The Energy Sector:  
Women’s last frontier?

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The Energy Sector – an exciting place to work

- Female employment in the Electricity, Gas and Steam, and Water – 50% of male employment
- Mainly administration and customer payments
- Sector with representative face of (white) male 50+ in suit
- Engineering requires physical work ‘not suitable for women’
Does it matter?

**For women:**
- Gender equity
- Women's personal fulfilment
- Women's economic empowerment → transformations in gender roles and relations

Does it matter?

**For companies:**
- Not tapping into a pool of talent
- Company with women on its board outperforms their rivals
- Teams that include women are found to make better business decisions
- Woman may be able to sell more effectively to other women
- Access to potential female clients is not hindered by social constraints
Does it matter?

**For government/society:**
- women tend to invest their assets in their families and communities
GENDER ASSESSMENT EU NON-NUCLEAR & NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGS

Research in 2001 within Europe

- research by women: women researchers and as activists in energy.
- research for women: women’s energy priorities - what are they and are they different to men’s?
- research on women: women as energy professionals
do women experience different career problems to their male counterparts?

Findings

- There was little gender awareness amongst Commission staff
- Gender wasn’t seen as an issue for research in energy (here the South has been much more progressive!)
- Small number of women as lead applicants
- Female applicants lacked proposal writing skills and networks
- Including women is tokenistic
Findings

- Private sector was more gender aware (at least in recruitment)
- ENEQO Project supported by EC 4th Action Programme on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men
- Electricity Industry Personnel Managers concerned about EI male image - barrier to recruiting young m/f professionals

ENEQO

- Women positive asset to work force
- Different skills – different (=better) work environment
- Awareness raising – promoting benefits of a diverse work force (not only gender)
What does (n’t) work - Canada

- Quotas don’t work
- Putting the responsibility on management not on women
- In context of diversity in society should reflect in employment

- What produces a shift in seeing women as a +ve asset?
  A shortage of men!

Some progress within EC (but not all my own work!)……...

- Initial evaluations of proposals now done on-line (addresses problem of child care)
- Gender as a topic for investigation within the human dimension of the energy system
- Network established
- Women are taking the initiative in local energy initiatives eg Saerbecke
Is it any better working for yourself?

Experience of woman engineer own consultancy company

Clients usually men, who often hesitate before accepting that her as professionally competent

“Every new customer or colleague treats me like a beginner, a male colleague of my age would never have to defend his competence.”

“More often than necessary, I have to explain why I am working in this ‘exotic non-female field’.”

A VIEW FROM THE SOUTH
ENERGIA Gender Mainstreaming in Energy Projects

- ENERGIA is international network on Gender and Sustainable Energy (established 1995)
- Phase IV (2007-2012) 19 energy projects supported to mainstream gender
- Asia and Africa – biogas, stoves, rural electrification, micro-hydro
Having a tool box

- Knowing where to start and how to do it
- ENERGIA & World Bank AFREA both have tool kits to assist at each stage of project cycle
- Aim to build capacity to mainstream gender in their policies, programmes and practices
Getting started

The preparation and adoption of Gender Action Plans, with clear gender goals, activities, indicators and M&E framework
- to improve women’s welfare, income generation and empowerment
- to involve women in the operation, installation and maintenance of technologies
- gender-sensitive training and promotion material
- ensure women’s participation in project activities.

Gender Organisational Assessment

- Good entry point – by a consultant
- Awareness raising – staff in general
- Formulate a Gender Action Plan
- Basis for proposal to the Board
- Design a training programme
- Remember mainstreaming is not a one-off
- Also conduct GOA for partner organisations
Tanzania Rural Energy Agency

- Organisational Assessment
- levels of understanding, attitudes, perceptions, capacity building needs, supporting tools, and commitments of senior management and all staff towards gender mainstreaming
- Questionnaire (22 out of 27 returned)
- 19 Face to face interviews – key staff from each department

Findings

- Gender mainstreaming = number of women participating
- Lack of clear targets and indicators
- High level commitment (Board level) is needed
- Staff were aware of ‘gender’ as an ‘issue’ – even if understanding wasn’t good
- Staff need to be more gender aware – training and guidelines needed
- Gender unit or embedding in each department?
What’s this got to do with Northern Utilities?

- Globalisation – looking for new markets
- Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE) – is required to mainstream gender in all parts of its operation eg Liberia
  Had to have its capacity built to do this

Concluding remarks

- Gender mainstreaming in the energy sector is seen more as ‘something for the South’
- In Northern energy organisations – diversity in work force might be easier entry point
- Often it’s a problem of not knowing how to do it
- Having a clear gender goal is key in the South – it isn’t essential to focus on women’s empowerment (creates resistance)
THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

(SPECIAL THANKS TO SOMA DUTTA, ENERGIA INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT FOR SOME OF THE SLIDES)