

**USAID/SARI/Energy**  
**Notes from the South Asia Women in Energy (SAWIE)**  
**Follow on Workshop at Dhaka, Bangladesh on 17 -19 Nov. 2008**

The second USAID/SARI/Energy Regional application workshop on "**Efficient Energy Management and Renewable Energy**" was held at Hotel Dhaka Sheraton, Bangladesh on 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> November 2008. The workshop was organized by PA Consulting Group, the SARI/Energy implementing partner, co-sponsored by UNDP Dhaka; and facilitated by two Knowledge Partners --Bangladesh Renewable Energy Association (BREA) and Grameen Shakti. This was follow up of the first application workshop on "South Asia Women in Energy" held in Trivandrum from 21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

The inaugural session of the workshop was attended by Prof. Dr. M Tamim, Hon'ble Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser for Power, Energy and Mineral Resources, Government of Bangladesh as the Chief Guest; and Dr. M. Fouzul Kabir Khan, Secretary, Power Division, Government of Bangladesh, and Ms. Shireen Kamal Sayeed, Assistant Country Director, UNDP/Bangladesh as the special guests. Ms. Denise Rollins, Mission Director, USAID/Bangladesh delivered the keynote speech, and Mr. S. Padmanaban, Regional Program Director, USAID/ SARI/Energy presented highlights on SARI/E program and SAWIE activities.

The workshop drew 35 women professionals including engineers, architects, academician, researchers, and practitioners from ten countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand and USA, working in the energy sector particularly in the field of renewable energy. Also, 30 resource persons from Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, and Thailand presented 20 technical papers on four specific thematic areas – 1) Energy Efficiency and Conservation/Renewable Energy Technologies/ Green Architecture 2) Gender Mainstreaming/Gender Auditing 3) Energy Enterprises, Microfinance and Income Generation and 4) Capacity Building/Best Practices/Information Sharing.

After the SAWIE launch in Kerala, India, four working groups had been formed to deal with various issues on efficient energy management and promotion of renewable energy with an objective to mainstream women's role in the energy sector. These groups were constituted to focus on the following key issues:

- ◆ Capacity Building, Best Practices and Information Sharing
- ◆ Gender Streamlining and Gender Auditing
- ◆ Micro Finance and Income Generation
- ◆ Renewable Energy Technology and Green Architecture

At the workshop, team leaders of these working groups presented updates on their group tasks.

Grameen Shakti discussed about gender centric operational best practices that were particularly noteworthy and represented a good lesson to be replicated in other areas and countries. Significant empowerment of women was evident in the Grameen Shakti programs. The role of local government in promoting Renewable Energy, Energy Efficient Lighting, Green Architecture, and CDM Financing were other interesting papers presented during the technical session. At the closing session, each working group presented their individual action plans for the period Jan to June 2009.

As a whole the workshop was beneficial to the participants and provided opportunities for networking and to learn from the various technical sessions. The attendees made the following important observations:

A comprehensive gender needs assessment must be completed before launching any project activity and women's vital role in sustaining energy technologies should be duly considered,

- Since micro financing has the potential to bring about positive changes in women's lifestyle, it could significantly contribute to many energy related activities as well; potential opportunities must be earnestly explored
- Energy projects must address the technical knowledge of women, to improve the quality of technology and provide earnings to women within the community

### **GENERAL OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) SAWIE is serving as a unique platform to enhance women's participation in the energy sector decision making process
- 2) SAWIE can share best practices amongst group members and demonstrate successful gender centric energy projects.
- 3) SAWIE can assist the group members to utilize the small grants fund of USAID SARI/Energy Program for implementing innovative initiatives.
- 4) SAWIE should share knowledge and experience through its website and can develop e-discussion forum on pertinent issues.
- 5) Energy Management Center (EMC), the SAWIE knowledge partner has offered to provide support in replicating their highly successful Energy Clinics Program.
- 6) Examples (with details) of "bundled" CDM projects would be helpful along with any information that would assist in preparing documentation for such an effort.
- 7) If any of the SARI/Energy Small Grants have been allocated, and there are results ready for sharing at the next conference, that would also give concrete examples for participants.
- 8) There are many best practices in the countries of South Asia on application of RETs (like SHSs, Solar pump, solar lantern, community solar clinic, solar heater, domestic and commercial biogas energy from various sources like poultry, cow dung, human excreta, biomass, rice husk) and efficient energy

house building (residential, corporate building, government building) which could be replicated in non-applicable and potential areas.

