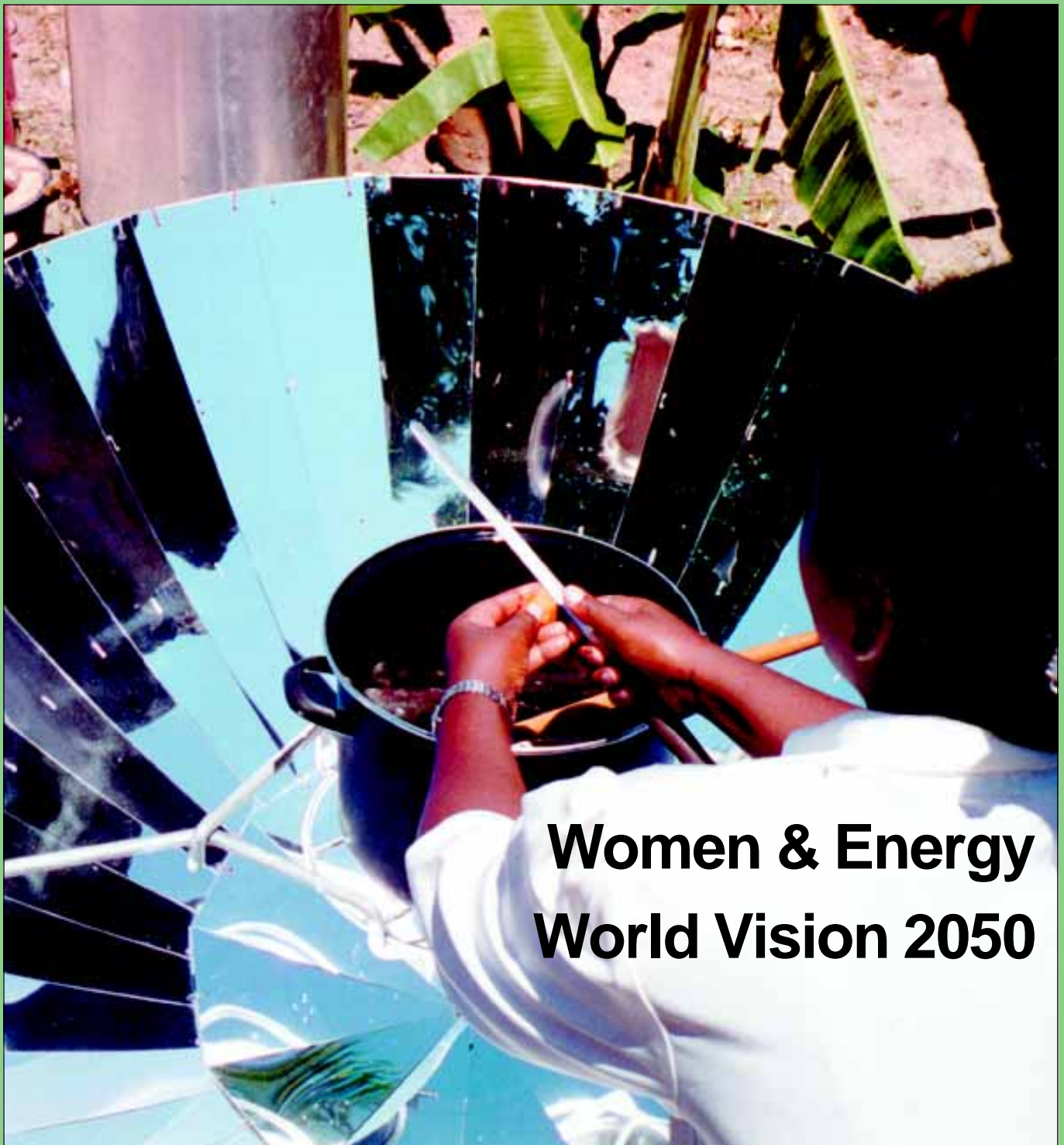


SUSTAINABLE ENERGY NEWS

Newsletter for **INFORSE** International Network for Sustainable Energy.

No. 32, February 2001



**Women & Energy
World Vision 2050**

Contact list World 2001 - Europe included

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Photo on the front page:
Solar Cooker evaluated by an
Ethiopian woman.
Photo: GTZ / ENERGIA
See articles of the "Women and
Energy" Theme on pages 4-10.

