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This policy brief is intended for public policy makers and practitioners; it will also be useful for those groups and individuals seeking to influence the policymaking processes.

This policy brief is also available in Georgian.

## Woman and Energy – Uneasy Relations

The relations between the energy and woman are not easy all around the world. In Georgia, it includes not only gender blind energy policy, but also ongoing construction of hydropower or fuel plants, transmission lines, setting up of tariffs and etc. does not include any gender aspects.

In Georgia, energy sector related impacts on gender are studied only in case of large infrastructural projects that may cause involuntary resettlement. But only in cases when those projects are funded by International Financial institutions. In all other cases, gender disbalance (women's restricted participation, employment opportunities, health impacts and benefits) don't considered as the problem and does not matter how significant that impacts may be. The issues of woman misrepresentation and mistreatment during decision making processes related to the energy infrastructure projects are substantial. As a result, projects are developed in a way that they do not address and mitigate particular gender impacts (health, employment, workload, poverty and etc.)

The energy sector impacts on gender in Georgia still does not get enough attention both from the public as well as decision makers side.

### The Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2016

The Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2016 adopted by Parliament of Georgia<sup>1</sup> is only document that address gender issues related to energy sector. It aims also to "increase of diversification of energy resources with a view to increase productivity, additional incomes and reduce workload", through activities as increased access of households to the energy resources, promotion of renewable and clean energy resources with a view to improve the environment and health condition, activities for raising energy efficiency aimed at increasing awareness and self-consciousness of the population, creation of jobs in the energy sector and promotion of establishment of women's role within the sector.

However, the assessment indicators to measure how the activities contributes to achievement of above mentioned goals, raise substantive doubt that the Ministry of Energy in reality does not plan to do anything to achieve the goals. The assessment indicators measure only quantity of gasified villages, new energy projects, meetings and of information covered by the media means, women employed in energy Sector. By the energy sector. The Indicators does not measure what impact would have those activities on quality of life of women living in Georgia.

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1 [http://genderconference.gov.ge/uploads/uploads/documents/GE\\_NAP\\_2014-2016\\_ENG.pdf](http://genderconference.gov.ge/uploads/uploads/documents/GE_NAP_2014-2016_ENG.pdf)

## Increase the access of households to the energy resources

In theory, the gasification of villages, first of all should ensure the delivery the cleaner energy option for the woman, as mainly they are responsible for cooking and heating. Each year at least 50-60 villages per year gasified, however, still the firewood is a major source for heating and even cooking in rural areas. According to estimations done under ENPI-FLEG program, the actual number of firewood consumers was calculated as 419,328 households, along with 29,944 households using firewood with natural gas<sup>2</sup>.

According to the researches, in Georgia, villagers may have several sources of energy, “including electricity, coal, bottled gas, piped gas, and wood. During the summer, five per cent of rural households that participated in the study utilize piped gas, and one per cent utilizes coal. Of the interviewed households, all but ninety eight per cent of families utilize electricity. Ninety two per cent of households utilize bottled gas during the summer. Seventy eight per cent of households utilize wood during the summer. In the winter season, coal and piped gas remain rarely utilized – at one and five per cent of households respectively<sup>3</sup>.”

While the on grid electricity is accessible widely in regions of Georgia, in “rural families the electricity is mostly used (in limited quantities) for electric appliances (radio, TV, computer, etc.) and for lighting. Thus, the consumption of electricity in Georgian villages is strongly limited and is used only for specific purposes and in case of necessity.” The issue in this particular case is affordability, rather accessibility to grid.

In addition, “wood is utilized more frequently during the winter than during the summer; bottled gas is utilized more frequently during the summer than during the winter. This is due to the fact that the wood heated oven has the function to prepare food and heat water, besides its function to heat the room”. And the aforementioned, has significant impact from gender perspective on quality of life women. The traditional role for man in rural area is to collect the fuelwood, while woman spent at least twice as much of time for water collection and responsible for almost all cooking, heating water and etc. Therefore, in Georgian rural areas, the households that used solid fuel cooking and heating “are exposed to indoor air pollution at levels on average 30 times above the recommended level<sup>4</sup>”. That at the end means that women that spend more time on cooking are exposed more for indoor air pollution.

