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From the Editor's desk

- EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AFRICA -

Welcome to this special issue on gender and energy of the FINESSE Newsletter. A quick look at the articles shows that they feature mainly women. Why? Surely gender and energy is about women and men. That is true. Both women and men benefit from energy use. However, in the household sector in Africa it is women who are the main procurers, producers and users of energy. So when were focusing on household energy we tend to focus on women. Men can play an important role because they make important decisions about purchasing equipment. But we should not lose sight of the fact that approximately a third of the households in rural areas in Africa have female heads. Many of these women are more disadvantaged than men in similar circumstances, for example, women's access and control over resources such as land, cash and credit is more limited than men's. Women's technical skills are often less than men's. In addition women's reading levels are lower and their experience with hardware is less than men's. This means that when making energy interventions, the ability of women to respond is more restricted than men and special elements need to be included to ensure that women are not excluded. Financing access to energy equipment is a case in point. Women's access to formal credit is severely restricted through the formal banking system so there need to be creative mechanisms and instruments to enable their access to financing. Africa is beginning to build up its experience here and an example of best practice can be found in Uganda, where a GEF funded project has used existing community based savings and loans institutions to administer loans to enable access to solar home systems. Conventional lending institutions found it difficult to adjust to the levels of loans acceptable to women and also their desired repayment patterns. Using village banks, familiar organisations to both women and men, to administer a variety of loans and advise on how to service their loans from agricultural products sales, enabled households to opt for systems that matched their cash flow. Women could have loans in their own right. In those cases they tended to choose the cheaper solar lanterns. Men saw income generating opportunities with larger systems to operate videos for entertainment. The banks are also building expertise in monitoring PV companies work quality. A win-win situation for all stakeholders.

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GENDER AND RENEWABLE ENERGY IN AFRICA

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1.0 Introduction

Renewable Energy has been talked about for more than thirty years while fossil fuels have increased in use and declined in supply. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg in 2002, energy was one of the most contentious issues. Setting targets for new renewable energy as well as reducing perverse and harmful energy subsidies were hotly debated. Despite the considerable efforts in different parts of the world to promote renewable energy sources we are still awaiting a major breakthrough in use in Africa.

In Africa, about eighty two percent (82%) of the energy generated is consumed by North African countries and South Africa. Most of the energy consumed in the sub-Saharan African countries is for basic, subsistence needs and does not directly contribute to the Gross National Product (GNP). When we look at who is involved in this subsistence activity we see that it is women. There are two reasons why we need to focus specifically on women in the energy sector.

Firstly, women are the main procurers, producers and users of energy. Women's needs can be classified as practical (for ensuring daily survival), productive (income generation) and strategic (women changing their position in society in particular to gain greater equality with men, and help them towards empowerment in all its senses). All these activities have an energy dimension: practical (for example, household lights, improved cooking stoves for household use, improved supply of fuel wood, improved technology for ergonomic collection and transportation of fuelwood, and better kitchen design), productive (income generation for example, through improved technologies such as food drying installations, and electric sewing-machines, and increased skills and knowledge, such as marketing strategies for improved cookstoves) and strategic (for example, street lighting allowing women greater freedom of movement after dark).

Secondly, of the 1.3 billion people who live in poverty globally, 70% are women. Therefore, in order to move families out of poverty you need to focus on women and their needs. These women are also active in the informal productive sector, mainly in food processing activities, some with high-energy demands, although women's energy needs are often equated with household energy for cooking. They are also engaged in small-scale industries such as cassava and fish processing, milling, brewing and bakeries where fuel wood is used. Table 1 below shows a sample of energy-intensive small enterprises operated by women in Africa.

Table 1. Sample Energy-Intensive Small Enterprises operated by Women in Africa.

Enterprise	Energy Consumption
Beer brewing	25% of fuelwood used in Ouagadougou; main source of income of 54% of women surveyed in Tanzania village; 1kg wood/1litre beer
Rice parboiling	1kg wood/0.4 kg rice.
Bakeries	Wood is 25% of bread production costs in Kenya; 80% in Peru; 0.8-1.5 kg wood/kg bread.
Fish Smoking	40,000 tonnes wood year in Mopti, Mali 1-5-12 kg wood/kg smoked fish; fuel is 40% of processing costs.
Gari (cassava) Processing	1kg wood / 4kg gari (cassava)
Hotels, restaurants, Guest houses, tea-shop, food preparation and processing	816,865 tonnes wood annually in Nepal; 1.3% of total household income in Nepal; 48% of mothers in Dangbe district in Ghana engaged; 49% of women in one village in Burkina Faso.
Pottery making Soap making	Men and women both have distinctive roles in different processes. Fuel is high percentage of production.
Shea Butter	60% of cash income for in parts of cash
Palm Oil processing	Extremely arduous, requiring lifting moving heavy containers of liquid; 0.43 wood/litre oil; 55% of income of female-headed households in Cameroon's study

The work that women have to do both for subsistence and productive purposes invariably involves drudgery and adds to women's heavy workloads as well as reducing the time available for other activities.

2.0 Energy Intervention For Women In Africa

Women in Africa need sustainable energy services that will address two crises in their lives: cooking and drudgery. Unfortunately, the whole issue of women's time and effort saving (that is, the reduction of drudgery) seems not to receive the attention it deserves. Reducing women's drudgery by providing improved access to energy services for lighting cooking and productive activities should have significant positive effect on women's education, literacy, nutrition, health, economic opportunities and involvement in community affairs which in turn also benefits all family members. The inefficient three-stone stove, with its significant impacts on health, and the open-to-sun drying traditional technologies still prevail and these limit the capacity for improvements of life quality.

GENDER AND RENEWABLE ENERGY IN AFRICA (cont.)

Promoting Renewable Energy

Energy interventions based on renewable energy are available that would do much to reduce the drudgery involved in daily household activities. However, the renewable energy community has to be aware that the renewable energy technologies have to compete either with biomass collected at zero financial cost or with other petroleum based cooking fuels (kerosene and LPG), which have the advantage that they are available through well-established commercial distribution channels. Petroleum fuels provide controllable heat, which is popular with cooks. However, while many women appreciate the possibility to purchase kerosene in small quantities, which matches household cash flows, they are afraid of the potential fire hazard. Similar safety concerns exist about LPG. Also, to be aware that a number of tasks would easily be served by diesel engines, for example, the preparation of many staple root crops takes an hour of vigorous pounding, which can be simply substituted by milling. The renewable energy community needs to pay more attention to the promotion of bio-fuels, such as biogas and vegetable oils, as a diesel substitute.

So, how can more women gain access to renewable energy technologies?