Let Women Have A Say, Too !

It Would Matter !

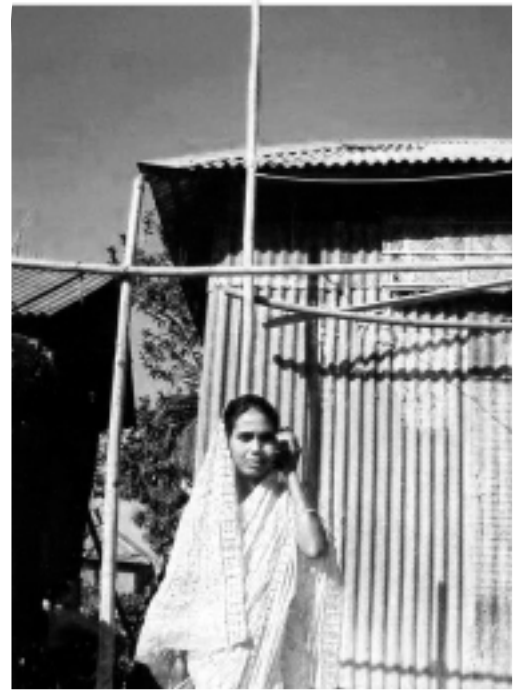


Women and men have different experiences with energy use, stemming from their different roles and different priorities. While women are the main users in and around the households, the men often control the types of energy used, via decisions from the household level to the formulation of national energy policy. Many of these decisions do not reflect the best interests of the female users or of families in general.

Where should the PV-powered lamp be placed? Men prefer it at the entrance where they chat; women want it in the back, where they cook. Who decides? This is a simple choice, which shows in small part of the problem. -

Look around; who are the decision-makers around you and in your national energy sector? Who are the ones that steer society towards increased centralised unsustainable energy supply rather than schemes to meet demands with end-use efficiency and local solutions? Men or women? Almost all men, - and more and more so, the higher you go in the hierarchy.

Would the world's energy supply be different if women were equally involved in decision-making? Would there be more solar and wind energy used, and fewer health and environmental problems connected to energy use? Would nuclear power have been phased out by now?

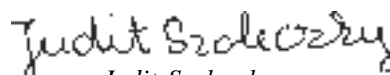


Yes, we hope so. There are growing numbers of women calling for more responsible management of resources leading to a sustainable future. Women have many and various kinds of knowledge and experience of energy through their traditional and non-traditional roles. Probable, our resources could be better managed, if women's knowledge influenced the relevant decisions.

For the first time, Sustainable Energy News focuses on "women and energy". We hope it will inspire men and women alike to get more women more involved and to give them more leverage in energy choices! Energy-related issues affect the future prospects of families as well as of national economies.

We must listen to and understand those who use and suffer from the present energy system; use this understanding when we organise the shift to sustainable energy technologies. In this process, women must be more engaged in the development of technologies and in decision-making at all levels.

In this issue you can also see an energy supply vision for 2050. I, personally, would like to see a world powered by sun and wind energy no later than 2025. A world in which our daughters and sons participate equally in decision-making and household tasks.


Judith Szoleczky
Editor

Why Women and Energy?

Gender Perspectives on Energy for CSD-9



Photo taken in South America by ETC Energy, the Netherlands.

This position paper was prepared by Elizabeth Cecelski, Director for Research and Advocacy of ENERGIA, the (see box), with contributions from Joy Clancy, and with review/inputs from the following: Wendy Annecke, Energy Research & Development Centre, Capetown, South Africa; Lalita Balakrishnan, All-India Women's Conference, New Delhi; Upendra Gautam/Odin Olaya, Peoples' Movement for Empowerment and Development, Leyte, Philippines; Johanna Gregory/Lisa Buttner, Winrock International, Washington DC; Minu Hammati, United Nations Environment & Development Forum, London; Jeanne Betsock Stillman, Strategies for Development, Inc., Hastings-on-Hudson, NY; Njeri Wanukomya, UNEP Centre for Energy and Environment, Roskilde, Denmark; Beth Woroniuk, Goss Gilroy Inc, Ottawa, Canada.

