A review of the Botswana Energy Policy took place in 2002. A participatory approach of consultations with individual actors and reviews in mini-workshops was used to identify policy issues. Over 35 energy sector actors were consulted, 50% of which were representatives from government, 25% from parastatals and another 25% from private sector entities. These actors tended to represent the technical, supply-side of the sector which reflected the output of the workshops. Although there was reference to the demand-side in the context of the household sector where respiratory diseases from burning fuelwood and wood harvesting were mentioned. The majority of participants were male. In all the mini-workshops, there was no mention of gender issues. The Botswana Women's Affairs Department (BWAD) was not invited to participate in the mini workshops. However, they were invited to the follow-up main workshop, organized to review the output of the consultative process, but did not participate. All the thirty-four men who attended the workshop were either engineers or administrators and not planners or social scientists. Of the five women who attended one was from the private sector and four from government. Not surprisingly gender issues did not appear in the recommendations for the revised energy policy. However, the Energy Affairs Department (EAD) did attempt to seek assistance on several occasions from the BWAD to integrate gender into the policy document without

⁵ This section draws on Kealotswe, 2006.

succeeding in gaining a response. The draft revised energy policy document was rejected in July 2005 by the Botswana Cabinet because of the absence of a gender objective.

The BWAD's explanation for not being able to support gender mainstreaming in the energy sector was that they were short of human resources. They also consider that they are invited by ministries late in the development of policy which made it more difficult to mainstream gender (Kealotswe, 2006). BWAD had developed a mainstreaming strategy involving a multi-sectoral approach and a *Step by Step Guide to Gender Mainstreaming* as a tool for incorporating gender issues. As of June 2006 only 3 sectors of the economy (education, health and agriculture) had implemented them. These sectors can be considered to be those where gender issues are most visible. Kealotswe (2006) also considered that men in the energy sector did not know how to mainstream gender. This assertion is supported by the Kenya 2004 Sessional Paper on Energy which states that deliberate steps will be taken to integrate women in policy formulation and management of the energy sector, but without any indication of a strategy how this is to be achieved (Sengendo, 2008). As of 2008, of the approximate 300 employees at the Ministry of Energy, men tended to occupy the decision-making top positions.

Clancy (2000) has suggested that another factor for the lack of attention to gender in the energy sector can be linked to the way that professionals view the sector. Although energy is recognised as an essential input into all activities, it has never been widely accepted within development circles as a basic need, as have water and food. The concept of *basic need* has both a physical dimension and a social dimension. The former is part of a science and technology discourse while the latter is part of a social science discourse. However, until recently with the evolving interest in climate change, energy in development has been dominated by technocratic thinking⁶ and in the academic development literature, there is relatively little attention paid to energy from a social science perspective (including gender), compared to other sectors with a strong hardware component such as water and ICT. At the field level energy, technologists from the agriculture and water sectors have developed a working relationship with social scientists over the years and now more readily accept the social dimension of their sector. The same situation is not found in the energy sector. The lack of a social dimension arising from energy not being regarded as a basic need has not led to the evolution of a working relationship between the economists/engineers and social scientists. The health, forestry, agriculture and water sectors use extension agents, with either technical or social science backgrounds, who work closely with the communities and people they are trying to assist. Clancy (200) posits that this direct contact creates a greater understanding of social needs and makes technical staff in these sectors more willing to assimilate gender goals into their work. However, the energy sector does not usually use extension agents even for demand management projects which are intended to influence people's behaviour. This working *one step removed* from their clients reduces the chances for creating awareness of the social dimension in energy sector professionals that is found in other sectors.

It is fair to say that many of the problems linked to gender mainstreaming are not exclusive to the energy sector, nor are they caused by the energy sector. Indeed, macro-economic frameworks are in general considered gender-blind (Balmori, 2003). What the lack of gender-awareness in energy policy and planning represents is the manifestation of wider issues related to political ideology, culture and tradition.

3. Engendering Energy Policy: A Framework

When advocating for gender mainstreaming in the energy sector, there is a need to understand what factors influence the process. Based on research in Uganda and South

⁶ I include macro-economics within technocratic thinking. No offence is intended!