Building and Strengthening Capacity

The first and main problem of renewable energy technology dissemination among women is the apparently invisible nature of their energy needs, which translates into a policy vacuum, leading to various issues that disadvantage the livelihoods and development of women. The lack of gender disaggregated energy data allows significant interventions to be missed.

The numbers of women enrolled in higher institutions especially in science and technology is small. Table 2 gives figures for Nigeria which are not untypical of the continent.

Table 2 : Total degree, diploma and certificate award by education and gender in federal universities.

Year	93 — 94		95 — 96		96 — 97		97 — 98	
Discipline	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Education	913	331	1010	576	939	469	1243	899
Engr/Tech.	274	10	345	41	436	51	424	39
Env. Science	69	5	93	9	86	16	79	5
Social Sc.	1446	177	1545	416	1885	410	2623	752
Vet. Medicine	15	2	22	7	25	6	25	5

Source: Federal Office of Statistics, Nigeria 2002.

This has two significant consequences for the energy sector wanting to promote dissemination of new technologies. The lack of women involved in technology design risks the chance of equipment being gender insensitive. The design of improved cookstoves in Kenya, which has one of the best success rates in Africa, is a lesson in point. Only when women became involved in stove design did the uptake increase and use sustained. Secondly, high education levels can lead to improved income earning capacity as well as understanding of more of the available options which stimulates the market for labour saving technologies. It is not only at the higher level but also at the grass roots level where technical training of women in production and maintenance of renewable energy technologies and awareness raising of users also helps in market development. Women can talk more easily to women, especially about technical issues, and when cultural considerations have to be taken into account.

Strong institutions are therefore required for the development and adoption of renewable energy systems and technologies. Such institutions must have qualified staff and resources to work effectively. To do this successfully, there is the need to build on existing institutional capacities. For effectiveness, training in all aspects of business will be important for would-be energy entrepreneurs and developers. For example, in the dissemination of solar energy, local technicians and entrepreneurs would need to be trained to have sufficient knowledge to install and maintain PV systems to a standard that would enable propagation of a good reputation. As was mentioned earlier, women technicians may find it easier to enter rural households than men. In many instances, especially in rural areas, local capacity has not been developed to deal with problems arising from specific technologies. There is a shortage of accessible workshops and technicians for advice and maintenance. Where they exist, participation of technically qualified women is almost none-existent. There exists a prejudice amongst decision makes that women are not interested in technology. Evidence from hand pump programmes around the world easily disproves this prejudice. Train a man from the rural areas and he is inclined to move to town; train a woman and she is more likely to stay in her community and use her newly acquired skills for the community benefit.

· *Financing Mechanisms & Access To Credit*

Most of the customers for renewable energy systems in Africa are likely to be individuals with limited capital and credit history. Women face additional barriers to men. In most cases, for instance financial institutions do not recognise women as independent adults, and require their husbands or other male relations to raise collaterals. The banking system is therefore generally not designed to handle such customers. A number of innovative schemes may be put in place to finance small-scale energy projects and programmes.

GENDER AND RENEWABLE ENERGY IN AFRICA (cont.)

For example, small levies can be put on petroleum products and pooled into a Special Energy Fund that can be used to promote renewable energy projects. The government of Ghana, for instance, has since the mid-1980s has been financing sustainable energy projects from over US$400,000 raised annually from such a Fund. Micro credit for energy is also a promising new approach to develop and accelerate dissemination of renewable energy technologies. Other models have been put in place in Southern Africa that have produced market studies and business plans for investments in projects including biogas, PV, micro-hydro and solar water heaters

Another source of sustainable funding for renewable energy technologies is to bundle small-scale projects into programmes that can attract funding from both bilateral and multilateral agencies and big financial institutions such as African Development Bank and the World Bank. Women in Africa often pool savings as means of paying for a variety of things. There need to be innovative ways of tapping into this cooperative micro-level savings and loan approach as a mechanism for creating access to renewable energy technologies.

Much has been written about the need for micro-financing and credit schemes. However, projects aimed at enabling women's access to technologies can still go wrong if they do not also take into account the reality of women's lives. A project in Uganda which set out to encourage women entrepreneurs to purchase solar systems by offering credit through a women's bank failed to reach the target group because interest rates were set well above levels women could meet, repayment schedules were too short and collateral requirements did not match women's resources (Sengendo, 2001). An example of best practice in micro-credit is the ENSIGN project (see box 1) of the Asia/Pacific Development Centre and UNDP, which combines micro-credit loans for energy services and for corresponding income-generating activities for the poor, including women. The services are co-financed by a revolving fund and national financing institutions, such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) Bank in India. An average growth of 124% in income was found in the participating households.

3.0 CONCLUSION

The empowerment of women through increased access to renewable energy would broaden the range of opportunities viz, economic and social life of women. This brings benefits to the whole family. It is foreseen that empowerment of women via the use of renewable energies will open up the employment base of the women both directly in the sector and as a beneficiary of improved energy services. Improving women's earning status also helps to move families out of poverty. It would appear that the starting point for the transition to a wide use of renewable energy technologies in Africa is to increase women's capacity with the technologies and to improve access to financing to enable their acquisition of the technologies.

References

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Box 1: Financing Energy Services and Income-Generating Opportunities for the Poor (ENSIGN)

The ENSIGN project was implemented in eight countries in Asia in a UNDP-financed project by the Asia-Pacific Development Centre. Energy-linked micro-enterprise portfolios were developed through micro-credit banks and institutions in each country. In urban areas, connecting to the grid and more efficient appliances were most important. In rural areas, however, renewable energy, coal briquettes, and diesel fuels were preferred. In both rural and urban contexts, process heat and motive power were more crucial to income-generation than lighting. The ENSIGN Revolving Fund offered 36 percent of total loan funds, national financing institutions 50 percent, and borrowers' equity 14 percent. Interest rates were 15 to20 percent, somewhat below market rates, with repayment periods of 2–6 years. Both individuals and communities were financed, with average increase in income of 124 percent (higher for the community projects).

Myriad activities were financed: Garment making, embroidery, felt and leather goods manufacturing, copper welding, utensils manufacturing, baking, cold storage, rubber stamp making, beauty salon, grain grinding, threshing, fish drying and powdering, soybean processing, rice husk cook stove, spice drying, beedi (flavored handmade cigarettes) wrapping, cinnamon peeling, rice processing....

Following are some lessons from the ENSIGN project:

- *Although this was not planned, the vast majority of borrowers were women, who proved enterprising, innovative, and creditworthy. Significant benefits for women, in addition to income impacts, were time savings and enhanced self-confidence from improved ability to support household income and greater control over self generated finances.*
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- *A need to account for transaction costs of intermediaries. There is need for a "Business Facilitator," possibly NGOs, in future replication efforts.*
- *Borrowers for ENSIGN-type loans are not usually the bottom poor; however, bottom poor often were employed as labour in the pilot projects.*

(Ramani 2002)

Changing the face of gender and energy: the role of ENERGIA as an international network

by Sheila Oparaocha, ENERGIA Secretariat.

