

Women in Energy

Gender and Energy Network of Swaziland

Case study 2009



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ENERGIA International Network on
Gender and Sustainable Energy



REASWA

*Renewable Energy
Association of Swaziland*

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Main Heading

Tinhlumaya Rice Robin's Rice

Ingredients

1 cup cooked tinhlumaya
 3 cups rice
 1 medium onion
 1 large garlic glove
 5tbsp olive oil
 2 level tsp paprika

Method

Parboil or cover rice with boiling water for 1 hour. Chop and fry onion in oil. Add garlic, paprika, tinhlumaya and salt. Drain the rice and add it to the tinhlumaya. Add a little water at a time to avoid burning. Stirring should be done with a fork to allow for loose grains.



Swaziland Electricity Company (SEC)

✦ Being entrusted with a huge budget to manage

✦ Being complemented by customers for ideas put forward and this proves that customers have gained confidence in me and the kind of work I'm capable of doing

Being able to motivate the staff that I work with which then has translated to improved performance.



Are you familiar with the country's gender, energy and development issues?

No, I didn't know that we have these kinds of useful structures in Swaziland and I very much would like to undergo training about the links between gender and energy. This training will empower me and may open doors for other women as well.

How do you as a woman balance this enormous amount of work with your role as a wife and mother?

It is difficult to balance the work I do with family needs but I am able to achieve this through my spiritual belief in God as well as the support that I get from my mother, my husband and my spiritual parents. Many times you have to weigh the needs of customers and family. My work being a male dominated field really doesn't leave to rush home whenever you feel there is a need to go home. Sometimes I am forced to work late, so it's a juggling act.

What can you tell women wishing to enter this sector? Any words of encouragement?

✦ We have a special skill as women, that of being able to multitask. There are so many opportunities in this field for women to make their mark.

✦ Sometimes we hard hit by the energy crisis, even though this field is male dominated, but having women does help solve problems that we come across. We have the same thinking capacity as men; therefore we should be able to do the work that is associated with men.

Introduction

Women and men have different roles and responsibilities according to socially defined division of labour based on gender. In terms of reproductive roles or activities, women have the primary responsibility for the care and feeding of children and families as well as health care and education. In terms of productive activities, it is the women who perform most of the work related to subsistence agriculture, plus the gathering and managing of fuel and water. These productive activities are often unpaid and labour intensive.

Beyond the home, energy is also a key productive asset. Many women are engaged in activities such as food processing, commercial vegetable growing, and sewing. All these are greatly facilitated by the availability of energy and can significantly improve a woman's economic standing, consequently, the standard of living in her household.

The last few decades have seen a growing recognition of the need to incorporate a gender perspective into energy planning in order to both promote greater equality between men and women and to ensure a more sustainable use of resources. Increasingly, policy documents and statements refer to the need to ensure gender interests are taken into account. According to the National energy Policy, the livelihoods of most people in rural areas depend on the availability of energy resources, primarily wood fuel. The effects of the shortage of wood fuel resources affect women more than it affects men, since wood fuel collection is primarily a woman's job.

Beyond the home, energy is also a key productive asset. Many women are engaged in activities such as food processing, commercial vegetable growing, and sewing. All these are greatly facilitated by the availability of energy and can significantly improve a woman's economic standing, consequently, the standard of living in her household.

The Gender and Energy Network of Swaziland (GENS) has developed this case study brochure with the aim of encouraging women to enter the energy sector.

Women United - Distributors of Fuel

The energy sector provides a suitable environment to engage oneself in business. One such example is a company named Women United, which is entirely owned by women. An interview was conducted with the Manager and Director of Women United, Mrs. Mary Vilakazi.

Women United is a business idea that was developed by a group of women. Can you describe how the idea came about?

Women United was formed in 2004, when Royal Dutch Shell Petroleum Company was seeking a group of organized women to work as agents for the distribution of paraffin. The idea was proposed to a group of women who initially called themselves Kukhanya Kwelunyati. Some of the women fell for the idea but some refused to because initially Kukhanya Kwelunyati was supposed to conduct business on property. Therefore some women preferred not to be involved in this kind of business, leaving the organization with 20 women who were willing to explore this new kind of business. These women are of a diverse professional background. Thus Women United was born. The remaining women then contributed an amount of E20 000 each as a form of capital to establish the business. They were provided with a truck for transporting fuel and a car in order to facilitate easy running of the business.



What services does your business offer?

We are distributors of paraffin and diesel.

What made you want to get into this sector (energy)?

We were able to establish that once you have the capital, the product is already available. The market is already available as well. Another

Swaziland Electricity Company (SEC)

electricity and the 70% is imported from Eskom in South Africa and EDM in Mozambique.