Africa which set out to analyse the processes of engendering the energy policies of those countries⁷, Feenstra (Feenstra, 2002) found it was possible to breakdown the policy making process into three phases. The policy process is illustrated by the flow scheme in Figure 1⁸. Phase 1 is seen as the existence of a number of enabling conditions as necessary prerequisites to stimulate the process towards creating a more gender aware energy policy (Section 3.1). Phase 2 is the policy formulation process itself within which a number of elements are also necessary to achieve the gender aware policy (Section 3.2). The implementation process is Phase 3 (Section 3.3) during which monitoring and evaluation can lead to adjustments of the existing policy.

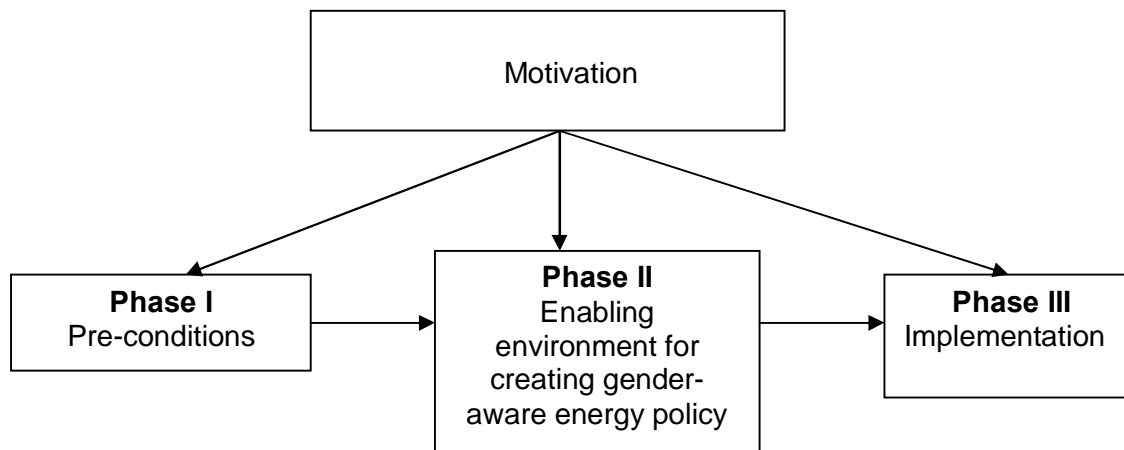


Figure 1: Phases in the gender-aware policy making process

Different groups of actors are involved in the three phases of the policy making and implementation process. Each group has its own underlying rationales for engendering energy policy. Actors are either motivated by the existing conditions to start the process or they can take action to create any missing conditions. These underlying principles of the actors influence the whole process as well as shaping the form of the engendered policy. There may exist also actors who wish to block or slow the process. Therefore, it is important not only to analyse the process itself but also those involved in the process if the gender-aware policy is to become a reality.

3.1 Phase 1: The Enabling Conditions for Engendering Energy Policy

Feenstra (2002) identified six enabling conditions for engendering energy policy⁹:

1. Participatory planning;
2. Gender Methodology;
3. Legislation on Gender Equality;
4. Political commitment;
5. Institutional support
6. Financial commitment.

⁷ At the time of her research these were the only two countries which had made any progress with gender mainstreaming in energy policy. It is noteworthy that both countries had had women as Ministers of Energy.

⁸ This analysis assumes a linear model of policy making. In reality, policy making is more chaotic and represents a power struggle between competing groups.

⁹ In her thesis, Feenstra used the term 'framework' in relation to each prerequisite.

A participatory planning approach is considered more likely to create a greater opportunity for women's voices to be heard than traditional approaches to policy making. Participation is not a smooth process for women who face cultural barriers as well as a lack of skills and experience in public speaking. Men can dominate such meetings and set the agenda. Therefore multiple forms of participation need to be used rather than relying on a community meeting to gauge opinion.

As was pointed out earlier, lack of information by policy makers when formulating policies can lead to gaps in policy. This is clearly the case in the energy sector where the collection and use of gender disaggregated data is not the norm. These data gaps can be closed through the use of a gender methodology which defines what gender-disaggregated data needs to be collected and analysed, by whom, when and how to provide information on gender inequalities as a result of existing energy policy. In this respect gender analysis can prove to be a very versatile tool. Not only does it create more gender awareness among actors, it also provides a tool for monitoring the process towards greater gender-equality in energy policy.

The existence of gender equality legislation provides the political basis for engendering policy. Legal issues relate not only to the content of energy policy, but also ownership of the energy sector and women's access to senior positions in the public and private sector.