Introduction
Ten years ago, in June 1995, when a group of women established ENERGIA as an international network on women and energy, neither the development sector nor the energy sector recognized the linkages of gender and energy in sustainable development. Although there was some conceptual thinking on the subject and limited empirical evidence from scattered, on-the-ground projects, no focused attention to gender and energy was given in the energy and development debates. The 1995 UN Conference on Women in Beijing, a key event dedicated to the status of women and development, failed to raise energy as a key impediment to the well being and advancement of women.

Nearly a decade later, in 2004, gender and energy is firmly on the agenda of international policy and to a lesser extent in regional and national policy. The key role that ENERGIA has played in making this shift is acknowledged broadly by both the development and the energy sectors. This article highlights ENERGIA's development as an international network and its contribution to mainstreaming gender and energy into policies and programmes engaged in sustainable development.

The early years
ENERGIA launched its initial activities in 1996 with support from the Dutch Government for a period of three years. The aim was to secure increased credibility and activities on women and energy in mainstream energy organizations. Building up a network of interested individuals and organizations, both in the North and South, and making gender and energy issues visible through a newsletter were the means chosen to reach this aim. These activities were facilitated by a network secretariat and by the end of three years the ENERGIA network had grown substantially to reach twenty countries. The newsletter - ENERGIA News – had more than 900 subscribers, and more than half of the contributions were from the South.

Expanding the network
Having gained success in raising awareness on gender and energy, the ENERGIA network was set to expand its reach. The demands from energy organizations for ENERGIA's services were steadily increasing. This was also recognized by the donor community and funding for a further three years was made available by the Dutch and Swedish governments. ENERGIA became more involved in advocacy and advisory services, engaged in capacity building activities, expanded its resource centre functions, took up research and documented case studies. The ENERGIA network continued to grow and more national and regional partners came on board, either as formal Focal Points of ENERGIA in the country/region or as informal associates. ENERGIA expanded to 15 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. By the end of this period ENERGIA had gained the status of a credible and widely respected international network – in both the North and the South – with a wide range of committed and capable partners. Gender issues had attained a notable and increased prominence in the debate and policy on energy for sustainable development.

Taking on more challenges
Building on the experience of nearly six years, ENERGIA was ready to wield more influence and take on more challenges in shifting its focus from being only in the energy sector, to include the social and development sectors. Since 2002, ENERGIA has been involved in consolidating and further strengthening the network, building the capability of network members to integrate gender and energy concerns into sustainable development, engaging in research and analysis, and is actively involved in advocacy and advice. As of now, the network has 13 Focal points in Africa and 7 in Asia. Each of these Focal Points facilitates national or sub-regional gender and energy networks under the umbrella of ENERGIA. Regional Network Coordinators, one in Africa and one in Asia, provide support to the networks in the regions in defining gender and energy priorities for their regions and in translating these into concrete network activities. These gender and energy networks are making alliances with other like-minded networks in exchanging experiences and collaborating in mutually beneficial activities for moving the gender and energy agenda forward.

Further, ENERGIA is developing a gender and energy training programme for the purpose of capacity building. It is based on the areas in which the skills and knowledge of the network members need strengthening, and will cover aspects such as gender sensitive energy planning and policy making, mainstreaming gender into energy institutions, gender assessment of energy project proposals and gender sensitive advocacy in the energy and development sectors.

ENERGIA continues to expand and improve its information and knowledge management activities. The knowledge and information resources are tailored to meet the needs of its members, target groups and other interested parties. Meanwhile the research activities of ENERGIA will provide credible data for furthering the debate on gender and energy, particularly in policy making and project planning.

Changing the face of gender and energy: the role of ENERGIA as an international network

by Sheila Oparaocha, ENERGIA Secretariat (cont.)

Advocacy and advice remain an important part of ENERGIA's work in convincing policy makers and planners. For some of them, gender and energy is a new concept and needs to be explained in a manner fitting to their particular area of concern. For others who have recognized the need to integrate gender into energy, tools and methodologies to do so need to made clear.

Some key achievements

The different strategies that the ENERGIA network has put into action have worked together to the success that it has achieved up to date in achieving the goal of engendering energy and empowering rural and urban poor communities, men and women. The following are few of ENERGIA's many achievements:

- Lobbying at international and regional events and getting gender and energy into political declarations and plans of action, i.e. World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002, World Renewables Conference 2004, World Renewable Energy Congress 2004, 9th Conference of Parties on Climate Change, International Conference on Rural Renewable Energy Technology for Rural Development
- Developing and making available a wide range of specific material on gender and energy such as annotated bibliographies, ENERGIA News (printed newsletter), ENERGIANet (electronic bulletin), www.energia.org an up-to-date and comprehensive website, databases on projects, programmes, events etc.
- Providing advice to energy sector organizations in designing gender sensitive energy policies as in the case of the gender equity strategy and action plan for the Bangladesh Rural Electrification Board
- Building strategic partnerships with key players in the energy and development sectors to get gender and energy incorporated into their activities, for instance the Global Village Energy Partnership (GVEP) that tries to facilitate access to energy services by the poor.
- Contributing gender and energy related case studies and articles into other publications in the energy sector such as Energy and Sustainable Development Journal, Energy Policy, INFORSE Sustainable Energy News, etc.
- Collaborating with other key institutions in the energy and development sector in research, advocacy and publication, i.e. Energy Poverty and Gender (EnPoGen) studies of the World Bank, UNDP Women and Energy Project.
- Participating in high-level expert advisory groups of strategic importance to ensure that gender and energy enters key debates and is integrated in the outcomes, as in the case of the GVEP Working Group on Monitoring and Evaluation, a joint initiative of GVEP and the European Union Energy Initiative (EUEI).

Looking ahead…..

Although ENERGIA as a network has achieved a great deal of success in its short period of existence, there is still much to be done before gender and energy becomes part and parcel of energy policy and planning at international, regional and national level. With this in mind, ENERGIA will continue to be active in expanding and strengthening the capacity within the network to take up the challenges ahead.

In the advocacy arena, ENERGIA is already planning for the Beijing Platform for Action Ten-Year Review (Beijing +10), the 14th and 15th sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2005 and 2006 respectively. Advocacy at regional and national events are also high priorities for ENERGIA.

Through the systematic implementation of the gender and energy training programme, ENERGIA hopes to establish a pool of competent trainers in the regions and the countries who would provide support to building gender and energy capacity within the national networks and among national energy and development practitioners.