What are your future plans and where do you see yourself in the next 5-10 years?

- ✦ to climb the ladder and be on a more influential role and be able to sell the company's vision to all employees
 - ✦ be in a position to make company operations much more efficient. If company operations are more efficient then it will lead to reduced electricity prices.
- To import experience from other countries and be able to apply it in our countries and also to keep pace with other countries

This is typically a man's field. What made you want to get into this sector (energy)?

While I was at school there was an exercise by the ministry of Education to encourage girls to enter the science and technology sector which played a huge role in shaping my career focus. While I was at school I found engineering fascinating and also had a positive influence in my life from people around me who were engineers as well.

What challenges have you come across as a woman in such a male dominated sector?

- ✦ Given a team of 17 men to manage, I have to convince them that I know what I am doing so that they are able to trust me and also encouraging them that we have to work together in order to deliver.
- ✦ Being a woman means you have to work twice as hard to get half the recognition a male counterpart would get. Some customers don't even take you seriously, at times they would come to the office to confirm that the person in my position really is a woman and this then leads to us women having the pressure to deliver.

What have been your most rewarding moments (achievements)?

Being a pioneer for being in a leadership position on the highly technical field. It is a door opener for other women at SEC.

Swaziland Electricity Company (SEC)

Could you give us a brief sketch of your professional and educational background?

I have a B-Tech in Power Engineering obtained from Tswane University of Technology (TUT) as well as a national Diploma in Electrical Engineering obtained from Durban University of Technology (DUT).



What is your Professional Background

I joined the Swaziland Electricity Company as a trainee technician in 1998. In 1999 I went for training in which I obtained a National Diploma at the DUT. I came back from training and in 2003 I became Power Systems controller and was mainly responsible for coordinating the imported power and that generated locally, coordination of high voltage operations as well as monitoring power conditions. In 2005 I went to study again and obtained a B-tech in power Reengineering at TUT and came back to work for SEC after completing my studies in 2006. In 2009 I was promoted into a more leadership role where I became Branch superintendent in which I am responsible for monitoring both technical and administrative work.

What is your typical day like?

On a daily basis I manage and direct the teams I work with, work that include review of customer quotations, manage those who do connections, directing teams that maintain power network. I assist in correcting faults, do consultations with key customers as well as site visits. Administrative work includes managing a huge budget.

Briefly describe the history of SEC mentioning the services offered by the organization as well.

SEC is a company that looks at the country's power needs. We generate, transmit and distribute electricity. We generate only 30% of the

Women United

thing that gave us encouragement was the ability to service consumers at a small scale.

What challenges have you come across as a women in such a male dominated sector?

We have a challenge more especially in dealing with some males, the feel this kind of business is not suitable for women. Some customers ask for discounts and would us that we are making a lot of profit; therefore we can afford to give those discounts. Also some customers take very long to pay because they also have challenges, so this leads to late delivery of our services to our loyal customers. Marketing of the company and service delivery has been a challenge as well.

Stick to the principles of business

What have been your most rewarding moments (achievements)?

Seeing the growth of the company in terms of our clientele and profit. In 2008 we were able to share dividends for the first time in our business, an indicator that the company is growing. We have bought our own property and we are preparing to move out of the leased premises into our own premises. The company has its own car now instead of the one that was being leased to us by Shell (our supplier).

What do you understand about the link between gender and energy

Some women do not understand the challenges that we face in this kind of business as most males feel it is not a sector suitable for women. Women limit themselves; therefore there is a need to educate both men and women on gender and energy. I would also like to undergo any training provided on gender and energy links.

What can you say to encourage women to enter the energy sector?

It is very important to exercise patience for customers to pay, then you can start enjoying the benefits. It is also not always that you need loans to establish a business. Sometimes you can start small, be patient and stick to the principles of business and do not compromise.

GTZ- PROBEC

Briefly describe the history of your organization as well as the services you offer in Swaziland.

The organization was established 10 years ago and it was funded by the German and Norwegian Implementing agency GTZ. Its main aim is to assist low income earning groups in a few SADC countries with improved access to sustainable and affordable energy. In Swaziland the organization assists energy efficiency technology business in promoting their technologies, training, and general business management as well as the improvement of existing businesses. Another service offered is the testing of the efficiency of existing technologies.



Could you give us a sketch of your educational and professional background?

I am currently pursuing a Masters Degree in Public Policy and Management at the University of London. I hold a Bachelors Degree in Mathematics and Environmental Sciences from the University of Swaziland and was involved in the establishment of REASWA office, as well as work for Yonge Nawe Action Group. I have also worked for FAO where my responsibilities included budget tracking, monitoring as well as the execution of projects.