Linked to gender equality legislation is the political commitment to gender mainstreaming: putting pledges into practice. The existence of a National Gender Policy is an indicator of the political commitment towards achieving gender equality. A National Gender Policy should encourage gender-mainstreaming in all governmental levels and sectors. Commitment to international gender conventions on gender equality, such as the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform of Action, can also play an important role in ensuring that governments act to engender policy.

To hold governments accountable to their political commitments and to monitor gender equality legalisation framework as well as to promote gender mainstreaming in all sectors, including energy, requires institutional support. This support can come from within government, for example a ministry for Women's Affairs or a Gender Ministry, or from civil society, for example, NGOs active in gender and energy.

Finally, financial commitment is crucial for realising gender-aware policies and to demonstrate political commitment to gender mainstreaming by allocating sufficient resources to develop and implement gender-aware policies.

That is not to say that a gender aware energy policy cannot be created without any or only some of these conditions in place, but that the process is likely to be longer. Nor do we argue that the conditions have equal value under all circumstances. Context is important in determining which conditions play a stronger determining role than others. Even if all these conditions are in place, a gender-aware energy is not guaranteed since the motivation and strategic interests of some actors might prove a retarding force. It should also be pointed out that there may be other as yet unidentified enabling conditions necessary to engender energy policies. The enabling conditions mentioned above can be considered as a trajectory to create an environment to make an energy policy gender aware.

3.2 Phase 2: The Formulation Process towards realizing a Gender-aware Energy Policy

In Phase 2, five elements were identified that needed to be in place when actually

formulating an engendered policy:

1. gender-disaggregated data
2. gender-mainstreaming;
3. participation;
4. recognition of gender energy needs;
5. Integrated Energy Planning;

These elements build on the enabling environment created in Phase 1.

The first element in the policy formulation process is the availability of gender-disaggregated data which contributes to improving decision makers' knowledge on women and men's energy use and demands, as well as information about the energy services men and women use and require. The availability of such data can be considered the foundation stone of a gender-aware energy policy.

In principle, public expenditure on social services and infrastructure are allocated on a gender-neutral basis, in practice, women and men use services differently and so public expenditure allocation can be considered as gender-blind. Therefore, the second element is the recognition by policy makers that current energy policy can be considered gender-blind, and giving a commitment to a gender mainstreaming approach to re-dress the balance. One way to ensure that sufficient financial support is given to gender-equity in policy initiatives is by gender budgeting¹⁰. Gender budgeting gives governments the opportunity to redirecting public policies and expenditure to promote gender equality. Governments' budgets should therefore be gender disaggregated both to create awareness of gender gaps and the enabling monitoring of public expenditure allocation (see below for further discussion on gender budgets).

The third element is the participation by women and men as energy end-users in the policy formulation process. Women are generally under-represented at the decision-making level in the energy sector and are rarely consulted regarding energy projects even when they are the intended beneficiaries (Annecke, 1999). Decision makers in the energy sector should consult women and facilitate their participation in formulating an energy policy that reflects their energy demands. Such participation in itself can be empowering for women, although it has to be kept in mind that women may need capacity building to enable them to participate in such dialogues in a meaningful way. Men also need to be sensitised to allow women space to speak.

A gender-aware energy policy should furthermore make a clear statement recognising women's role in energy provision and use and that women's practical, productive and strategic energy needs are different to men's. This recognition arises directly from the use of gender analysis in Phase I.

Energy planning has traditionally focused on the supply-side with attention to the technology and macro-economics (getting prices right). Climate changes issues have recently begun to influence thinking but again these are seen as technical issues in terms of renewable versus non-renewable and social issues (including gender and poverty) are not seen as relevant to the energy sector. A demand-side approach to planning, which looks at the end-users' needs, would be more likely to integrate the gender dimension into energy policy than

¹⁰ Gender budgets are a tool used to break down and identify the differentiated impact and incidence of general public revenue and expenditure on women and men (Balmori, 2003). A gender analysis of an energy budget has been made in South Africa. In 1996/7, the Department of Minerals and Energy budget was only 0.5% of the annual state budget, 79% went to nuclear energy; 0.1% went to women specific projects (James and Simmonds (1997: 218-9), quoted in Annecke, 2003).

a supply-side approach. Gender is about roles and responsibilities which underlines the fact that energy is a means to an end. In other words, that energy is a key input into other sectors, for example energy inputs into small scale industries and agriculture are essential for securing income generation. In addition, energy plays a role in providing food security, education, and health and the form of energy chosen can have a variety of environmental impacts. There is also reciprocity: increased income can lead to a higher energy demand as well as the purchase of more energy efficient technologies and cleaner fuels. Reciprocity also extends across sectors: education can create awareness about different types of energy, the need for environmental protection can stimulate the use of renewable energy technologies, infant vaccination campaigns need refrigerators for storing medicines etc. Therefore, energy policy planning requires an approach to look at both gender and energy from an integrated perspective which will help to understand the relation between gender and energy and what the impact of certain energy policy decisions will be on women in relation to men not in isolation but embedded in their societal roles and responsibilities. Again the same caveat holds at the end of Phase I, it may be possible to create a gender-aware policy without some or all of the conditions in place.