The regional and national networks will continue to be supported so that they can become as effective and successful at regional and national levels as ENERGIA has been at the international level. An important milestone for the Africa Regional Network is the appointment of a Regional Network Coordinator who will take up her post in December 2004.

For more details on this article and the ENERGIA Network,

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From solar home systems to grid electricity, a women's view

By M.A. Green and D.Zwebe.

This article reports on a study in Maphephetheni, South Africa, which aims to make "*a comparison of the usage and perceptions of solar home systems (SHS) and grid electricity of households in Maphephetheni that have or had access to both*". The *specific objectives* of the study included the following:

1. To compare the equipment connected to both systems;
2. To compare the satisfaction level of households for both systems;
3. To compare the changes of lifestyle when accessing the grid;
4. To identify whether households see SHSs as an inferior energy source.

Maphephetheni was chosen as the study area because of several reasons; it was one of the earliest communities with PV experience in the country and now also has some areas with electrical grid connections. It is rare for one household to have experience of both electricity sources. Therefore this study was undertaken to reflect the experiences of such households, particularly focusing on the female head of household. Access to energy should particularly influence the lives of the female members of the household because they are at home most of the day, they are the ones who collect the wood for cooking, they do the cooking, they support the children with homework, they heat the water for bathing and use household equipment.

The survey covered the six households in the area that had both grid and SHS experience. This meant that they had had a functioning SHS in the past or their SHS was still working and they also had access to the grid. All families had purchased their SHSs over a 3-4 year period and now owned the systems. Yet all households were considered to have fairly low incomes. All grid connections were of the prepayment meter type. The family type is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Family composition of SHS/grid households in Maphephetheni.

House-hold	Num-ber of peo-ple	M (male) / F (female)	Chil-dren at school	Work-ing away from home	Work-ing locally with income	SHS work-ing
A	10	10F	7	3M	1F	No, still working not token
B	9	9F	6	1M	-	No, battery prob-lem
C	12	4M / 8F	5	-	2M	No, still working but not rein-stalled
D	5	3M / 2F	3	1F	-	Yes
E	13	5M / 8F	10	-	2M	Yes
F	10	3M / 7F	6	2F	2M	No, battery prob-lem.

Lifestyle Changes of the family

The interviewees were all female and were mostly *de facto* female heads of households and answered the questions with help from one of their daughters. This article highlights what changed in the lives of the women of the family: the equipment women use, the water which is still heated by the women and the cooking which is still done by the women of the household.

Equipment

Four out of six families bought a color TV instead of a black and white TV after they were connected to the grid. Two other welcome equipment changes that benefited the women were a kettle (4 households), and an iron (2 households). Thanks to the kettle it was less effort to make tea or heat water. The iron provided an opportunity to the women to look smart and beautiful.

All households converted their refrigerators from gas to electricity (and the remaining household obtained their refrigerator after they accessed the gird).

Cooking

While all the households interviewed have electricity, none of them used this as the main source for cooking. For one family biogas was the main source, with paraffin as secondary source and electricity came in third place. One other family cooked on gas, while the other four families still cooked on paraffin and sometimes fuel wood. Three of these four families mentioned owning an electric stove, but they all say they hardly used it because it would use too much energy and it would be expensive.

Households with access to electricity still cook on fuelwood.

From solar home systems to grid electricity, a women's view (cont.)

Using paraffin as a resource has many disadvantages. It is dangerous to the children in the family through possibility of mistaking the fuel for a beverage (a clear fluid), commonly used poor quality paraffin appliances sometimes explode under conditions of heavy or improper use and most importantly: paraffin creates a health hazard through causing respiratory problems from fumes while cooking.

Water heating
All families had used paraffin or fuel wood to heat water in the past; one household with a biogas digester now used the biogas to heat the water. All the other households still used paraffin to heat their water, three of these five families used an electric kettle to heat the water for tea and one household used the kettle to warm bath water for the father. The women in that family do not use the kettle to heat the water for themselves, that happened the old fashioned way.

Lighting and vision
All the female heads of households reported that nothing changed regarding homework; the children had light in the evening when they had (only) the SHS and the time they spent on homework did not change with the grid connection. A similar thing was said about entertaining friends or other social activities. For all these things, light was the most important source and it did not matter which source provided this. All were seen as an improvement on candlelight.

Financial Matters
Head of household A tells us that the wide variation in monthly costs is because of the children. When nobody is watching they sneakily use the electricity for cooking and baking. The male head of household told the children many times not to do this but it is difficult for her to control (female head of household).

Another household (F) stated that especially the iron and the kettle – that make her life easier and more interesting - use a lot of energy and they try to save a bit by reducing their usage. The problem is that these instruments are relatively cheap to purchase, but they use a lot of energy compared to more expensive purchases like a TV, so that "in the long term these appliances are much more expensive than they seemed at the time of purchase".

Head of household E reported that they only obtained the grid connection for their children. She did not like TV or radio, she did not use the grid at all. One of the reasons for this was that every time they use the grid electricity too much, her husband yells at her and the children. He gets angry with them because it will increase costs. This family mentioned the highest grid costs, which can be explained by the fact that they had the most equipment connected to the grid, inclusive of a video recorder.

Satisfaction level
Is the system they prefer linked to the fact that their SHS is still working or not. Table 2 shows that there is no connection between these aspects.

Table 2: Which do you prefer, SHS or grid electricity?

	Preference	SHS working	Cost per month (R)	Easy to pay for the grid usage
A	SHS	No	50-100	Yes
B	Indifferent	No	50	Yes
C	SHS	No	110-120	No, it is very difficult
D	Indifferent	Yes	30-50	No. but the SHS is working
E	SHS	Yes	140	No, they struggle but have SHS working
F	Grid	No	50-100	Yes

The main reason why the women prefer the SHS above the grid electricity seems to be financial. All three families that prefer SHS mention money as the main reason; the electricity from the SHS is free while the costs of the grid usage can, unnoticed, increase greatly. There seems to be no link between ease of grid payments and preferences. People who say they struggle with paying for grid electricity do not all prefer the SHS, and people who do not struggle to pay do not all prefer the grid. There is a mixed response, so it is not only a matter of finance.

Another reason provided for preferring the SHS was that the grid does not always function well. Sometimes when it rains or when there is a bad storm, the grid fails to work. There are even power cuts without any reason, which can take up to a week to be restored.

A further reason for preferring the SHS was family arguments. In family E, the husband gets angry if the women and children use the grid electricity too much. Family A also mentioned some discussions between male and female and between the elders and the children about the (ab)usage of the grid.

