

Gender auditing energy policy in Africa: the case of Botswana

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While this article concentrates on the findings related to Botswana, short summaries are provided at the end on the similar findings for Kenya and Senegal.

While females are more amenable to adopting energy efficient technologies, and especially those that ease labour-intensive household chores, in Botswana women have so far not contributed as a stakeholder group to decision- and policy-making in the energy sector. This conclusion was drawn from a gender audit of the Botswana Draft Energy Policy conducted in 2006, which looked at possible strategies to implement and incorporate gender considerations in policy and decision-making processes in the energy sector. The audit was conducted as part of the TIE-ENERGIA project¹ which aimed to increase awareness of gender aspects within energy in 12 African countries through capacity building and gender audits. Members of the audit team were from the relevant ministry's Energy Affairs Division, the University of Botswana, UNDP and BOTEC (Botswana Technology Centre) and were trained in gender analysis before starting work.

The diverse gender roles and the inequalities in energy access by men and women have consequences for energy use, needs and priorities. Although decision-makers may view energy-related choices as neutral, men and women are affected differently by energy policies at home and in the workplace as their roles differ. The audit set out to identify gaps in the policy preparation, formulation and planning stages that will hamper the achievement of the gender-related goals and objectives as laid down in the draft energy policy.

The issues audited were:

- Availability of gender-related energy statistics.
- Organisational management and awareness, and gender mainstreaming in energy-related programmes.
- Gender perspectives in the Botswana Draft Energy Policy.
- Resource mobilisation for gender- and energy-related policies and programmes.
- The role of gender and energy in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The exercise has shown that gender auditing the energy policy can lead to an expansion of the scope in addressing the national energy access agenda. In the absence of relevant gender and energy case studies in the country, the audits are seen as a starting point in creating awareness in policymakers. The outcome of the audit is a comprehensive set of recommendations which, if followed, would contribute to gender mainstreaming in the Botswana energy sector.

Analysis of energy sector statistics and gender mainstreaming

The main outcomes of the statistical analysis are that female-headed households are generally poorer than those headed by men, and are less likely to have access to electricity or to take out loans for the installation of a PV system. In male-headed households, it was found that women have little decision-making power when it comes to grid-connectivity, despite being the main users of energy within the household. Women are more involved in decisions made on fuelwood collection, an activity which has become far more time consuming in recent years, with



One of the Rural Industries Innovation Centre energy programmes visited during the audits. (Photo: Nozipho Wright, BOTEC, Botswana)

the average rising from 2.3 hours in 1995 to 3.3 hours in 2000. Few females are employed in energy-related organisations: only 5% of the workforce in the four major energy organisations in the country are women.

Although disparities still exist, Botswana has been making progress over the last ten years towards achieving gender-balance in decision-making positions in both public and private sectors. More women can be found in parliament and the cabinet today, and while only 12% of the permanent secretaries in the public sector were women in 1995, this had increased to more than 30% in 2003. Many women, however, can be found in middle management positions.

Ninety percent of the energy organisations interviewed did not have any gender structures, or gender mainstreaming policies, plans and programmes in place. The Energy Affairs Division (EAD), and to some extent the Department of Vocational Education and Training, had taken positive steps to meaningfully mainstream gender in their policies as well as establish structures and indicators to ensure the incorporation of gender concerns. This could be used as an example to promote gender mainstreaming in energy organisations.

Further findings indicate that most organisations do not have any gender analysis and mainstreaming skills. Over 90% of the staff interviewed across all the organisations had never undergone any training on gender awareness or gender mainstreaming. Officials interviewed had a general understanding of gender as a concept but lacked the ability to incorporate gender when planning policies and programmes. Most of the respondents were willing to improve their knowledge and skills through gender training so as to be able to effectively mainstream gender in their policies and programmes.

The Botswana Draft Energy Policy

The Ministry of Minerals, Energy and Water Resources (MMWR), through the EAD, has developed a draft energy policy to address the challenges faced and provide direction for future developments in the energy sector. This draft energy policy has a specific objective on gender: to facilitate gender equity. Through this objective, the policymakers are seeking to address women's and girls' needs in the policy. Although the draft energy policy does not have strategies on how different policy objectives would be achieved, it acknowledges that women have to travel far in search of fuelwood for cooking, a burden that could be reduced through increased access to energy services and to an extent also to alternative energy sources.