USAID gender assessment (2010) states that in Georgia, “rising energy prices and the inefficiency of the public energy infrastructure have lead to disruptions in the provision of heat and energy, a problem that is especially burdensome to low-income families. In these countries it is estimated that people living on welfare benefits spend between 30%-61% of their budgets on utilities. Concerning state benefits in Georgia, women outnumber men as applicants (55.3% women and 44.7% men) and recipients (56.7% women and 43.3% men) of welfare, and thus changes to energy policy and pricing could well have a more profound impact on women”.

That profoundly clarifies that energy poverty rate in Georgia is more than significant. The energy poverty impacts directly all groups of society, but largely burden the woman, that takes a care on household issues and health of the family members. The energy poverty may impact drastically the health of children and their education pattern (malnutrition, bad living conditions, exposure to the PM and etc.) Traditionally, it also increase the workload on women.

Therefore, while the improving access to modern energy is thus seen as a potential means of improving welfare and mitigating these adverse impacts, it could not be achieved just by gasification of the villages or access to the electricity

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2 [www.enpi-fleg.org](http://www.enpi-fleg.org)

3 Women's Access to Energy in Georgia Challenges and Recommendations Assessment and Concept, WECF and RCDA, September 2014, <http://rcda.ge/userfiles/files/WomensAccessToEnergyinGeorgiaChallengesandRecommendations.pdf>

4 <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/293731468001755898/pdf/ACS13945-WP-P147475-Box391501B-PUBLIC-6-26-15.pdf>

grid. The evidence shows, that the largest majority of rural households in Georgia use the fuel wood for heating and cooking, especially in winter times<sup>5</sup>, therefore their quality of the life is the same.

Therefore if people are unable to use the gas provided, the investment is not well thought and impact measured as the number of the villages with gasification, is rather superficial.

Therefore, both in terms of the better energy planning and addressing the needs of most vulnerable, it's important to acknowledge existence of energy poverty problem in Georgia. After that, it would be important, to address gender aspects of energy poverty, through acknowledging the different energy needs and consumption patterns of men and women, as well as their ability to pay for utilities, based on household roles and duties.

However, the energy poverty and its gender aspects is not mainstreamed by the neither by the movement nor donors in their own decisions or projects. E.g. The number of assessments<sup>6</sup> carried around the poverty and gender in Georgia, does not stress the issue of energy poverty and its gender aspects<sup>7</sup>.

### Promotion of renewable and clean energy resources with a view to improve the environment and health condition

Another cluster of activity in Gender Action plan 2014-2016, supposed to promote renewables and energy resources, supposed to be measured through development of the new projects.

Taking into account the fact, that Georgia does not employ any tools to assess the gender impacts of any proposed project that indicator also sounds very superficial. Already, in 2010 USAID gender assessment stress that “the actual implementation of energy sector projects can have distinct gendered impacts on the population. For example, pipeline and hydropower plant construction projects in Georgia have had different, and at times negative, economic and social impacts on women. While construction projects brought an influx of male workers, there were scarce employment opportunities for women. The incidence of sexual harassment and prostitution increased, in part related to income inequities as well as increased drug and alcohol use and crime around work camps<sup>8</sup>”.

However, country still has no comprehensive impact assessment system, to address properly social and gender aspects of projects. During the preparation of the project, project sponsors are supposed to submit the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA). Nevertheless, the social issues, including the problems with vulnerable people, as indigenous people, Internally displaced people, women, involuntary resettlement and its, does not considered as the part of the environmental permit issued by the Ministry of Environment. Thus, the social commitments undertaken by ESIA stays without any state revision and follow up supervision.

