

## Practical Action

# Advocacy for Gender and Energy in Kenya (AGEK)

### Background and context

**Energy access in Kenya is dominated by traditional use of biomass with 68% of the country's population using firewood and 13% charcoal for cooking.** Household electricity access is at about 30% with 50% of urban and 6% of rural households connected to the grid.

Kenya has introduced some policy, regulatory and institutional changes to enhance energy access and promote investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency. The draft national energy policy (2014) and the Energy Bill (2014) recognize the need to promote development and use of renewable energy resources. Through the Constitution of Kenya 2010, county governments have been created, with the devolved units mandated to plan and develop local energy resources.

**In terms of energy-gender nexus, women and men face disproportionate opportunities and impacts in terms of energy access.** Previous policy measures e.g. the Sessional paper No.4 of 2004 on energy are gender-neutral with no specific mention of what will be done to eliminate gender disparities with respect to each policy measure<sup>1</sup>. Not specifically recognised is the fact that policy investment decisions determine who benefits from which type of energy option, that poor women and men are unlikely to benefit from the large-scale commercial energy expansion programs, especially if they do not support connections to households (the country aims to achieve universal connectivity by 2030 by connecting to the grid a total of 25,000 trading centers, schools, and health centers. This target, however, does not include universal access to electricity by rural households) where the participation of women is important, that many women and girls suffer from health problems related to gathering and using traditional fuels. Gender inequalities exist in various aspects of community participation in energy delivery; moreover women's specific contribution in energy decision-making is not explicitly recognised.

A lack of credibility and capacity in civil society and in government, limited mechanisms for engagement between the two, and the marginalisation of women from decision-making are fundamental obstacles to pro-poor development and energy access to the poor women in all counties targeted. Despite high commitment, barriers to effective civil society and women's engagement in energy include social exclusion, low awareness of rights, fragmentation of interests, and few opportunities for active engagement with the state. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) also suffer from weak organisational and management capacity, as well as poor credibility due to ineffective governance resulting from poor representation, accountability, participation and responsiveness to women's issues.

Although the media has a key role to play in addressing challenges to human rights and the rule of law, they too lack capacity and confidence to deal with energy and gender issues. In addition, the work of civil society, CSOs, and the media is often set in contexts where limitations to their freedom of expression exist.

Challenges in government at county and national level can include low policy awareness, ambiguous responsibilities (particularly in newly-devolved systems), a lack of transparency and accountability, and few mechanisms for active engagement with citizens (particularly women and the most disadvantaged). Insufficient resources, inefficient or corrupt resource management, low morale, high staff turnover, and stifling bureaucracy often exacerbate these issues.

Women and other marginalised groups are under-represented in the energy sector both in government and in CSOs. Despite these challenges, civil society is young, vibrant and committed. The project will build on this potential and increase the demand for good governance and access to energy resources, services and products by strengthening the capability and legitimacy of CSO partners, especially women's organisations to act as the voice of, and advocate for and with, the citizens that they represent.

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<sup>1</sup> Stock-taking and gap analysis report for Sustainable Energy for All presented to the Ministry of Energy, 2013.

It will also develop the capacity of media to make this voice louder, to publicly hold duty-bearers to account, and to raise awareness of women's rights to access energy.

For this increased voice to be effective, Practical Action and SCODE have learnt the importance to develop the capacity of government partners to engage more with and be more responsive to civil society. Devolution brings government closer to the people that they serve, and provides opportunities for GESK to widen the space for citizen-state dialogue.

This approach draws on Practical Action's experience of promoting Voice-Responsiveness, which underpins its work on with the poor people and government. This stresses the importance of strengthening the relationships and mechanisms by which voice is heard and responded to. GESK will therefore focus on building the capability, responsiveness and accountability of civil society, women and government partners and focusing on the interplay between these three elements.