More information:
CSD NGO Women's Caucus
www.earthsummit2002.org/wcaucus/csd9/csd-9.htm, and www.csdngo.org, and ENERGIA (see box on page 5)

The ENERGIA Network has made a thorough analysis of women's roles and interests in sustainable energy. This work was done in close collaboration with the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) NGO Women's Caucus and through a very comprehensive process. On the basis of this analysis, general recommendations for all agencies involved in working for a sustainable energy future, as well as specific recommendations for the 9th meeting of CSD in April 2001 (CSD9), have been worked out.

The INFORSE Network supports the recommendations and suggests that other networks do the same. In the article, a summary of the recommendations and important facts from the analysis are presented.

Recommendations

- Address poor women's development needs for labour saving, for timesaving, for improved health, for security, and for income in rural energy projects and technology research by:
 - Assign high priority to the cooking fuel crisis and its impacts on women's health,
 - Increase the efficacy and the numbers of renewable installations as well as of sustainable public transport systems;
- Support capacity-building (education and resources) for women and men involved in energy to enable the development of a critical mass of

women and men who can act to change the policies, programmes, and practices affecting women and their energy choices;

- Adapt and apply specific, proven "best practice" development-sector approaches to overcome institutional factors such as women's lack of access to credit, to training, and to employment in the energy sector;
- Integrate energy access and financing for income generation in a holistic approach, offering a bundle of services to enable women to access improved energy, while at the same time enhancing women's entrepreneurial skills, self-respect, and self-confidence;
- Support and allow institutional representation of women in the decision-making of organizations that affect women's vital energy interests;
- Address issues of energy insufficiency in war-torn countries and in refugee camps, where women and children are especially vulnerable;
- Disaggregate information by gender at all levels in the energy sector (target groups, beneficiaries, project staff, planners, policy, etc.);
- Create more knowledge, analysis, and understanding of gender/energy linkages and needs;
- Provide technical, catalytic, moral, financial, and political support to efforts to promote joint initiatives between the (sustainable, ed.) energy sector and de-

velopment-sector professionals, organisations, and projects;

- Support networks and partnerships for and about aid to women and their needs for energy.

Specific Recommendations for CSD9

The Commission on Sustainable Development in April 2001 (CSD9) should:

- Establish an ongoing, multi-stakeholder process on gender and sustainable energy, hosted by an appropriate organisation such as the World Bank or the UNDP.
- Quickly address the high-priority issues recommended (see above) and include them in the budget for the different areas.

Solar Cooker evaluated by an Ethiopian woman.
Photo: GTZ / ENERGIA



Facts from the Analysis

Fuel Scarcity

Rural women (and their children) are the primary collectors of wood and residue fuels, which account for 80% of all household energy use in many developing countries. The proportions of rural women affected by fuel wood scarcity range from 60% in Africa, to nearly 80% in Asia, and nearly 40% in Latin America. Time spent in fuel collection in fuel-scarce areas can range from 1 to 5 hours per household per day.

Real Energy Crisis: Women's Time

The real rural energy crisis is rural women's time, with women working longer work days than men to provide human energy for survival such as fuel and water carrying, cooking, food processing, other household duties, non-monetised work which is largely invisible in national energy accounts and labour force statistics. Many income-generating activities of women in the informal sector - often critical to family economic survival - are fuel-intensive, and the viability of these activities is affected by energy prices and energy availability.

Energy/Water Scarcity

Energy scarcity impinges on the provision for other basic needs, such as water, health, and education. E.g., the proportions of rural women affected by water scarcity are estimated to be 55% in Africa, 32% in Asia, and 45% in Latin

America, with the median time for collecting water in the dry season about 1.6 hours per day.

Health

Women are victims of environmental pollution due to energy use. More than 50% of the world's households cook daily with wood, crop residues, dung, and untreated coal. They have the highest exposures to indoor air pollution, which is linked to, e.g., acute infections, chronic lung diseases, low birth weights, lung cancer, and eye problems. Women are also particularly vulnerable in their reproductive roles because of radiation after nuclear accidents.

Violence Against Women

Physical and psychological violence against women has been reported e.g. rapes while gathering fuel wood and bride suicides related to women's inability to meet their family's wood fuel needs.