Conclusions
For these low-income households who felt that they could not afford to cook using grid electricity, there were few major or obvious differences between owning a SHS and accessing the grid. Most families still used the same sources of energy for cooking as before, mostly paraffin. They only used the grid connection sporadically for these purposes. The only change in the kitchen was converting refrigerators from gas to electricity.

From solar home systems to grid electricity, a women's view (cont.)

A SHS was definitely not seen as an inferior electricity source in Maphephetheni. The households were very satisfied with their SHSs and reported that generally they worked well. On the other hand, there were grid power cuts fairly often that took time to restore. People appreciated their solar home systems and wished they could put the color TV and other equipment on it. Nobody mentioned here that they wanted electricity for cooking. Half of the families included in the survey preferred the SHS to grid electricity, two families were indifferent about it and they liked both. Only one family preferred grid electricity.

Having accessing to the grid taught the women some important lessons: energy efficiency became important (often enforced by the reaction of the male head of household to the expense) and that initial equipment costs were misleading; they should include running costs. A father also benefited more from the grid in that his bathwater was electrically heated with a kettle, while the rest of the family resorted to the previous fuel use. Women benefited in that they could take on more duties but with less effort, for example, ironing using grid electricity is less complicated than heating an iron over a paraffin stove.

Grid energy did not appear to make any difference for women. The kettle was not used for their own benefit except for tea. The iron was used sparingly because of its high energy consumption. Cooking was still on paraffin, and so the potential benefits of lower indoor pollution were not realised. Educational gains and social contacts did not show positive change. A negative change occurred in that there were more arguments within the family about using grid electricity because it is too expensive.

So it seems that for women in low-income households, access to grid electricity over Solar Home Systems is a mixed blessing.

For more information contact : Prof J M Green, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, E-mail: green@ukzn.ac.za, Dagmar Zwebe (Technology and Development Group, University of Twente.

Energy News from Africa

Gender and Energy Network organised in Mali

Mali - In July 2004, a similar to set up a Gender and Energy Network in Mali was organised by the NGO Mali-Folkecenter. Among the 24 participants were representatives of government ministries, international and national NGOs, universities and civil society organisations. The gender and energy scenario in Mali was mapped out through several presentations. ENERGIA Focal Point in Nigeria, Friends of the Environment, presented the objectives and aims of ENERGIA. Ms. Dembele Aida of Mali-Folkecenter shared her experiences on the Gender and Energy Training Workshop organised by

ENERGIA in South Africa. Having reached consensus on the need for establishing a gender and energy network in Mali, the participants selected Mail-Folkecenter as ENERGIA Focal Point in Mali with Ms. Demebele Aida as President of the network. A Steering Committee consisting of several participating organisations will be involved in developing a set of internal rules for the network. For more information, please contact Ms. Dembele Aida of theMali-Folkecenter at aida.dembele@undp.org. Look at the detailed report at: http://www.energia.org/resources/reports/mali_natcons.pdf.

ADB Encourages Renewable Energy Development in Africa

African Development Bank (Tunis), October 4, 2004. Despite the vast potential of energy resources available in Africa, 92% of the rural population does not have access to modern energy services.

The majority of the population that is not connected to the grid will remain "in darkness" regardless of the massive investment in the electricity sector. In this light, efforts have to be directed at providing sustainable energy to the population.

With traditional grid extension becoming excessively expensive to provide isolated rural areas with electricity, decentralised renewable energy and energy efficient technologies that make use of locally available resources become relevant.

The African Development Bank (ADB) will organise a Wind Energy Workshop on October 28 and 29 in Tunis to encourage the development of marketable wind energy potentials on the continent, in the framework of its support to Private Sector and Sustainable Development in Africa

In this perspective, the ADB staff participated in the FINESSE Renewable Energy Staff Seminar held on September 23 on the site of the Tunis International Centre for Environmental Technologies (CITET) in Tunis. The objective of this seminar was to introduce the participating staff to applications of renewable energy such as wind, solar and bio energies, in fields of operation, like water supply and sanitation, education, health, agriculture, infrastructure, rural development and enterprise development.

http://allafrica.com/stories/200410041339.html

Energy and Gender: A brief case of TaTEDO experiences. By G. Ngoo

Résume - Depuis sa création, TATEDO, une organisation environnementale tanzanienne s'occupant de l'énergie renouvelable travaille avec les communautés aussi bien rurales qu'urbaines dans différentes parties du pays. Durant sa longue expérience, TATEDO a constaté que l'accès limité des femmes aux services modernes d'énergie contribue largement à élargir l'écart hommes - femmes en Tanzanie. En effet, ces dernières mobilisent la plupart de leur temps et de leur énergie pour des activités telles que l'agriculture, la collecte du bois de chauffe et de l'eau ainsi que leur transport. Pire, le bois de chauffe est brûlé dans des fourneaux inadaptés, à l'intérieur de cuisines ou l'air circule peu. Cela résulte en un risque de maladies respiratoires très élevé et le temps consacré aux autres activités telles que la formation et les activités lucratives est limité.

TATEDO a donc décidé d'intervenir par la promotion de technologies d'énergie efficaces qui aideraient les femmes à gagner du temps et de l'argent. Ainsi, des foyers d'une efficacité de 30 à 40 % et 22 à 28% pour le charbon et le bois de chauffe ont été introduits dans différentes parties du pays , notamment Dar es Salam, Kilimandjaro, Kagera, Shinyaga, Mwanga et Arusha. Ces foyers servent à la fois aux ménages (préparations culinaires) et aux activités lucratives. A titre d'exemple, les fours améliorés promus par TATEDO permettent de cuire 50 pains en 1 heure, comparés aux 18 heure qui étaient nécessaires pour la même quantité de pains. Une étude faite par Napendaeli en 2004 révèle qu'environ 40% des ménages de Dar es Salam disposent de foyers améliores. Les femmes ont donc désormais un gain de temps, une réduction des dépenses et des risques de maladies respiratoires dues à la fumée.

Toutefois les politiques et stratégies existantes en matière d'énergie devraient prendre en considération le fait que la plupart des problèmes d'énergie sont spécifiques et de ce fait des solutions uniformes ne sont pas appropriées. Les questions socioculturelles incluant l'inégalité homme-femme doivent être considérées brs

Baking with improved charcoal oven developed and promoted by TaTEDO

Since its formation, TaTEDO, a national rural/ renewable energy development and environment organization in Tanzania, has managed to work with both rural and urban communities in various parts of the country. Through such a long-term experience TaTEDO has learned that, energy as a means of development has broadly contributed to widen the gap between men and women in Tanzania. Due to limited access to improved and modern energy services women especially in rural area use most inferior and inefficient energy technologies that consume most of their time and metabolic energy in activities such as agriculture, fetching firewood, fetching water and transportation. Worse enough, collected woodfuels, which uses on average 4 hours per day, are burnt in inefficient stoves and in poorly designed kitchens that does not allow enough air circulation. As a result risk for respiratory diseases is very high and time to engage in other activities such as those related to academics or income earning is limited. This situation has led to women becoming economically, socially and environmentally poorer as compared to men.

