Rural Energy Agency Initiatives in Mainstreaming Gender in the Delivery of Modern Energy Services to Rural Areas

Grace C. Mathew
Rural Energy Agency
Electrification status around the country
Energy Situation in Tanzania

**Access:**
- Less than 15% of the country has access to electricity. In rural areas, modern energy access is about 2%.

**Consumption:**
- Estimated total energy consumption 22 mil tones of oil equivalent.
- Rural energy consumption makes up to 85% of the total national energy consumption.
- Per capita electricity consumption: 100 KWh (versus 500 KWh required for quality life).
The reasons for setting up the REA

- An attempt to improve the modern energy services provision and access in rural areas. To accelerate economic empowerment in rural areas.
- Social standing, economic muscle of women especially in rural areas is weak, energy use in cooking and heating leading to health risks and environmental degradation.
- The Government of Tanzania has been trying to address the situation of women in the country by putting in place various policies to improve the standing of women in general (e.g. 30 women in Parliament through special seats, Ministry of Community Development, Women and Children, other policies include some address to gender issues).
About REA - the Tanzania Rural Energy Agency

- REA is an autonomous body established under the Rural Energy Act No 8. of 2005
- The Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MEM) oversees the activities of REA
- REA’s scope is to promote and facilitate improved access to modern energy services in rural areas
- REA is funded through government budgetary allocation, levy on electricity and Development Partners like the World Bank and SIDA.
- REA often works as a facilitator to bring together project collaborators/champions, financing, and technical expertise to lead to innovation in service delivery.
Gender Aspects in Rural Energy

- Men and women often have very different energy needs and energy access. For instance, women are often executing some of the most time intensive tasks - tasks which are made much more efficient with energy services.

- Examples of how energy access can have different impacts for men and women:
  - **Household use:**
    - Access to affordable, modern fuels is essential for cooking, heating and food-processing that does not rely on biomass (smoke emissions, gathering time) – essentially for helping women move up the energy ladder
    - Women’s economic empowerment through small enterprise often takes place in the home (beer-brewing, food processing, pottery) – therefore are part of household energy use.
  - **Lighting:**
    - Improved lighting can increase women's literacy, education, income-earning options, security in public spaces
  - **Water Pumping:**
    - Water gathering is often women’s responsibility – burdens time, strength, limits agricultural productivity, decreases sanitation, reduces food preparation abilities
  - **Transportation:**
    - Without transportation services, it can take more time and energy to refill fuel and water; other activities requiring travel have higher opportunity costs
  - **Information and Communication:**
    - Where women operate largely in the domestic sphere, radio and television can be key for keeping them informed about community decisions, activities, programs, etc
Goals for Gender Mainstreaming in REA’s Energy Activities

- Benefits of a gender responsive approach:
  - Improving access to energy services can greatly improve health and welfare;
  - Provision of reliable and affordable energy services for household cooking will contribute to gender equality and women empowerment;
  - Reduce labor and increase access to non-polluting lighting, cooking; Increase access to other household and productive technologies;
  - Improve how gender policies and programs respond to the needs of both men and women.
Operationalizing the Gender Sensitive Approach

• How to meaningfully integrate gender into Rural Energy Access?
  • There is a need to mainstream gender during planning and implementation of projects.
  • Accessibility and affordability are key to make innovation have impact.
  • Must be coupled with other efficiency technologies, so as to not just extend the workday w/o improving efficiency.
AFREA/REA Gender and Energy Initiative

- With support from AFREA, a Gender and Energy strategy is being designed to support gender mainstreaming in the Rural Energy Agency in Tanzania.
- A brief gender and energy training was organized in October, 2010, and after this, REA and the World Bank collaborated to initially identify challenges and opportunities for gender mainstreaming in REA.
A tentative action plan has been designed to promote gender mainstreaming in REA activities:

1. **Gender Baseline Assessment:** An initial baseline assessment and ‘gender audit’ of REA is proposed in order to identify:
   - Obstacles and opportunities for integration of gender issues into REA operations, currently – including capacity issues, management and accountability issues, human resources issues, etc.
   - Specific opportunities for mainstreaming gender into specific projects being facilitated by REA
   - The gender dimensions of energy use and needs at the village level
   - Indicators for identifying success in mainstreaming gender into project activities.
   - This activity would also include a stocktaking of the resource persons, trainers, and training centers with knowledge of gender and energy, and/or experience in conducting gender and energy trainings in Tanzania.
AFREA/REA Gender and Energy Initiative

- REA has been involved in capacity building activities for rural energy entrepreneurs/developers, where both Women and Men take part: Example.
  - Preparation of Business Plans
  - Production of charcoal briquettes
  - Construction of efficient Charcoal Kilns
  - Basic knowledge on Solar Energy/Power
  - Knowledge on maintenance of SHP plants
  - Fabrication of efficient cooking stoves to include:
    - Improved firewood stoves
    - Improved charcoal stoves

- However, the turn-up of women during capacity building sessions is still questionable.
As part of the gender mainstreaming approach, REA will work to mainstream gender into these capacity building activities.

In addition, based on the findings from the baseline assessment, a **Capacity Building Component** will include additional support for:

- Capacity building activities for all staff on Gender and Energy, for technicians, and specifically on M&E.
- In addition, training will be developed for project developers, so that they are aware of gender dimensions of energy.
- Based on the needs identified in the baseline assessment, capacity building activities will also be organized for a gender focal point/gender desk staff, to enable him/her to support the rest of REA staff on gender mainstreaming issues.
AFREA/REA Gender and Energy Initiative

3. Development of tools and M&E framework for Gender in REA. Based on the outputs from the baseline assessment, the following will be developed:
   - Specific tools and guidance notes related to gender mainstreaming
   - A monitoring and evaluation strategy for REA as an organization as well as for specific projects.
Proposed Next Step

- To formulate a centralized gender strategy, which would help ensure mainstreaming of gender issues across the Agency
- To have a dedicated focal point to which staff/developers can address questions and requests with regards to gender mainstreaming
- To establish specific tools/checklists for gender mainstreaming, for all phases of project development, to help ensure that gender is uniformly included in activities.
Thank you for listening