Socio-Economic Dimension of Energy Access for Women

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Introduction

• Energy is one of the fundamental pillars of human development.
• Energy is needed for any kind of activities and a key input to all economic sectors such as industry, commerce and agriculture.
• It is important for the provision of social services such as education and health.
• The wealth of a nation and its people is closely correlated to the type and dimension of access to energy.
Access to energy is important not only for consumption but also for income-generating activities that provide sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Estimated 2.7 billion people, almost half the world's population, are deprived from clean and energy efficient cooking technologies and around 1.4 billion have no access to electricity.
Introduction Cont’d

- Energy is a particularly critical area and renewable energy is often cited as a key climate change mitigation technology
Gender Roles

- Gender refers to socially constructed roles and relations between men and women.
- This includes the different responsibilities of women and men in a given culture or location.
- Roles vary within and between cultures, ethnicity, households, etc. and can change over time.
Gender roles

- Gender refers to socially ascribed roles, responsibilities and opportunities associated with women and men, as well as the hidden power structures that govern relationships between them
- Reproductive
- Productive
Ama’s gender and Kofi’s gender are socially constructed, meaning that society attaches certain expectations and roles to each of them based on their sex.
Gender and Energy

- Use of energy and the production of energy are areas in which men and women have different roles, information and perspectives.
- Situations in which energy is scarce, in both urban and rural settings affect activities undertaken by women and men.
Available Renewable Energy

- Biomass
- Solar
- Waste

Which of these are available to most women?

An absence of choice in energy access or use in their daily lives

Cost implications
Women and Energy

- Women are most often collectors, users and managers of natural resources
- Main burden of providing and using fuels (dung, raw biomass) for cooking
- Women and children are responsible for collection of fuel-wood
- If time increases, children’s capacity to attend school is at risk
• In rural sub-Saharan Africa, many women carry 20 kilograms of wood-fuel an average of 5 kms every day (IEA)
• The effort uses up a large share of the calories from their daily meal, which is cooked over an open fire with the collected wood
• Impacts associated with deforestation and desertification also make it more difficult for women to find wood-fuel
Women and Energy
• Inefficient ways of using biomass for cooking, is a source of indoor and outdoor pollution
• Health implications for women and children
Rural vs Urban

- Rural:
  - *May not have much choices*
  - *Cost implications*

- Urban:
  - *Available choices*
  - *Cost implications*
Challenges

- Women have less access than men to credit, extension, land and training, necessary for improving energy access to support their livelihoods and income generation from micro enterprises.
- New energy technologies may even have unintended negative consequences for women.
Advantages

- Improved cook-stove reduces 1 ton of carbon a year used by 2M poor women and men in the kitchen (Energia)
- Less burden for women
- Improved energy services could play an important role in enhancing the life of the poor, particularly for women and children
Ordinary gari roasting stove

Improved roasting stove
• Electric light extends the day, providing extra hours for school work
• Modern cook-stoves save women and children from daily exposure to noxious cooking fumes.
Way Forward

- Bringing women’s perspectives into the centre of policy making
- Working with both women and men is a key to success
- Energy projects should be integrated in a holistic way with other improvements relating to health, education, agriculture, etc
THANK YOU