What made you want to get into this sector (energy)?

The work that I do is not really technical but mainly project management which anyone can do, though I am able to easily grasp the technical part of my work. We partner with other agencies which do the more technical bits of work.

What challenges have you come across as a woman in such a male dominated sector?

Because this is a highly technical field, the men that are doing the technical work think you as a woman do not know anything if you do not know the technical bit of things. They tend to think in a box, for

Natural Resources

How do you as a woman balance this enormous amount of work with your role as a wife and mother?

It's difficult because I have a challenging job which means sometimes attending workshops and work late and I am also studying at the same time. It requires good time management. I have a very supportive family. You have to have that will and diligence to be able to manage.

There are high gender imbalances hence women have been marginalized

Would you be interested in any training on gender and Energy?

Yes! There are a lot of aspects to gender and energy that what I currently know

What can you tell women wishing to enter this sector? Any words of encouragement

- ✦ Go for it! Women should not look at it as only technical there are plenty of other professions that make the sector
- ✦ There is a need for women in this sector and there are lots of interesting things with lots of opportunities for growth and it is a highly paying sector as well.

We should not see barriers anymore. We can do anything we put our mind to.

Natural Resources

government sector and women are not allowed to wear pants. It is also difficult to grow within this sector and the respect is according to your marital status, you get more respect when you are married.

What have been your most rewarding moments (achievements)?

I had an opportunity to participate in the World Energy Youth Programme held in Rome in 2007 and here a lot of issues relating to the energy sector worldwide were deliberated. It proved a good forum to have your issues heard. Being chosen to manage very important (key projects) within our organization as well as being involved in the formulation of legislation that will govern the petroleum.



Are you familiar with the country's gender, energy and development issues?

There is a very strong move to involve women in the energy sector. There are gender imbalances in this country hence women have been marginalized in terms of energy services, for example, a majority of those that use biomass are women. The country is slowly working towards being gender balanced. For development to take place women cannot be segregated.

What do you understand about the link between gender and energy?

There is a very strong link especially in the developing countries. Women are responsible for the collection of biomass fuel at home. Women have to even walk for longer distances in search of firewood due to deforestation. In urban households most of the energy is being used by women. This is because of the nature of their responsibilities in the household.

example if something doesn't work they think it failed because you have not done your research. Most of the men seem to think energy does not belong to the environment they think the energy sector should be purely dominated by engineers. They do not want to include the environmental and social aspects which exist in energy.

What have been your most rewarding moments (achievements)?

Initiating partnerships with several local agencies at no cost with no expectations of being paid as well as the active involvement of leaders and officers. Another achievement was realizing the linkages between mandates of various agencies, (collaboration with partners)

What do you understand about the link between gender and energy?

There is a strong link because energy basically affects women because of their responsibilities at home. It becomes difficult to source energy, for example for child headed household and the disabled. Energy touches on the lives of all people and ages and people living with different disabilities.

Aim— improved access to sustainable energy

How do you as a woman balance this enormous amount of work with your role as a wife and mother?

It is very difficult, what makes it manageable is that I have a good housekeeper who helps me take care of my child. I can hardly fit everything into my schedule. I must admit that I have not mastered it more especially being a married African woman. Your mandate stretches beyond your immediate family to your in-laws. You have to take care of both families and it is a huge responsibility.

What can you tell women wishing to enter this sector?

Women should not only think of the energy sector as only a technical field. There are social and developmental aspects to energy as well. Joining efforts or partnering with people who have technical expertise help achieve our goals. The society responds better to issues that have been declared a disaster. As long as energy or the environment is not declared they'll always be looked down upon.

Edladleni (in the kitchen) with Dolores

Joy Rocky Emasi Cheese Cake

Ingredients

500g emasi
 450ml Carnation Cream
 1 pkt lemon jelly
 4 spoons castor sugar
 6 spoons lemon juice
 250g margarine
 1 pkt digestive biscuits
 1 pkt ginger biscuits

Method

Grease 18 X 30 cm dish with margarine. Refrigerate a can of carnation cream. Add lemon and castor sugar to emasi. Chill. Prepare jelly as per instructions. Place in fridge. Crush the biscuits and mix in melted margarine. Pat into greased pan. Gently whisk the carnation cream. Pour cream into emasi mixture. Mix in set jelly and pour over the crushed biscuits. Chill till set.



Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy

Could you give us a brief sketch of your professional and educational background?