#### Current Status of SE4All, actors and processes

**Kenya is a pilot country for the SE4All initiative in recognition of the country's record in and commitment to improving access to energy and strategies for energy efficiency as well as development and use of renewable energy.** A taskforce was established by the United Nations to assist the country in spearheading this (SE4ALL) initiative, to coordinate the main development partners and to serve as a connecting link to different sectors. Subsequently, a draft stocktaking and gap analysis report was prepared and shared with Energy Sector stakeholders, including the Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). A workshop for representatives of CSO in Kenya was held, coming up with the Kenya Civil Society Declaration on SE4ALL. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency and Government of Kenya are partnering with BizClim and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to develop Kenya's SE4ALL Action Agenda and Investment Prospectus. As an initial step, a consultative workshop has been held to seek CSO input into the process. The National Agenda of Action and Investment Prospectus will identify energy priority projects in the country that will help to achieve the SE4All targets. The two documents will potentially be launched at the high-level validation workshop on 29 to 30 November 2014, in Nairobi. Civil society organisations have been participating in the country's process. Practical Action, a CSO, has been coordinating building awareness and the capacity of CSOs to make informed the inputs of civil society into the SE4ALL processes.

#### Key gender issues that need to be advocated for in SE4ALL Country Plan and Investment Prospectus/ Energy Policy and legislation /energy plans at the County Level

**The action will advocate for gender mainstreaming to ensure that energy projects proposed in the Country Plan, Investment Prospectus and county plans achieve greater welfare and livelihood enhancements, and makes a maximum contribution to poverty reduction and women's empowerment:** The specific issues to be advocated for include: (i) addressing barriers that women would face in benefiting from and participating in sustainable energy solutions being proposed; This would ensure that the transition to sustainable energy creates benefits and opportunities for women and men. Women in particular would be able to access energy for both their practical and reproductive needs e.g. household energy for cooking, house maintenance and child/family care; reduction in time and drudgery of collecting fuel and water, and also for their productive and strategic needs e.g. leadership development, job creation/ market opportunities, evening classes, better health conditions and community organising that will ultimately lead to empowerment ; (ii) mainstream gender issues in energy governance and policy making; (iii) Advocate for capacity building of women in clean energy sector, i.e. training women on leadership and technical aspects of sustainable energy technologies as well as building their entrepreneurial skills and access to capital and markets in energy sector. This will include sensitising project counterparts to ensure that all project partners are aware of associated gender implications and opportunities; (iv) Advocating for establishing and implementing accountability measures and indicators to ensure gender equity in the energy sector; support the generation, collection and use gender disaggregated data on energy use, energy sector employment and impacts of energy development. This will serve as baseline for evaluation purposes, and support gathering to understand women's practical needs and to help energy projects identify how women can be instrumental in making energy projects more effective. (v) Lobby for funding for country level catalytic activities related to technical assistance and capacity building for women and their organisations to accelerate country action on activities to achieve the three objectives of SE4ALL.

Without sufficient proactive efforts now, it is unlikely that either of these points will be reflected in the SE4ALL process as it moves forward as well as in other national and county level processes. There is need for Civil Society Organisations to engage in the processes, share experiences and ensure that gender issues are incorporated in the processes.

### Project summary

The project will support the SE4ALL process in Kenya by advocating for clear gender objectives in the action plans and investment prospectus.

Energy access in Kenya is still very low with significant gender inequalities. The country is committed to improving access to energy, energy efficiency as well as development and use of renewable energy, and currently preparing the Agenda of Action and Investment Prospectus to identify energy priority projects that will help to achieve the SE4All targets. The 32 month project, with a budget of EUR 160,000 will lobby and advocate for the adoption of women empowerment approaches in delivering new targets for universal modern energy access at County and National and international levels. Specifically, the Action will aim to achieve the following outcomes: (i) The SE4All country and county action planning processes and investment prospectus integrating clear gender objectives for equitable benefits to men and women, especially in lower income and marginalised areas; (ii) WE perspectives adopted and incorporated in policies, plans and implementation strategies at County and national level though the implementation of a national level campaign; (iii) Lessons learnt on WE approaches in energy activities at country level used to lobby for WE adoption in SE4All initiative at regional and international level.

**Practical Action will work with ENERGIA-Kenya CSO partners, the government, donors, private sector and media in influencing mainstreaming of gender in the county and national energy master plans and investments.**

Knowledge and lessons learnt on WEE approaches in energy activities will be developed and disseminated to influence policy and discourse in energy-gender nexus. The implementation of the project is dependent on the availability of resources and timely execution of the country action plans and investment programs, cohesion of CSO in advocacy work and the enthusiasm of the government, donors and private sector to embrace gender objectives in the investment programs. The project management team is proactive in defining realistic results and indicators and adapting work plan and budget to achieve results and will embrace participatory evaluation.