Women as Activists

Women are effective activists on energy questions in health, environmental, children's and peace-related organisations and issues, ranging from community education for recycling, lobbying for sustainable energy, to anti-nuclear protests. Women are considered to be more favourable to energy conservation and renewable energy. In Sweden, in the late 1990's, 80% of young women were found to be against the long-term use of nuclear power.

Poor in the North

There is an increasing population in the North who are poor, and who are suffering energy poverty as well. Moreover, space-heating is needed for a larger part of the year in the North than in the South. 15.4% of women and 12% of men are below the poverty line in the USA. In 1991, in the UK, 7 million households (36% of total) suffered from fuel poverty.

Also in the North, poor single-parent families are often headed by women. Old women are left alone to struggle for meeting their energy needs, because they live longer than man.

Male Preserve

The energy industry is perceived as a male preserve. In the energy sector, in the industrialised countries more than 80% of employees are men and more than 90% of all managers are men. Women occupy less than 5% of technical positions. Despite the increased access by women to science and engineering education, women still make up less than half of students enrolled in energy courses.

In the developing countries, the situation is even worse. There are few women who have access to the education, financing schemes, and support systems necessary to negotiate careers in the energy sector. This also hinders the development of energy policies and of technologies better suited to the needs and wishes of women, who are actually the major users of the energy.



ENERGIA Network

The International Network on Gender and Energy, ENERGIA, was formed by an informal group of women involved in energy inputs to the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995.

It was a response to the lack of any international institution or program with the main objective of promotion of the role of women in sustainable energy development.

Major plans up to 2002:

- Regionalisation of ENERGIA activities, by supporting national and regional networking initiatives in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
- Establish a Resource Centre focusing on synthesis and dissemination of knowledge, especially in electronic form.
- Advocacy and capacity building.
- Research and development of case studies, both to improve empirical understanding of linkages between gender and energy, and to generate examples of successful practices.

ENERGIA publishes a quarterly newsletter in issues of 1200 copies. The activities are funded in part by the Dutch and the Swedish Development Agencies (DGIS, Sida). ENERGIA is also a member of INFORSE.

More info: ENERGIA Secretariat, Kastanjelaan 5, Postbus 64, 3830 AB Leusden, The Netherlands. Ph: +31 33 4326000, fax: +31 33 4940791, e-mail: energia@etcnl.nl, www.energia.org.

Sheila Oparoacha, Secretary of ENERGIA and editor of the ENERGIA News in the Netherlands since 1999. Sheila was born and raised in Zambia. She holds a BSc in Veterinary Medicine, Zambia and MSc in Gender and Rural Development from the Asian Institute of Technology, Thailand.



Elizabeth Cecelski, Director for Research and Advocacy of ENERGIA.

Poverty/Gender Analysis Examples

By Elizabeth Cecelski, ENERGIA

If you were an expert on the project, would this give you ideas about how to work with women? Examples from Ghana:

EXAMPLE 1:

What do you see in these photos? Both show a solar PV street light installation in a village.



Here, men are using the solar lighting to play table soccer.

Now, how are the women using the PV-powered street light?



They are preparing and selling food by its light, an income-earning activity.

EXAMPLE 2:

Where should the light be if there is only 1 lighting connection point in the house?

Women want to use the light

- in the kitchen (for preparing food),
- in the workroom (to income generating activity),
- in the bathroom (to bath children in the evening).

Men prefer to use the light

- in front of the house (for entertaining friends, playing cards),

Policies strengthening the position of poor men, may not have the same impact on women.

More Information:
ENERGIA (See on page 5)

Women News:

Active Network in Latin America

In 2000, GENES (Central American Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy) had its 2nd regional meeting since its inception in 1998. The meeting produced an action plan including a number of proposed projects. The creation of the network was facilitated by Winrock and Fundacion Solar with support from USAID and the Dutch HIVOs. Then, the World Bank program, ESMAP, approved a proposal to provide support to key GENES activities. Some of the projects are in progress, like the Hurricane Mitch Reconstruction PV and household project funded by USAID, sharing training material in gender-relevant methods developed by the World Conservation Union (IUCN).

GENES consist of more than 50 organizations, including NGOs and constituencies. There are national coordinators in Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mexico.

More info: Katja Winkler, Fundacion Solar, 15 Avenida 18-78 Zona 13, 01013, Guatemala. Ph: +502-3601172, fax: +502 3322548, e-mail: funsolar@intelnet.net.gt.