3.3 Phase III: Implementation

The last two phases of the linear process of policy making as shown in Figure 1 are the implementation phase and the phase of monitoring and evaluation. The existence of an engendered energy policy does not mean that the implemented policy reflects what exists on paper nor that policy is implemented in a gender sensitive way. The implementation phase includes the translation of policy into workable detail. This means that the abstract policy needs to be translated to actions people can work with. The second step is to make this detail operational. This translation can be quite complex and will include a lot of negotiations, adjustments, improvements, changes, etc. In order to prevent policy evaporation, the policy implementation process needs to be monitored in which civil society should play an important role.

Two processes form part of implementation: monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring is the activity which enables the implementing agency to check whether or not goals and targets are being reached and to allow for timely adjustment to correct for any inconsistencies. Evaluation is the activity which assesses results and impacts. Evaluation takes place at different moments in time. The output of an evaluation can be used as the basis for new policy initiatives. Monitoring and evaluation of policy can be carried out by all interested actors. Official policy evaluations themselves need to be monitored to ensure that the terms of reference are clear and specific about the gender issues that will be evaluated and that evaluation teams should have a member who has gender expertise otherwise there is the risk that gender equity can be easily overlooked (OECD, 1998).

During this phase gender methodologies can also play a role. Two options are gender budgets and gender audits. Gender budgets provide a mechanism for assessing the impact of government revenue and expenditure on women, men, girls and boys ((Budlender and Hewitt, 2003): 5). These can be carried out at a variety of levels: national, local, sectoral and programmatic. A gender budgeting exercise can be lead by governments or independently of governments (Kabeer, 2003). There are concerns that the skills and knowledge required to understand government budgets is beyond many citizens (Balmori, 2003) . especially in developing countries where literacy and numeracy levels are low (particularly for women). This undermines the possibilities of participation by all social actors. Balmori (2003) warns against the process becoming too dependent on external consultants. Also there is no guarantee that participatory budgeting leads to gender-aware policies since underlying gender relations continue to dominate in the political arena where men have the upper hand (Balmori, 2003). Therefore more inclusive approaches are needed. Gender audits offer this

potential since they can be seen as a much broader approach than gender budgets, although a gender audit can incorporate a gender budget as one of the activities incorporated into the audit. In particular gender audits look at systems and processes, recognising the importance of organisational structure and culture in the design and delivery of programmes and projects (Moser, 2005).

4. Gender mainstreaming in the Energy Sector¹¹

In order to address the gender-blindness of energy policies, ENERGIA developed a strategy for gender mainstreaming in the sector. This strategy has two main components:

- Building awareness of gender issues in the energy sector, how these can be assessed and how policies can be developed.
- Conducting gender audits of national energy policies.

There is little experience of gender audits of energy policies so the first step was to build capacity of a range of actors from the public and private sectors as well as NGOs. A generic training package in English and French containing concepts, tools and techniques were developed specifically for use in the energy sector. The need for specific tools for the energy sector was identified by Skutsch who considered the standard tools of gender analysis, such as the Harvard framework, to have a number of shortcomings since they were not easily adapted to incorporate energy data nor did they deal with energy demand (Skutsch, 2005).

Forty professional trainers from 18 sub-Saharan African countries were trained in the use of the concepts, tools and techniques. These trainers form a critical mass of expertise on gender and energy who are in the position to repeat the process in their own countries thus building a critical mass of expertise in gender and energy¹². At the national level, training workshops were held to create this critical mass of individuals sufficiently senior in their organisation that they would be in a position to influence change. There was gender balance in those trained since it considered critical for gender mainstreaming to have gender-sensitive men as well as women.

The next step was to conduct gender audits of energy policies in three African countries: Botswana, Kenya and Senegal. The audits were used as a tool to identify and analyse the factors that hinder efforts to mainstream gender in energy policy.