Having recognised the difficult situation many women face daily, TaTEDO has made a positive intervention in household energy by developing and assisting promotion of efficient energy technologies that could help women generate income, save time and money. Efficient stoves with efficiencies of 30-40 percent and 22-28 percent for charcoal and firewood stoves respectively economizes the use of woodfuels have been introduced in several regions of Tanzania namely Dar es Salaam, Kilimanjaro, Coast, Mwanza Shinyaga, Kagera and Arusha. These stoves are used for both income generation activities and for cooking in the households. For instance, the improved charcoal oven was designed purposely to minimize time, expenditure and hardship experienced by women when baking using traditional firewood ovens. With the traditional ovens women were spending 18 hours baking 50 loaves of bread while with the improved ovens promoted by TaTEDO they now take 1hr to bake 50 loaves of bread and the cost of fuel has been reduced from Tshs. 100/loaf to 5/loaf. On the other hand local rural brewers in Kilimanjaro, who are mostly women, have now managed to cut down expenditures on firewood by almost 50% due to the use of improved stone made firewood stoves. Women in rural areas of Kilimanjaro like in other regions of the country engage in selling local brew to generate income.

Through these initiatives, more than 1,125,000 improved stoves have been produced/purchased installed in both rural and urban households. While in urban areas, women are proud of using improved charcoal stoves known as ***jiko bora,*** in rural areas the most preferred wood stove is ***jiko sanifu*** with chimney, which uses firewood and remove smoke from the kitchen. Recent study by Napendaeli 2004 shows that about 40% of Dar es Salaam residences have now adopted the improved charcoal stoves. This means that women who are in most cases burdened with cooking energy can now reduce time, expenditure, respiratory diseases due to smoke, accident risks associated with collection of firewood in the forest and burning while cooking.

Energy and Gender: A brief case of TaTEDO experiences.

However, with the current global, regional and national efforts to eradicate poverty and reducing the gap between men and women, the way in, which energy services are produced, distributed and used, play a central role. Unfortunately, energy policies and strategies that are being implemented have been formulated and implemented without enough consideration on how energy can be used to address critical issues mentioned above . Therefore we could conclude that appropriate policies and strategies need to be formulated and implemented taking into consideration that:-

- Most energy problems are location and application specific and hence, uniform solution are not feasible
- Socio-cultural including gender issues and economic diversities, have to be taken into account while designing interventions at the local level.
- Institutional mechanisms with gender perspectives have to be set in place for long-term sustainability of rural energy programmes and services. For more details please contact, Gisela Ngoo, TATEDO, PO BOX 32794, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. E –mail : Energy@tatedo.org, Tel: +2550222700438.

An improved wood stove for institution and SMEs

Women and household energy supply in Mali. The risk of deforestation and need of new income-generating activities. The Sinsibere Project.

By Dr. Ibrahim Togola and Johanna Togola

Résume: Au Mali, pays de l'Afrique de l'Ouest, le bois de chauffe et le charbon constituent 92% de la consommation totale d'énergie. Ceci entraîne une forte pression sur les ressources naturelles notamment aux environs des grandes agglomérations où sont concentrés les plus gros consommateurs de bois de chauffe. Les femmes s'adonnent à la coupe et à la vente du bois de chauffe à des fins lucratives.

L'objectif du projet Sinsibere initié conjointement par le Mali-Folkcenter et une ONG finlandaise dans 3 communes de la région de Koulikoro est double : réduire la pression exercée sur les ressources naturelles d'une part et permettre la création de nouvelles activités génératrices de revenus pour les femmes d'autre part. Pour ce faire, le volet formation environnementale constitue l'élément clé par lequel les problèmes de déforestation et de désertification découlant de la coupe extensive de bois sont abordés, de même que les conséquences sur l'approvisionnement en eau d'où la nécessité de planter des arbres. L'attention des villageois est également attirée sur les avantages des foyers améliorés. Le second objectif du projet est le développement de nouvelles activités génératrices de revenus (exemple fabrication de savons, élevage de volailles, jardinage, poterie). Il s'articule autour des associations féminines dont les membres sont formés aux pratiques de l'épargne et du micro crédit afin de mieux gérer leurs revenus et diriger des petites entreprises. Ce projet financé par le Ministère des affaires Etrangères finlandais qui devait s'achever initialement à la fin de

In Mali, West-Africa, firewood and charcoal represent 92% of all energy consumption. Two thirds of the area of Mali is already covered by Sahara desert, and most of the 12 million inhabitants live in the southern third of the country. This gives lot of pressure to the natural resources, especially near the cities which are huge consummators of firewood. In the surrounding countryside of the capital, Bamako, the production of wood is highly negative due to extensive commercial wood cutting. Traditionally it has been the task of women to supply household with the firewood, so the activity has remained theirs also when it has become a business. For many women in the area wood selling is their most important source of income.

The actual project originates from the Local Environmental Plan (Plan Communal d'Action Environnementale: PCAE) made for the project area by Mali-Folkecenter, according to the recommendations of National Action Plan in the frame of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). The PCAE suggested new income generating activities for women to be developed in the place of wood selling. Very often the problems of extensive wood cutting are dealt with legislation or production of energy efficient stoves. These are though not helping the original problem, which is poverty. Women who get their income from selling wood, are usually very poor, and do the activity because they don't have other choice. Wood cutting is very hard work, and it is dangerous, too. There are lot of snakes in the bush, and lately many women have been reported to be violated by young men who go around with motorbikes.

The goal of the Sinsibere-project, initiated by Mali-Folkecenter and a Finnish NGO, Dodo, is to reduce wood cutting and other pressures on natural resources in three rural communes (Sanankoroba, Dialakoroba and Bougoula in the region of Koulikoro) near the capital, Bamako. This is done by arranging environmental education for the population and by teaching women's associations how to create new income-generating activities and a micro-loan system for the members, to replace the selling of firewood and charcoal. In the local language, Bambara, *sinsibere* means the support that someone needs to start something new.

Women and household energy supply in Mali. The risk of deforestation and need of new income-generating activities. The Sinsibere Project. (cont)

In order to decrease the amount of wood cutting as well as other pressure on natural resources, environmental education is the key element. In this project, in co-operation with the municipalities and forestry authorities, environmental education has been arranged for all of the 60 villages of the communes. The education concentrates on deforestation and desertification, and how these are linked to wood cutting and erosion, as well as the consequences for farming and the water supply. The villagers are also informed about the advantages of improved stoves and the importance of planting trees. The problems related between wood cutting and reduced quality of farm land is often familiar to people, but what is needed is the support to really change the way of doing things. It is not easy or fast change, as not any other change which is affecting the complete lifestyle of people, but many women are very willing to make the change, if they just get some moral and practical assistance.