New Network in Zimbabwe

A recent initiative in Zimbabwe is the setting up a GENEZ (Gender and Energy Network in Zimbabwe).

The new network is built on a previously formed committee WISEZ (women in Sustainable Energy in Zimbabwe) consisting of several governmental and non-governmental organizations. The network wants to move barriers. It does case studies and analysis. It highlights the present role of women in using energy resources, balanced against the fact that women are given little representation in major energy programs, strategic planning, and energy policy decision-making.

More info: W. Nyabeze, GENEZ/WISEZ WEDS Development Services, PO Box 66727, Kopje, Harare, Zimbabwe. Ph/ fax: +263-(0) 4336454, e-mail: weds.wrn@internet.co.zw or Tinashe Nhethe, ITDG, e-mail: tinashe@telco.co.zw.

African Ministers Declare

Durban, December, 2000

We, the African Ministers of Energy, recognize that: Women are the key main consumers of household energy resources and services, but they are marginalized and should be in the forefront of African energy policy-making and formulation.

We agreed:

- To facilitate strategies, action plans, and programs that benefit women at national and regional levels.
- To review the financial impact and make necessary planning for the initiative.
- To encourage financial institutions, including micro-credit, to facilitate women's access to modern energy services.
- To make progress reports annually.

Source: Earthlife Africa Johannesburg, Richard Sherman, rsherman@icon.co.za e-mail lists: energy-csd@egroups.com

Post-Soviet Changes

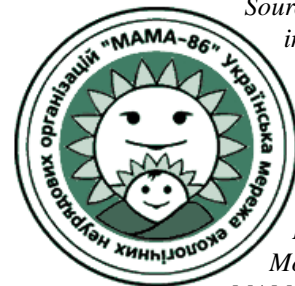
A new report shocks the readers.

The structural adjustments in economy have resulted in economic crisis, which changed women's status:

- Although women are generally better educated than men, women find it harder to get jobs. Women occupy lower positions than men do, and they have limited choices of profession.
- A woman's salary is about 55%-70% of a man's salary. The wage gap increased by 50% over the last 10 years.
- Women are still overloaded with the "double burden" of professional duties and housekeeping.
- Women spend more time to search for cheap products and cannot not allow themselves to use washing and other social services because of high prices.
- The poverty rate among females doubled.
- The birth rate is decreasing. Women have no confidence in the future, and this influences their desires to give birth.
- The paradox is that women still live longer in this region. They could not allow themselves to die?

Source: "Women in Transition Economies", prepared for the Regional Hearing on Beijing + 5.

More info:
MAMA-86 p. 7.



Mothers Respond to Chernobyl

Politics Needs More Women Fear lead to a strong mother group to influence politics

By Anna Golubovska-Onisimovo, MAMA-86, Ukraine

My path to environmental activism was quite simple: after my first child was born, my viewpoint changed. Maternity made me worry in what environment my child would live and what future he would have in the motherland of the biggest environmental catastrophe. In 1990, after four years of the Chernobyl disaster, my son was one year old. There was a lack of reliable information about Chernobyl. My friends have children born in 1985 and 1986. We didn't know how the radiation would influence our children, but we knew that its impact could cause serious disease and even death. It made us scared, but also indignant, because the state was not going to give us the information that we needed to protect our children and ourselves. The feelings of helplessness and fear were combined with the desire to get free from it, to be saved.

"Help ourselves!" and "Rescue of the drowning is the business of those who are drowning" were very valid slogans for us when we were starting "MAMA-86". When we registered our NGO with Kiev's city administration in 1991, it was the first time that a group of citizens, simply applied to be registered. But we succeeded after a lot of troubles. Today, "MAMA-86" is the network of many environmental mothers' (women's) groups and activists in Ukraine.

We raise public awareness of environmental and health issues, focusing particularly on women, through information-gathering and dissemination, as well as through education and the organization of intersectoral debates. We aim to empower women - who are essential to achieving sustainable development - through promotion of public participation in decision making.