The approach used in the gender audits is similar to that outlined by Moser (2005). The approach was primarily participatory and was led by a national team of experts which included a gender specialist, energy planner, budget analyst, statistician, economist and policy analyst. The first step was to engage the ministry responsible for energy plus civil society organisations and other actors linked to the energy sector and those working on poverty, gender equality and women's empowerment. The expert teams, after intensive training in gender and energy concepts, tools and indicators, conducted gender audits which consisted of in-depth analysis of energy planning approaches, budgets, the institutional capacity of ministries to implement gender-mainstreaming strategies, the links between gender, energy and national objectives related to poverty reduction strategies and meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The audits considered energy statistics, communication channels, energy policy, development strategies, plus the objectives and priorities of key institutions. They identified the specific ways in which gender issues were, or were not, addressed and also the critical gender gaps in existing national energy policy formulation and implementation as well as links with Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and national

¹¹ This section draws on ENERGIA(2008).

¹² In total over 260 practitioners (144 women and 118 men) have been trained in sub-Saharan Africa (ENERGIA, 2008: P6).

gender policy documents. Interviews with key informants were also held plus focus group discussions with stakeholders to sample opinion on gender and energy issues. Data was analysed using gender tools and indicators some of which were specially developed by ENERGIA (Clancy et al., 2007).

An important part of the strategy has been to involve the ministries responsible for energy at every stage so that there is a sense of ownership of the audit findings within those ministries. This sense of ownership was achieved through a validation workshop which involved of a range of actors from the energy sector, including government officials, in is seen as an important step in ensuring the participation and involvement of key political actors in the future. The workshop reviewed the findings from the audits and discussed future recommendations as well as agreeing on actions with specific targets and timeframes that were needed to engender the policies. In addition, participants were encouraged to conduct organisational analyses of their organisation to evaluate whether or not there exists gender-sensitive approaches in practice and a needs identification for capacity building in such approaches, as well as the gender balance in employees¹³. A constructivist evaluation approach was used during the workshop to build consensus and to create a sense of ownership of the findings (Sengendo, 2008). The outputs from the audits are considered to be official reference materials for the Ministries and their partners. Civil society can draw on the material as the basis for advocacy as well as monitoring and evaluation.

The three audits revealed some common issues:

- Gender is not a high priority in the energy sector despite the existence of gender policies at the national level.
- There is a lack of know-how to gender mainstream . both with energy and gender specialists.
- The lack of gender disaggregated data is a barrier to the development of gender-aware energy policies and gender-sensitive practice.
- Gender budgeting was new within the countries and had not been carried out in the energy sector.
- The incorporation of gender and energy into meeting the MDGs was mainly externally driven.

5. Conclusions

One of main reasons that the energy sector is a late developer in terms of gender mainstreaming is a lack of awareness of how to do it. The quote from an energy decision maker who participated in the gender audit in Botswana is not unusual:

“The results of the gender audit activity reveal where we have gaps and where we can improve. I am ready to take action. The question is, what can I use to mainstream gender in the energy sector and how can I do it? Show me how to use gender analysis and mainstreaming in my policy planning work so that I can do it now, because it fits my mandate within the energy ministry”. (Sengendo, 2008)

The lack of gender-disaggregated data makes the visibility of gender and energy issues difficult. Ministries of energy need to begin to build such data bases.

Feenstra (2002) considered that participatory processes were are important requisite in gender mainstreaming. However, the form of the participation is crucial. The mere

¹³ This should pay attention not only to numbers but also to the positions in the organisation.

presence of women does not guarantee the inclusion of gender issues into policy, as the example from Botswana shows. Gender budgets have been promoted as a tool for engendering policy, although they have been criticised for not allowing participation by broad cross-section of women. Gender audits have been suggested as an alternative.

ENERGIA's strategy of gender audits in the energy sector has been successful in enabling more women to contribute to engendering energy policy. The network is currently developing a manual to serve as a step-by-step guide to gender audits in the energy sector.

A key factor in embedding gender mainstreaming in the energy sector has been to involve the appropriate ministries from the beginning of the energy audits. However, in order to maintain the momentum and to translate the individual capabilities into organisational change needs technical support. For a network, this can create expectations that are difficult to meet.

The success of the strategy has yet to be formally evaluated. However, there are signs of change in perceptions about and commitments to incorporating gender and energy into energy policy and practice, as well as examples of organisational change in terms of policies and actions.

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