I currently hold a BSC in Chemical Engineering which I obtained from the University of Cape Town (UCT). I joined the Ministry of Natural resources and Energy (MNRE) in 2005 as a fuel analyst in one of the projects that was being conducted by MNRE. My responsibilities included sampling and analysis of fuel sites (petroleum) in order to safeguard against fuel adulteration and illegal importation. later that year I joined the ministry full time as an Energy Officer in the petroleum inspection unit. My responsibilities included monitoring and setting up a fuel laboratory and I obtained a certificate and currently I am pursuing a master's degree in environmental management.

What is your typical day like?

Implementation of projects, mostly involving interacting with stakeholders therefore it involves a lot of communication, checking what needs to be done based on project plans. Can also involve going to the field, the laboratory, report writing and seating in meetings, briefing with the department as well as stakeholder meetings

Briefly describe the services offered by your organization.

Regulating the energy industry, that is, electricity, petroleum and renewables. With petroleum it involves quality testing as well as the designation of oil companies. Information provision on energy.

What made you want to get into this sector (energy)?

I am the kind of person who likes a challenge. Since joining the energy sector I have also developed a passion for the sector since energy is the centre of life.

What challenges have you come across as a woman in such a male dominated sector?

This is a technical, hands on field sometimes you have to wear overalls. Getting your opinion heard has proved a challenge because Swaziland is a cultured nation where usually women are view a minority. I feel that I have to prove myself ten times more than men. I work in a

Edladleni (in the kitchen) with Dolores

Sinkhwa Sembila— Traditional Fresh Meallie Bread

Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh green mealies
- Water or Milk
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup self raising flour
- 2 tbsp sugar

Method

Peel, shell and grind the mealies. Save the cobs and some of the inner leaves.

Lay cobs at the bottom of the pot and bring to boil.

Take ground mealies and add your dry ingredients. Mix well to form a dough using milk or water. Mould dough into parcels and place on the mealie leaves.

Lay them over the mealie cobs and close the pot. Allow to cook for 1 hour.



New Dawn Engineering

We talked to Mrs Thabsile Shongwe who is sales manager for New Dawn Engineering. This is company that was established in the 1970's by Crispin Pemberton-Piggott, an engineer. The company manufactures technologies such as fuel efficient stoves, oil refining machine, technologies for making peanut butter, fences as well as roof tiles.

What is your typical day like?

Well I have been with this company for seven years, therefore, I am responsible for carrying out administrative duties, sales as well as facilitating demonstration of technologies.

**The vision
was to make
energy
technologies
affordable**

What services does your business offer?

We are the manufacturers and distributors of technologies, such as fuel efficient stoves, cash boxes (safe) to be used by women cooperatives in the rural areas, and a whole range of technologies such as peanut butter making machines, roof tile making machines, as well as machines for making fences.

Briefly describe the history of New Dawn Engineering. How the organization was formed?

New Dawn Engineering was established in the 1970's by Crispin Pemberton-Piggott, an engineer who was at that time working in the Swaziland Water Services Corporation (SWSC). He started putting together technologies using wood and later on moved into using steel in his designs. To date a lot of these technologies have been produced for a number of organizations. The vision for the founders of the company was to make energy technologies available to consumers at affordable prices. Such technologies include cash boxes (safe) which are used by women societies in rural communities, fuel efficient stoves, oil refining machine, technologies for making peanut butter, fences as well as roof tiles.

Where do you see New Dawn Engineering in the next 5 - 10 years?

I must say that we have already put together strategies for the future which are already in place. These should help in promoting energy efficiency through the use of our technologies. We aim at increasing our market for the technologies that we currently offer taking into account that we are the only manufactures in Swaziland. We want to promote these technologies and then it will lead to the increase in sales and success of the business.



What made you want to get into this sector (energy)?

I am a person who has a person for learning new things. As much as the energy sector is a technical field through the passion and drive to learn more, I have learned the technical bits that are conducted in the company. I also realized that this is an opportunity for me to work with different individuals and organizations and since then I have become exposed to different situations and I have gained more knowledge about the field.

What have been your most rewarding moments (achievements)?

Receiving support from local NGO's such as World Vision, NERCHA and others. The manufacturing of cash boshes has contributed to the prosperity of women in the rural areas as they are able to make investments and save their money even when they are located far away from banks. The recognition that Swaziland gets through the manufacturing of technologies that can only be found at New Dawn Engineering

Are you familiar with the country's gender, energy and development issues?

Yes, we also been involved with training workshops on gender that were hosted by REASWA as we have been equipped with knowledge on issues of gender in the energy sector that I am able to share with other people.

What do you understand about the link between gender and energy?

The technologies that we manufacture are used by both women and men we have to make them suitable for the use by both. For example when manufacturing fuel efficient stoves we have to take into consideration that they are mainly used by women and since they have a huge responsibility of taking care of the household, these technologies should help ease that burden.

Would you be interested in any training on gender and Energy?

Yes



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