Why is Kiev's "MAMA-86" mainly a mothers' group? Sometimes men or even fathers drop in, but they can't hold such work for a long time in the conditions of post-Soviet Ukraine. They usually leave the group quite soon. This is mainly because the environmental NGOs' activities need much dedication and patience, sometimes even sacrifices, and it doesn't give a stable and high income. Thus, you can understand that the women who are working in our NGO are very strong, this in addition to the general spiritual strength which is typical for Ukrainian women. Indeed, it is not easy to work or live with strong women! Additionally, maternity gives a sacred feeling: a feeling of responsibility for life and for the future.

The basic concept of femininity, for me, is love as a lifestyle, although on a personal level this goal is hardly achievable for women. And, as women perceive it, there is no love without responsibility - here you are, women are responsible for the Earth!

Photo: Anna Golubovska-Onisimovo with her child.
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Ph: +380-44 2287749, fax: +380-44 2295514,
e-mail: anna@gluk.org, <http://www.mama-86.kiev.ua>

Science Needs More Women We should make science more responsible!

By Cathy Foley, Australian physicist

Looking down at my perfectly formed baby, I could not remove from my mind the contrasting image I had seen that morning in a scientific journal: a picture of a Ukrainian baby horribly deformed as a consequence of the mother's exposure to nuclear radiation before she had even conceived her child. That devastating image made me reflect again and again: how can I participate in a profession that contributes to the knowledge that causes these disasters, which have destructive and long-term effects on our children, ourselves, our environment and our future generations?

How can I morally be a scientist, even worse a physicist, and be part of a profession that takes little or no control or responsibility over what research is undertaken and how its outcome influences our world? As I pondered these thoughts while nursing my child, I realized that this situation exists because there are not many women working in scientific careers. Science needs more women.

Scientific research depends for its existence upon grants of money. The grant process determines the subjects of research. Grants are usually allocated by committees of eminent senior scientists, dominated by men for whom participation is a feather in the cap. This method of allocating funds and directing research in technology and science argues for a single voice, a single responsibility, and the problem with it is that a kind of silliness comes over collective decision-making. *Is this collective stupidity or collective cowardice?* A. Squires observed in 1986: "Males in our culture learn early to admire chance-taking and mistake it for courage. Men in numbers often do not speak up against a bit of daring that few would accept if given sole responsibility."

For too long, scientists have claimed they can have no responsibility over how others use their scientific findings. *We publish and then wash our hands of it all. This must change!* Knowledge and how it is used is the responsibility of us all. I believe a very different science would exist today if there were more balance in the female-male ratio. A lone woman does not change things. Look at the governments where a single female has risen to power. The lone woman, to survive, needs to mimic the masculine behavior of her male peers. *Equal numbers of males and females with equal standing could change all this. Chernobyl will not happen again if we have more women in science.*

Source: *Beyond Chernobyl. Women Respond.*
Compiled by Corin Fairburn Bass, et al.,
1993. Envirobook ISBN 0858811227.

The source of the 2 articles:
Women Special for Men, WISE,
<http://www.antenna.nl/wise>,
e-mail: wiseamster@antenna.nl



Micro Credit to 100 Million Poor Women

By Lalita Balakrisnan, AIWC, INFORSE National Focal Point, India



Improved Chula (woodstove) Training, September 2000: Less smoke, reduction in cooking time, saves fuel. Photo by AIWC.

The AIWC began playing a leading role in support of the International Summit on Micro Credit in February 1-5, 2001 in New Delhi. The objective is to open avenues of access to economic resources through micro-credit for at least 100 million poor women in the Asia Pacific Region.

I think that there is a lot more to be done in this field. I find that poor women, who cannot buy commercial energy like electricity, are coming forward in larger numbers to benefit from these schemes.

Among the Conference objectives are that we should

- help women to understand the concept of safe, viable renewable energy, including its linkages with family health and living standards.
- train women in the use of improved technologies and of credit management for energy projects

- devise training for women's groups for planning and implementing projects as well as for collective action

Our ultimate aim is:

- to save as many women as possible from smoke-related diseases through the use of improved stoves and biogas burners.
- to reduce drudgery, improve the quality of women's lives, and to free time for other activities such as income generation.

It has been my experience that rural energy initiatives have empowered women at the village level. Often, as a result, the role of women in decision-making at village levels as well as at local governance levels has improved.

More information: www.microcreditsummit.org/newdelhi/ and AIWC (see in the box).

Trainees in the computer center



AIWC headquarters.



