Seven Policy Recommendations of the Collaborative Research Group on Gender and Energy (CRGGE)

Gender matters in energy projects and programs in some significant ways, this empirical research shows. Modern energy services are important for the empowerment of women because they improve women's health and make their lives easier so that women can participate more fully in development. They reduce women's time poverty (and sometimes, consumption poverty), and give women more options in their work and more knowledge from media, and this can help women negotiate for their strategic needs both in the household and the community. Each of the case studies includes recommendations pertinent to energy practice in their own countries and regions. The evidence is clear but not as extensive as may be needed to convince policymakers in all areas (see Table 6), and more research is needed. But many of the key findings of these studies have immediate policy implications that can be acted upon, e.g.:

1. ***Invest in energy infrastructure technologies and end-uses that directly meet poor women's energy demands and make their labour more productive,*** **in order to have a significant positive impact on women's practical needs, family welfare and development. High potential technologies include (see sections 3.3, 3.5 and 4.):**
   - **improved cooking stoves and fuels and other household energy interventions;**
   - **food processing technologies such as grinding mills;**
   - **drinking water pumping and transport; and**
   - **electric lighting and media.**

2. ***For highest impact, promote sustainable livelihoods through modern energy services that permit poor women to increase their productivity and income and hence the value of their labour, and therefore encourage adoption of modern energy services in the home.*** **Two strategies shown here as high impact, justifying the investment of public funds, are:**
   - **women's involvement on the supply side, in producing and marketing new energy resources and services; and**
   - **support to women's micro-enterprises in accessing and using modern energy services and complementary business inputs (see section 3.3).**

3. ***Do not restrict poor women in their choice of cooking fuel because of the profligacy of Northern industrialised countries.*** **Current cooking energy use in developing countries has severely negative impacts on the health of women and children, via low birth weights and infant mortality, and substituting these fuels with more efficient biomass or fossil fuels would add little to global emissions. MDG 5 on reducing child mortality cannot be met without improvements in the household energy system (section 3.6).**

4. ***Prioritise complementary inputs for gender equality.*** **The issue of "complementary inputs" is familiar in energy and development – it is the lack of these inputs that often determine whether access to modern energy services will does or does not have an impact. Modern energy services are most likely to produce benefits for women if they are implemented in the context of one or more of the following (section 4.4):**
   - **a deliberate gender strategy in project planning, implementation and institutions that ensures women's access;**
   - **a supportive policy and/or institutional environment for women's needs;**
   - **a community-based organisation with women's effective participation;**
   - **existing or changing gender relations that value women's labour compared to men's; and/or,**
   - **industry objectives coincide with women's interests.**

   At least the first two can be influenced by project practitioners and policymakers respectively. Energy projects that effectively involve women have been a source of their increased voice and participation in development (see section 3.5). Seeking synergies with one or more of the above conditions can be an efficient way to enhance benefits for women from modern energy services.

5. ***Seriously think about how to integrate operationally (in energy but also other development sectors) some key areas where evidence is incomplete but highly suggestive*:**
   - **Increased girls' education and electrification and labour-saving energy services (see section 3.4);**
   - **HIV/AIDS – both quality of care and transmission – and the availability of modern energy services (see section 3.7);**
   - **Sexual violence and fuelwood collection (see section 3.5).**

6. ***Include and document gender analysis at each step of policy, programme and project planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.*** **This research project was greatly hindered by the lack of disaggregation of data and information by gender in the energy and development literature. Engendering the logframe can only improve our understanding and effectiveness of how modern energy services can contribute to development.**

7. ***Build capacity of women to work in the energy sector and of both women and men to engage with gender issues in energy systems.*** **Our research showed a need for capacity building at all levels, ranging from training for poor rural women who need skills to operate energy technologies and businesses, to female and male energy practitioners, researchers and policymakers who need tools to engage effectively with gender. Improving linkages and networks among researchers, the grassroots, and policymakers is a powerful means for generating self-confidence and increasing visibility at every level.**