- 9) High cost of RE is still a barrier in reaching poor people.
- 10) There is heavy dependence on traditional cooking technologies which affect women and children's health and damage environment.
- 11) Improve Cook Stove, biogas energy, Thapabharani (used in Kerala) can play an important role in rural village for energy and environment conservation, improve health of rural women and children and enhance their livelihood status.
- 12) There is huge disparity in energy consumption between rural and urban areas when there is crisis of energy. This disparity must be eliminated through effective energy conservation programs using energy efficient bulbs, improved cook stove and efficient energy management in all sectors (domestic, industrial, agriculture, commercial and others) to meet energy targets in the region. The policy makers should give special attention to these efforts.
- 13) Experience sharing across the countries on RETs, energy conservation and efficient energy management can help to meet energy target in a country.
- 14) Access to the poor to off-grid RETs should be ensured through community-based mini-grid systems and a "commercialization plus" approach for household technologies like biogas and solar PV.
- 15) RETs should be expanded in education, health, micro enterprise, and telecommunications to benefit the poor.
- 16) Investment should be increased for grid-interactive RETs for rural electrification.
- 17) Investments also should be increased for bio fuels, but cautiously (and increase employment through community production of oil crops and bio fuels to power multi-functional platforms and local transportation as well as for external sales); the countries which use bio fuels should have a bio fuel policy based on country situation.
- 18) Increased Oil pricing can affect energy budget and affect the poor.
- 19) The national governments should reduce oil intensity through energy efficiency, fuel shifts and structural shifts including targeted subsidies, financial and fiscal incentives to promote technological changes such as by promoting use of natural gas, clean coal and renewable energy for electricity generation and putting mandate on use of LPG and CNG for public transport.
- 20) Policy and legislation on national targets on renewable, Renewable Portfolio Standards, tariff, standardized power purchase agreements, sharing royalty from hydropower and wind with local residents for benefit of poor should be in place.
- 21) Oil companies should be mandated by the government for oil exploration; for example, a part of their profits must be expended on exploration activities and provide fiscal incentives like tax rebates to oil companies to strengthen exploration activities.
- 22) CDM and climate fund should be tapped to expand clean energy and energy conservation activities.

- 23) Energy Efficient building and Green Architecture design should not be exacerbated. It should be conducive to nature and environment.
- 24) Small Grants Program of USAID-SARI Energy can help promoting RETs and EC

## **WORKING GROUP VIEWS**

### **A: Gender Mainstreaming/Gender Auditing**

- 1) Energy needs of women are multiple, modern energy carriers are not available to facilitate their tasks in reproductive, productive and social domains, and also to adopt strategic measures to reduce imbalances in getting benefits and to contribute towards their economic & social advancement.
- 2) Energy sector has a crucial role to play in expanding opportunities for women who do not have equal opportunities to get access to a mix of modern energy carriers, energy efficient technologies & end use appliances.
- 3) Energy can resolve the issues of gender ideology, energy poverty, inequities, economic stratifications that seriously affect women.
- 4) Women play an important role in energy conservation and efficient energy management and the MDGs for energy can't be achieved without involving women in energy sector.
- 5) There are gender gaps in energy sector.
- 6) The national governments should incorporate gender in the energy policies for gender mainstreaming in the sector through various development projects.
- 7) Women's role in energy sector should be made specific. There is no clear definite such role of women in energy field.
- 8) Gender framework should be developed for women to play an effective role in energy sector.
- 9) Gender Auditing in energy sector to assess gender involvement should be in place

### **B: Microfinance and Income Generation**

- 1) There is lack of knowledge on microfinance in the countries of South Asia among rural women.
- 2) Awareness program can be taken for women microfinance.
- 3) Microfinance is still at premature stage. Microfinance Institutions have not been very effective because of high rate of loan interest.
- 4) Income Generating Activities should be part of the energy projects.
- 5) Access of the poor to microfinance is very important for booming RETs.
- 6) Loan and revolving fund concept should be integrated in energy projects especially for RETs promotion.
- 7) Energy enterprises should be encouraged to develop to support RETs implementation.

- 8) Microfinance can support micro-enterprises and this should be linked with promoting RETs

### **C: Capacity Building/Best Practices /Information Sharing**

- 1) Capacity building of women in operation and maintenance and repair of RETs, energy conservation and efficient energy management particularly energy efficient building should be continued and should be the core task of women mainstreaming in energy sector.
- 2) LGED (a govt organization of excellence) in Bangladesh is a unique example for gender mainstreaming. The organization has its own gender equity, action plan, Gender Information Management Center, LGED Gender Development Forum and Dab's external Forum on Gender and Dev. This could be replicated in south Asian region.
- 3) The Rural Cooperative Model in Bangladesh (Palli Bidhuyt Samittee (PBS) has excellent experience on 100% billing collection which could be replicated where women also play a big role.
- 4) Community initiatives like energy clinic in Kerala for creating awareness among women on energy conservation at household level. This could be replicated for effective energy conservation.
- 5) USAID SARI Energy SAWIE website should disseminate information and best practices on involving women in energy sector and it should link other organizations' websites who are also working as knowledge partners in the energy sector.
- 6) IDCOL financing model could be replicated.
- 7) Bio fuel -Food security. Should be very careful about it.
- 8) Prioritisation

### **SMALL GRANTS PROGRAMME**

The small grants program was launched and PA made a presentation on the objectives, guidelines, eligibility criteria, leveraging requirements, and networking with one or more partner organizations in the region.