Lalita Balakrisnan
Hon. Secretary General of All India Women's Conference (AIWC) and chairperson, Rural Energy Department, AIWC. Lalita was born in 1932 in South India. She is educated in the social sciences. She earned a postgraduate diploma in journalism in India and obtained a Diploma in Company Law in the UK.

AIWC is a core member of INFORSE and an Indian focal point. On behalf of INFORSE, AIWC organised a sustainable energy exhibition at the World Women Conference in Beijing.

AIWC is also active in the World Renewable Energy Network and in the ENERGIA network. AIWC was identified in 1984 as a Nodal Agency by the Ministry of Non-conventional Energy Sources, as a key actor involving national and grassroots NGOs in the implementation of the improved cook-stoves and biogas programs.

AIWC has obtained consultative status with the UN and with the Government of India.

AIWC is one of the oldest pioneer volunteer organisations, established in 1927 by an Irish lady, Margaret Cousin. The AIWC are working for the emancipation of women. After India gained its independence, the organisation grew rapidly. Today, it has over 100,000 members in 500 branches. The



More information: AIWC, Sarojini House, 6 Bhagwan Dass Road, New Delhi 110001, India. Ph: +91 -11-3389680/3381165, fax: +91 -11-3384092 e-mail: aiwccct@nda.vsnl.net.in.

Micro Credit in Bangladesh

Women's way from the darkness to light, from carrying wood to using mobile phone and internet.

By Rubina Hossain, Grameen Shakti, Bangladesh

Let there be light.....for everybody in Bangladesh, a country of no electricity for 80% of the population, was the main motto of Grameen Shakti, which emerged out from the Grameen Bank family in Bangladesh. We found that the appropriate technology to meet the increased need for energy is renewable energy.

Meeting the Needs

We opened 25 branches in rural areas and provided micro credit to more than 3,000 PV solar home systems between 1996 and 2000. In the last 2 years, the rate of sales was more than 1200 systems / year. This is a huge success in a country with a per-capita income of less than US\$ 240, considering that the cost of a system is more than US\$ 300.

We opened up 2 types of financing model to buy a PV system:

1st type:

- 15% down payment.
- 85% payment/month in 3 years
- Service charge: 12% per year.

2nd type:

- 25% down payment.
- 75% payment/month in 2 years.
- Service charge: 8% per year.

Customers reported increases in income due to extension of working hours after dusk. They started new businesses, like a radio/TV repairing shop, telephone service, power selling service, etc. Grameen Shakti has a desire to develop an area as a micro-enterprise zone. The targeted options of these micro-enterprises are: electric sewing machines; ice-making, rice-husking, and other post-harvest machinery.

Why Women?

Why does Grameen Shakti place the emphasis on women?

Grameen Shakti emerged out from Grameen Bank family and it has been working in the field of renewable energy since 1996. The Bank's earlier experiences giving micro credit to women shows that:

- Village women have already shown their potential in growing businesses and small entrepreneurships, then have proved their sincerity by repaying loans in due time.
- The Grameen Bank has 2.3 million borrowers from 38,951 villages. It contributes up to 1-1.5% of the GDP of Bangladesh. It is a Bank of women. Presently, 94% of its member customers are women.
- Women often play a very significant role in popularizing renewable energy. They are also good publicizing ambassadors. Starting from the family level, a woman can be a good motivator to introduce renewable energy into the household. Due to a demonstration effect, the neighbors will be inspired to do the same in their own houses. In this way, the use of renewable energy may expand.
- Village women's quality of life can increase radically with the blessings of solar energy. Solar energy will remove the darkness of their household as well as that of their fate
- The solar light eliminates the health hazard arising from kerosene lamps and providing a better light.
- Solar home systems allows housewives to be involved in new income-generating activities like basket making, net weaving, tailoring, etc. Hence, the sufficient light obtained from solar systems not only brings them economic solvency but also ensures the equal participation of both men and women in development processes.
- The bright light improves the quality of their work after dusk in their households and in post-harvest or money-making activities. It helps to ensure the women's security.
- Beyond meeting their everyday needs, it presents other new opportunities as well. They can also enjoy television along with their families, and children can study in the evenings. Moreover,



"Hallo! I am calling from a village in Bangladesh." Ms. Abeda, a member of Grameen Bank, bought a solar home system for lighting her home and charging a mobile phone. The phone is also available to other villagers, who pay a fee to Ms Abeda. This brings her a significant income of about US\$ 100 per month.

in the future, a PV system along with wireless mobile phone connection and computers with Internet access will bring them some of the advantages of modern technology. Thus, real empowerment will enhance their lives. Hopefully, this will halt the tragic practice of migration to unknown destinations, which commonly are city slums.