The policy formulation process was preceded by mini-workshops involving stakeholders from the demand and supply sectors. Seventy-two percent of the 61 stakeholders participating in all the mini-workshops were male. Four-fifths of these stakeholders were engineers and 20% were planners, with little involvement of gender experts. It was noted that the process used to formulate the current policy lacked direct consultation with households, in particular with women who are the major users and managers of domestic energy fuels. Gender aspects were added to the draft policy at the request of the Cabinet indicating that the Government is conscious about, and committed to, addressing gender issues in its policies and programmes.

The audit highlighted the importance of bringing the different energy needs of men and women to the attention of policymakers and planners, especially when planning and implementing household energy programmes. These programmes could then reach out to everyone including the poor in the urban and rural areas, many of whom are women, and thereby increase their access to modern and improved energy services.

Budgetary allocations for gender and energy

The purpose of allocating budgets to gender- and energy-related policies and programmes is to cultivate, promote and support such policies and programmes at three levels:

- policy formulation level, where resources are needed for creating awareness within government and for formulating relevant national policies;
- strategic level, for building institutional capacity and capability;
- operational level, to implement and sustain policies and programmes.

The purpose of the audit was to determine the extent of the linkage between expenditure and budgets on the one hand and energy and gender on the other. The results show that the budgets for energy projects supervised by EAD between 2000-01 and 2004-05 were P34 million for coal and petroleum development, and P391 million² or renewable energy and power development. These budgets were allocated to promote the development of energy sources for socioeconomic development and social equity - and did not specifically address gender-related needs.

It was necessary to extend the audit exercise to other sectors not directly under EAD for two reasons: first to determine the current penetration of gender policies and programmes in government budgets and expenditures, and second to identify leverage points for policy intervention. The expenditure and budgets of the other key ministries reviewed, notably the Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Labour and Home Affairs, and Finance and Development Planning, indicate no or very limited linkage between energy and gender.

The audit shows that financial resource data are not disaggregated in terms of gender at the higher levels of decision- and policy-making, and that there is a lack of financial resources to support gender programmes and policies. The audit also revealed a lack of association at the institutional level between energy services, sustainable development and efforts to achieve the MDGs in the various sectors and public organisations.

Suggested strategies for bridging the gender and energy gap in Botswana

Based on the gender audits of the energy policy, the following ten strategies are recommended:

- EAD needs to ensure that future surveys present clear situations with regard to disparities between male and female performance in the energy sector and in access to modern energy services.
- EAD, in collaboration with the Women's Affairs Department (WAD), civil society organisations and training institutions should develop an

institutional capacity-building programme involving gender-training programmes for all energy-related institutions.

- Promotion of gender planning, awareness and mainstreaming in energy-related organisations in order to develop long-term gender-sensitive policies and programmes.
- WAD should advocate and request through Cabinet that all departments put in place an institutional structure, i.e. gender committees, gender units and focal officers, with direct responsibility for mainstreaming gender in planning and policy initiatives.
- Civil society organisations, in collaboration with community structures, should sensitise the public to the need to transform negative customary practices and attitudes that affect the education and career choices of girls and boys.
- Mainstream gender in the education curricula at all levels of the education system and train teachers on gender-sensitive language and concepts.
- Lobby, advocate and influence policymakers and other stakeholders to collectively support gender mainstreaming in energy policy and programmes.
- Formulate a policy whose goal is to establish a sustainable funding strategy to support gender-responsive programmes, and develop a strategy for achieving the energy access policy goal through the allocation of public budgets for mainstreaming gender in energy.
- Increase the linkages between gender, the provision of modern energy services and attainment of the MDGs, and in particular target the health, education, agriculture and commercial sectors since most of the MDGs are closely related to improvements in these sectors.
- The current education policy and related strategies should be strengthened by integrating energy services into the infrastructure development concepts and into teaching aids requirements. The education and health sectors, especially in rural areas, are affected by a lack of energy services.

It is believed that the above recommendations, if implemented, would contribute to enhancing the process of gender mainstreaming in energy policies and programmes. By following this path, the energy disparities between men and women would be narrowed by increasing women's access to modern energy services and technologies. ■

This article draws extensively on the report 'Gender Audit of Energy Policies and Programmes: The Case Study of Botswana', to which Peter Zhuo, Elsie Alexander, Masego Kealotswe, Nathan Tlhalerwa, Andrew Obok Opok, Leonard Dikobe and Irene Ramatala greatly contributed.



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1 More on the TIE-ENERGIA programme can be found on page 7 of this issue of ENERGIA News.

2 At the time of the research, the exchange rate of the Pula was P5.3 = 1 USD