

UiO : **Centre for Development and the Environment**
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Women's empowerment in energy projects: What is the meaning?

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Engendering the Energy Transition
Theory meets policy and practice, South meets North
23-24 November 2016



EFEWEE (2015-2018)

Exploring Factors that Enhance and restrict Women's Empowerment through Electrification

- Comparing grid and decentralised systems
- Kenya, India and Nepal
- Mixed methods



Seacrester Consulting,
Kenya

Dunamai Energy,
Malawi



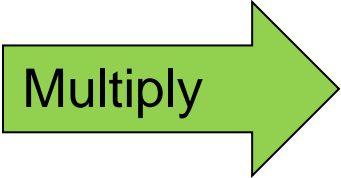
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Consortium Members EFEWEE

- Tanja Winther University of Oslo, Norway
- Kirsten Ulsrud
- Karina Standal
- Debajit Palit TERI, India
- Mini Govindan
- Anjali Saini Seacrest Consulting, Kenya
- Henry Gichungi
- Magi Matinga Dunamai Energy, Malawi
- Raju Laudari AEPC, Nepal (collab. partner)



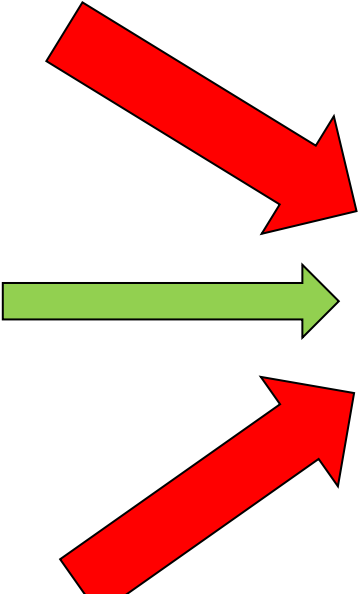
Motivation 1: social change is complex



Empowerment

Invest in a lamp and let a girl read...

Invest in a cow('girl effect')



Potential for empowerment



Typical gender goals in energy projects/programmes

- Women's increased welfare
- Women's economic empowerment
- Women's political empowerment

Skutsch 2006
Clancy et al. 2007
IEG 2008

Motivation 2: risk of more inequality



Men tend to be recruited in management/operation

Electricity and appliances: desired, high status

Meaning of empowerment from below

- “To be educated”, “unity”, “political power”
- “No association electricity – empowerment”

Focus group discussions, Chhattisgarh, India 2016

- “To make somebody able to do something.
Light empowers them to read”

Interview with female staff, Ikisaya Energy Centre, Kenya 2016

- “Nowadays, women have become empowered: they
make an income and can just leave”

Man telling his life story, Homa Bay, Kenya 2016



Meaning of empowerment

- “Achieve agency” (choice → action)
 - Kabeer 1999, 2001:
“Ability to make strategic life choices”
Measure: agency + material, social, human resources
 - Friedman: 1992: Marginalised groups moving out of subordinated position
- Energy: How do we conceive women’s empowerment?

EFEWEE Assumptions & definitions

Drawing on Friedman (1992) and Kabeer (1999 and 2001)

- **Women's empowerment:** A process towards gender equality
- **Gender equality:** Women and men's equal
 - rights
 - access to and control over resources
 - power to influence matters that concern or affect them

Rural Zanzibar (grid)

Women did obtain improved welfare ('development') and more flexibility, but men's dominance was reinforced



HOW:

- Men controlled houses, electricity and assets
- Discriminating rules for inheritance and divorce
- Women excluded from local electrification process

Winther 2008

Cutwini, South Africa (grid)

Women obtained increased agency
and control over resources



HOW:

- Many single female households
- Government grants were given directly to women guardians
- TV: Alternative gender narratives and information about rights

Matinga 2010

Rural Afghanistan (solar engineers)



Women gained increased agency
Changed gender norms

HOW:

- Women trained and recruited as solar engineers
- Changed perceptions of what a woman can do
- Fathers-in-law: continued control over household finances

Standal 2008

Reviewing empirical literature I

Qualitatively oriented studies

- **Explorations of electrification in local contexts,** with focus on ‘who, ‘how’ and ‘why’
- Process
- Design of electricity supply
- Social practices rather than single indicators
- Impact on
 - Organisation of daily life
 - Household finances, formal and informal economy
 - Decision making
 - Gender relations, norms and ideologies
- **Different paths to empowerment**

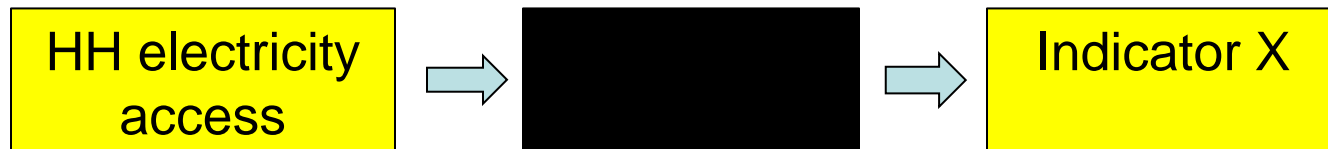


Reviewing empirical literature II

Statistical studies (incl modelling)

Gendered impact of **having access to electricity** on

- Employment rate
- Fuel use and cooking technology
- Welfare indicators
 - Time use (drudgery)
 - Fertility rates
 - Girls' and boys' study time and enrolment in school
- Attitudes to norms that discriminate women



How to bridge the various approaches so as to **accumulate** knowledge and understand the **mechanisms** at work?



Analysing women's empowerment through electrification

Categories	Dimensions
1 Overarching issues	Women and men's rights Gender ideologies and norms Women and men's social positions
2 Access to and control over resources	Material opportunities (short term) Material endowments (long term) Social resources (e.g. social networks) Human resources (education, drudgery, health)
3 Power to influence decisions (Agency)	Life decisions (incl. political power) Everyday decisions Decisions on electricity's uses at home Involvement in system of supply
4 Impact of women's involvement in supply	The impact of women's involvement in supply on the empowerment of women in the wider community
5 Negative effects	Signs of negative impact of electrification on any of the above dimensions

Kitui, Kenya (energy centre)



Endau, Kenya (grid)



Available results, EFEWEE

From the scoping phase (literature review and review of policies)

- EFEWEE Web and Blog <http://www.efewee.org>
- ENERGIA <http://energia.org/research/>
- tanja.winther@sum.uio.no
- mamat_001@yahoo.com (*Magi Matinga*)

In progress (academic journals):

- Palit, D., Govindan, M. et al.: **“A gender review of electricity policies: Perspectives from Kenya, Nepal and India.”**
- Matinga, M., T.Winther and K.Standal: **“Electrification and women’s empowerment: What is the evidence?”**
- Winther, T., M.Matinga and K.Ulsrud: **“Electrification and women’s empowerment: Proposal of a framework of analysis”**

Thank you