Another element of the project is to develop new income-generating activities for women. This is done in co-operation with local women's associations. In the Sinsibere-project the members of the associations are trained in saving and microcredit so that they are better able to manage the income, and to carry out small enterprises more profitably. New income-generating activities for women include soap-making, poultry farming, gardening and pottery. All these activities were already done in the villages, but with the training the women learn how to do them in better and more profitable way

The project is supported by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Funding is secured until the end of 2004, and more support has been applied until the end of 2006. For more details please contact Dr. I Togola, MaliFolkecentre,

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Market gardening is an alternative income-generating activity

The Energy Gender Dimension in Small-scale Brick Making in Zimbabwe

by Lasten Mika

Résumé - Au Zimbabwe, la fabrication à petite échelle de briques à partir du bois de chauffe mobilise beaucoup d'énergie (environ 25% de la demande nationale) et est traditionnellement considérée comme une activité masculine. La contribution de la fabrication de briques à la création d'emplois, à la construction d'abris et à la réduction de la pauvreté est largement reconnue malgré le fait que leur nombre soit inconnu. Cependant, vu le nombre croissant de producteurs, des problèmes de pollution, de santé et de sécurité apparaissent.

Les femmes intervenaient très peu dans le domaine de la construction jusqu'à ce que le Groupe Intermédiaire de Développement de Technologie (GIDT) financé par les Pays Bas démontre que les femmes peuvent constituer une force dans ce domaine grâce à la diffusion de machines manuelles améliorées, servant à la fabrication de briques. Ces briques connues sous le nom de «briques stabilisées» (BS) peuvent être utilisées différemment pour parvenir à des structures faciles à construire, esthétiques et peu mobilisatrices d'énergie. Ce projet a permis d'accroître le nombre de femmes dans cette industrie, leur permettant ainsi d'avoir des revenus. Les femmes ont par la suite crée leur association, «Femmes dans le domaine de la Construction» afin de diffuser les technologies promues par le projet et s'exprimer communément sur les problèmes rencontrés tels que l'accès aux prêts bancaires.

In Zimbabwe, small-scale brick production is energy intensive and has traditionally been regarded a man's domain. It is estimated that 25% of the national energy demand is consumed by this industry. Fuelwood is the major source of energy used for brick curing. With the country's housing backlog standing at 1.5 million units, there exists potential for small-scale brick producers. Small-scale brick producers can be found in most fringes of the urban towns and in rural areas. Although the number of small-scale brick producers is not known, its contribution to shelter provision, employment creation and poverty alleviation is well recognized.

The involvement of women in this industry is insignificant due to the historical and cultural background of the construction industry. At household level it is common for women to engage in brick making specifically for their own use but it is rare to see them doing it commercially. The conventional or traditional brick making process is labour intensive and as such is considered a masculine job not ideal for women. Apart from this, the huge energy input in the form of large logs of fuelwood is a physical and financial disadvantage to women.

The Energy Gender Dimension in Small-Scale Brick Making in Zimbabwe (cont.)

In urban areas fuelwood is purchased at a high price, which then renders the bricks very expensive. Alternatively the fuelwood has to be cut and carried over long distances placing a physical burden on women who at the end of the day have to attend to the normal household chores.

Figure 1: Small-scale brick making is not only male dominated, it is also energy intensive.

Small-scale brick making certainly contributes to deforestation, through the use of firewood for fuel. The most common type of kiln is known as the scove type see figure 1 above. Fuelwood used varies from 0.3 and 0.4 kg per brick and most operations make 10,000 – 12,000 bricks per kiln. Studies show that, carbon emissions caused by small-scale brick are of the order 700kg CO_2/1000 bricks. Given the large numbers of small-scale producers, there is a growing need to address the problems of pollution, the efficiency of both energy and raw materials and health and safety hazards this industry pose. Innovative production processes that are gender sensitive can break the barriers that have impeded women to participate in this industry once considered a male domain. The Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG) with funding from Novib/Oxfam Netherlands, has demonstrated that women can become a force to reckon with in the construction industry through the dissemination of improved manually operated brick making machines that can produce low-cost and energy efficient bricks. These bricks known as soil stabilized bricks (SSBs) can be used in a number of ways to come up with structures that are structurally sound, energy efficient, easy to build and aesthetically beautiful.

Through the project intervention, 11 brick and tile making enterprises owned by women are operational in the towns of Chitungwiza, Marondera and Rusape in Zimbabwe. It has been shown that there is evidence of paradigm shift in the community regarding women abilities in the construction industry, as evidenced by an increase in the number of women in the informal construction sector. There is growing awareness and acceptance of products produced by women's groups as shown by increased volume of sales. With regards to poverty alleviation, the project has indeed shown potential as an income earner for women. However, attainment of this objective for some groups is still elusive since they were not actively producing for the market. In addition accessing loans for business expansion still remains a problem given the current economic environment that is inflationary. Some of the group members are now earning monthly incomes in the Z$250 000 –300 000 (US$48-58) range.

Figure 2: Appropriate technology can assist in breaking the barrier that once excluded the participation of women in the construction industry.

Following this success, the women went on further to form their association. Known as the Women in Construction Association (ZWICA), this association has created a lobbying and advocacy platform for the groups under the project to publicise the technologies that the project promotes as well as get a common voice as women in construction. Some of the key objectives of the association include, the promotion of the recognition of women in the construction industry, encouragement of networking of association with other strategic organisations and associations; supporting members in the following aspects ,access to bank loans and markets, promotion of quality control; and lobbying and advocating for a conducive working environment and supportive policies on access to tenders

The project, through the promotion of the SSB, has the potential to unlock a wide range of impacts in the building industry in Zimbabwe; the technology lends itself well to women participation and can thus secure the income base of women who play an important role in society; the equipment needed is simple and locally fabricated –requiring no need for foreign currency; the production process is energy conserving, as no fuelwood is required for the curing of SSB's. This has climate benefit through zero GHG emissions during the curing process; the production process is water efficient with very minimal water required; The major raw material is soil and it is available in abundance, hence the product is low cost hence can be afforded by low income groups; and the finish need no plastering –its aesthetically beautiful. Contact : Lasten Mika, Intermediate Technology Development Group — Southern Africa, Email: lastenm@itdg.org.zw.