An implementing partner will be on board soon and we will go ahead with instituting the small grants program by early 2009.

### **PLAN OF ACTION - Working Groups**

#### **Capacity Building / Best Practices:**

- 1) Creation of an enabling environment with appropriate policy and legal frameworks
- 2) Institutional development, including community participation (of women in particular)
- 3) Human resources development and strengthening of managerial systems

- 4) Energy Conservation Measures taken by ENERCON & Electricity Supply Companies
- 5) Energy Conservation Groups created among School children
- 6) Energy Clinics following the Kerala Example
- 7) Energy as a compulsory subject at university level
- 8) Efficient House hold Appliances
- 9) Involvement of Manufacturers in future SAWIE activities
- 10) Building Construction Standards
- 11) Information Sharing on Renewable Energy such as bio-gas,solar energy etc

### **Gender Mainstreaming / Gender Auditing**

1. Awareness raising: Field-based learning – workshop to enhance capacity to integrate gender into projects, Afghanistan
2. Field based learning – field camp – India Vikaspur (AIWC)
3. Knowledge sharing with energy sector – workshop involving the energy sector – Bangladesh
4. Technical Training – Training workshop on Gender Mainstreaming for/energy projects planners – Energia/SEA Sri Lanka
5. Small grants: Proposal writing and submission for funding; Methodology development; compilation of methodology to share with the others at next SAWIE
6. Networking: Information sharing – exchange of national programs planned in the respective countries; status of gender mainstreaming in each country

### **Micro Financing and Income Generation:**

1. Conduct awareness programme on energy efficient technologies in conservation areas
2. Submit proposal to work for physically handicapped women to USAID small grant programme
3. Work for fund management to provide loan to maid servants to purchase energy efficient household appliances
4. Conduct awareness/training programme on energy technologies for utilization of RE technologies
5. Provide technical assistance to national environment protection agency in drafting an energy efficient policy for Afganisthan
6. Information sharing through its regular publication

7. Develop micro enterprises based on local raw materials

### **Renewable Energy/Green Architecture:**

- 1) Ms. Madhumita from Jadavpur University will carry out a study on energy efficient residential house building in Bangladesh to assess how efficiently they are saving energy as she has excellent experience in design and planning of energy efficient buildings.
- 2) She will also hold a workshop for architects to disseminate knowledge on energy efficient building design.
- 3) Ms. Jorifa Khatun from BPDB will carry out a study on energy production from solid wastes.
- 4) Ms. Farzana from PSL would like to submit a proposal to USAID SARI Energy for getting access to small grant fund for distribution of solar lantern for poor households in coastal areas of Bangladesh. She will also try for small grant fund on testing efficiency of electronic ballast.
- 5) Dr. Sanja will continue dissemination of SAWIE activities and will try to get access to small grant of SARI-Energy for research and studies on RETs and EC.
- 6) Bhutan will contact some NGOs in their country to get access to small grant of USAID/SARI/Energy and disseminate how to conserve energy and manage energy efficiently.
- 7) Dr. Merle will establish COSFORD Lorry Baker and Govt of Kerala's education center on energy conservation and Energy efficient house building.
- 8) She will also submit a proposal to SARI energy for a documentary film of Slum rehabilitation project in Kerala.
- 9) Ms. Aziza from Grameen Shakti will involve women in operating solar pump. She alongwith other three new members will build capacity of women on ICS, Slurry demonstration from biogas plants and repair and maintenance of Solar Housing Systems (SHSs) and will disseminate the initiative of SAWIE.
- 10) Ms. Reba Paul will seek for small grant fund of SARI energy to build capacity of women in operation and maintenance of biogas plants in Bangladesh.
- 11) Ms. Jalajakshi will submit a proposal to SARI-Energy as a part of "lighting a million" households initiative.

### **Follow up Actions – SARI/Energy:**

- SARI/Energy will follow up with UNDP Bangkok on the proposed Center of Excellence to be set up in the region for SAWIE with UNDP support.
- SARI/Energy will look at the offers given by both Pakistan and Nepal for conducting the next SAWIE workshop.
- SARI/Energy will closely monitor the action plans put forth by each working group for the next six months to 1 year.

**Alternate Team Leaders:**

To carry out the SAWIE activities without any disruption, four Alternate Team Leaders, were chosen to support the Team Leaders.

Renewable Energy – Dr. Sanja, Sri Lanka

Gender Mainstreaming – Prof. Anoja, Sri Lanka

Micro Financing – Deepa Kumar, Kerala, India

Capacity Building – Rema Vijay, India

Methomas:Notes from SAWIE Dhaka