More information:

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See also article in issue 24 ('99) about the Grameen Bank.

The author, Ms. Rubina Hussain, has been working in Grameen Shakti as an Assistant Manager since its inception in 1996.

She received a Master of Social Science degree in Economics from Dhaka University.



UNDP Analyses and Assists

An "Energy and Women" Project aims to generate opportunities for women in the energy field in Africa. It has produced national reports, a guideline for decision makers, and a series of case studies. Pilot projects are in progress in Mali and Uganda.



By Gail Karlsson, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), USA.

In February, 1999, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) initiated a project entitled "Energy and Women: Generating Opportunities for Development" which is being co-ordinated by UNDP's Sustainable Energy Program.

Shared Concerns

In order to gather information, the Project began by sponsoring national consultations in southern Africa in the spring of 1999. National experts, government officials, and leaders of community organisations discussed the particular energy situations in different countries in relation to women's development needs and priorities. Reports were prepared by representatives from Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and were presented at a regional workshop held in South Africa on June 21 and 22, 1999.

- The "Energy and Women" Project looks at linkages between women and energy as an entry point for addressing both sustainable development and the advancement of women, two of UNDP's major priorities.
- The Project assumes that access to more efficient and environmentally sustainable energy services can provide benefits to women and girls in developing countries, including more time, improved health, and increased opportunities for income-generating work. The geographical focus is on Africa.
- The main elements include:
 - Analysis of sustainable energy projects regarding their impacts on women;
 - Networking and information sharing;
 - Training and advocacy activities; and
 - Technical assistance to countries that are developing energy projects and policies to benefit women as well as men.
- Financial support for the project has been provided by the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency (SIDA) and by the UNDP's Sustainable Energy Global Program.

At the regional meeting, there were many shared concerns about the need for more attention to women's energy problems, especially in rural areas, and for more involvement of women themselves in solving those problems.

There were also similarities in the kinds of energy projects discussed, many of which dealt with improved cook stoves, briquette-making, wood lot management, solar electric panels, and solar cookers or food dryers. Participants expressed frustration that past donor-driven pilot projects did not involve consultation with the expected users, and ended when the donor funding was finished, without sufficient follow-up or analysis.

Some of the major concerns raised in the country reports were the following:

- Lack of energy services creates particular hardships for women.
- Energy planning processes, policies, and projects generally have not been gender sensitive.
- Participatory approaches are needed in energy project planning.
- Education and training of women is needed to increase their role in energy plans and projects.

- More public information is needed about possible energy options.
- Financing arrangements are essential for project continuity.

Gender Agenda

The Program has prepared an introductory briefing paper entitled "Gender and Energy: How is Gender Relevant to Sustainable Energy Planning?"

This paper has been distributed to UNDP country offices, energy planners, and to gender specialists, as well as at the UN General Assembly meeting in June, 2000 to review progress 5 years after the international forum on women held in Beijing.

It has been included in a new publication:



Photo by UNDP

"Sustainable Energy Strategies: Materials for Decision-Makers".

The Project is currently putting together case studies as an input to the 9th meeting of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in April, 2001.

Technical Assistance for Pilot Activities

The Project is involved in promoting certain pilot activities identified through national and regional consultations. E.g.;

- Expansion of an ongoing multifunctional platform project in Mali. The project engages village women in acquiring motorised equipment that can be used for a variety of productive purposes, including producing electricity, pumping water, and grinding grain.
- Monitoring and evaluation of a UNDP/GEF project in Uganda designed to establish financial and institutional mechanisms for supplying solar photovoltaic electrical services to households, businesses, and communities on a commercial basis. The managers are currently working with a women's bank, Uganda Women's Finance Trust Limited, to establish a pilot credit mechanism to allow women to purchase PV systems.

In addition, discussions are in progress with other UNDP country offices in Africa concerning technical assistance in designing new proposals.

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