'THE GENDER FACE OF ENERGY' WORKSHOP IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

A six- day training workshop on gender and energy tagged *"The Gender Face of Energy"* was held from 10th -15th July 2004, in Randburg, Johannesburg, South Africa. The workshop, which was organized by ENERGIA International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy and the Technology and Development Group (TDG) was hosted by Mineral & Energy Education and Training Institute (MEETI), Randburg with the trainers; Mr. Dazydelian L. Banda and Ms. May C. Segendo, from The East African Energy Technology Development Network (EAETDN), Uganda and Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI) respectively.

The main objective of this workshop was to test two training modules designed by ENERGIA and TDG, to develop the capability of ENERGIA Network members and focal points in incorporating the gender aspect of energy into project planning. This is because of the recognized fact that women, men, girls and boys have different needs, roles, and undertake different activities and therefore, require different energy technologies. Also, women's energy needs are often ignored or over-sighted during planning and implementation of energy projects. A situation attributed to the lack of statistics on gender and energy, inadequate personnel involved in data collection and the poor knowledge of planners about the energy needs of women, men, boys and girls.

In her opening remark, Ms. Sheila Oparaocha, the Coordinator of the ENERGIA Secretariat, Netherlands detailed the Network's activities since inception in 1995. She informed participants that the workshop was one of the activities lined up to fulfill the third phase of the ENERGIA phase 3 programmes that aimed at developing the capability of its network members and focal points; policy makers, planners and project implementers, to integrate gender and energy concerns into sustainable development.

Twenty one (21) participants from the various regional, national focal points and members of ENERGIA in West Africa, East Africa and Southern Africa attending the training course. Organizations represented included Friends of the Environment (FOTE), Nigeria, UNDP, Mail; NOVIRA, South Africa; Nigeria; Botswana Technology Centre, Botswana; Department of Energy, Zambia; Palmer Development Consulting, South Africa; Environment Tiers Monde, Senegal; RAPS Consulting, South Africa; Integrated Rural Development initiatives, Uganda; WYOCC, Kenya; ENVIROCARE, Tanzania, AFREPREN, Malawi; Ministry of Energy and Power Development , Zimbawe; GRATIS Foundation, Ghana; Environment and Development Association of Ghana, Ghana.

Participants were exposed to basic gender terms and terminologies relating to energy projects as well as to gender analytical tools for use in energy planning. The tools are to be used at various stages of project planning to ensure that differences between the genders are not inadvertently overlooked. Besides the interactive sessions, using case studies to expose participants to the challenges faced in designing appropriate projects, there was also a field visit to Kwa Thema, a small town in the suburb of Johannesburg where the data gathering tools- Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) Techniques (Focus group discussions, interviews, social and resource mapping) were put into practice.

The workshop was timely and useful to many of the participants because of their current involvement in energy projects, and even though some have been in the business of development planning, they had overlooked issues of gender in their respective assignments. It also becomes quite clear why gender issues shouldn't be left to the gender machineries (e.g Ministry of Women's affairs) alone as they are too small to make any reasonable effect, rather should involve all stakeholders with their gender goals in perspective for a sustainable project.

The training included guidelines for follow-up plans. This included the need to make use of the tools in participants' work as well as provision of feedback on the training to the organisation where the participants come from as well as to ENERGIA/TDG in future. Participants were requested to consult with their respective head of organisations in order to ensure that post training follow ups could be realised to be incorporated in the operational and planned activities of the organisation. This follow-up process was considered to be a strategy to facilitate commitment of participants and their organisations beyond the training workshop. This would then enable application of the skills trained through practical implementation of the tools in project planning as well as wider dissemination of training at national level.

Ms.Gladys O. Fayomi and Engr. Chike. Chikwendu
Friends of the Environment (FOTE), Nigeria

Participants at the workshop

Energy News from Africa

High oil prices drain Africa's forex

Addis Ababa - High oil prices have had a substantial impact on the foreign exchange reserves of poor countries as well as consumer prices, the World Bank's chief economist said yesterday. Already precious foreign exchange reserves were being depleted by as much as a third and families were paying more for goods in poor countries, said Francois Bourguignon. "We have an impact of between 2 percent and 5 percent of GDP [gross domestic product], depending on the oil dependency and dependency on other sources of energy," said Bourguignon, who has been holding talks with Ethiopian officials on anti-poverty targets. He said some countries had seen their foreign exchange reserves depleted by as much as 30 percent as they struggled to pay for oil. In Nigeria, a nationwide strike to protest against higher fuel prices began on Monday, shutting down most of the country's commercial capital, Lagos. The strike is set to last for four days. The country's output of 2.5 million barrels a day has not been affected yet, but traders remain concerned. The World Bank economist said oil prices had risen - now more than $50 a barrel on world markets - because of global events, including the war in Iraq. Experts at the bank estimated that oil prices had risen by $10 on average from the previous year. While oil prices are about 80 percent higher than a year ago, they are more than $26 below the peak inflation-adjusted price reached in 1981.

Underlying daily jitters is that excess available output is scant, with global production capacity only about 1 percent above the daily supply of 82 million barrels.

Bourguignon said Irish rock star Bob Geldof's call for rich nations to wipe out the debts of poor countries was "a red herring" and what these countries needed to do was better manage their foreign debts. Africa owes $305 billion (R1.99 trillion) in foreign debt.
Source : http://www.busrep.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=613&fArticleId=2258711

Poor energy infrastructure stunts Africa's export trade

Despite the abundance of potential energy resources in Africa, the continent's energy generation amounts to a mere 3.1 percent of world electric production, according to a new report of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). "Nature has endowed the African continent with the widest-possible range of energy resources and yet its power sector remains severely underdeveloped in all countries," the Commission observes in its Economic Report on Africa (ERA) 2004.
Entitled 'Unlocking Africa's Trade Potential', the report pinpoints the inability to provide good and adequate energy services as a major constraint to export diversification in many African countries.
Solving Africa's power sector problems, ERA 2004 suggests, "requires not only greater energy efficiency and sustainability, but also a reduction in the dominant role of the State in its management." Calling for the transformation of power companies into independent and self-reliant corporations, the report argues that their success and efficiency would be determined by the extent to which they incorporate economic decisions in their operations. http://www.panapress.com

Energy Events

North African Power Industry Convention, 22-24 November 2004.
To be held in Algiers. Contact: Emmanuelle Nicholls, Spintelligent. Tel: +27 21 700 3500. Email: emmanuelle@spintelligent.com.

Third Energy Summit in Africa, 23-25 November.
To be held in Dakar, where the event will be opened by Senegal's President Abdoulaye Wade. To include sessions on oil, gas, finance, renewables and power. Contact: Jean-Pierre Favennec. Tel: +33 1 47 52 71 16. Fax: +33 1 47 52 71 09.

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