The Parliament of Georgia adopted the law on environmental impact assessment, in line with EC Directives on environmental impact assessment in May 2017. However, its still not clear how the law will improve the quality of the ESIA's and especially, how the social and gender impacts would be taken into account during the project preparation. The regulations that would define the role of the Ministry of Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia during the ESIA process should be elaborated due to the course of 2018.

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5 [www.enpi-fleg.org](http://www.enpi-fleg.org)

6 <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/980951472223098077/Georgia-PPA-FY16-presentation-AUG2016-final.pdf>

7 E.g. ADB <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/cps-geo-2014-2018-ga.pdf>,

World Bank <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/26091/112838-WP-P157626-Georgia-CGA-2016-final-PUBLIC.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

8 [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/EFD28F4AE04074D94925775A00081927-Full\\_Report.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/EFD28F4AE04074D94925775A00081927-Full_Report.pdf)

Meanwhile, there is growing evidence, that newly planned and developed projects may adversely impact the women. In general, the analysis of any ESIA, both large or small hydro and/or fuel power plants, does not contain any social and/or gender analysis. The proper social and gender analysis are not done even in cases when the projects are supported by International Financial Institutions. The ESIA documents, based on presumption that projects would not have any significant social or gender impacts, unless if they don't contain involuntary physical resettlement.

Therefore, during the planning of the small hydro power plants ESIA does not address the issues how the women may be impacted through diminishing the access to water, increased traffic during construction and etc. The issues that usually represent the major concerns for project affected communities.

Another important issue is that women are often not included in the decision making processes, like it happened during the construction of Shuakhevi hydropower plant supported by ADB and EBRD. In Muslim communities of Adjara Mountains, none of the local woman takes part in public hearing process or being interviewed separately. However, neither project implementer Norwegian Company Clean Energy, neither local or central authorities does not been concerned by this fact.

However, at the end those woman from affected communities appeared to be most impacted by Shuakhevi hydro power plant. Increased traffic and blasting from the construction have also impacted the lives of women in more than ten communities in the region. They now must accompany children to and from school, and women are travelling further to retrieve water for household use, sometimes two to three kilometers more, as river and springs nearby have dried up. In addition, women whose spouses or relatives find jobs on construction now have a greater workload, since they then need to maintain the agricultural activities previously cared for by men.

### Energy efficiency awareness raising

As, one of the activities for gender action plan 2014-2016, was considered the raising public awareness on energy efficiency. The Action plan supposed to measure the impact of public awareness raising by number of public meetings. However, this particular indicator that has no capacity to assess or measure implementation of the activity.

In Georgia, there are no special programs or focused educational advertisement is carried out to promote the energy efficiency. Meanwhile, public and private buildings in Georgia consume about 40–45 per cent of all energy for heating purposes<sup>9</sup>. It has direct impact on energy poverty and health of the people.

*Another lost opportunity, is the development of the NEEAP-National Energy Action Plan since mid-2015, funded by EBRD without wide public participation and media involvement. The civil society organizations has been chosen to comment on the plan, rather to ensure the wider public participation process that would also give opportunities to environmental and gender groups to propose the activities that will positively impact both man and woman across the Georgia.*

The NEEAP represents a strategic policy document that sets the country's overall and intermediate national indicative energy savings targets for the public and private sectors and proposes concrete measures and actions to meet these targets. Government of Georgia requests EBRD to assist the Government with the development of primary energy efficiency (EE) legislation implementing the policy measures expected to be endorsed by the Government in the NEEAP. However, the terms of reference for experts does not include involvement of wider public in elaboration and public review of draft law<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://library.fes.de/pdf-files/id-moe/09397.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.ebrd.com/cs/Satellite?c=Content&cid=1395255717840&d=Mobile&pagename=EBRD%2FContent%2FContentLayout>

Again it represents the missed opportunities for broader public dialogue on energy efficiency and its practical application in life.

## Woman in energy sector

There is very scary data, about the woman employed in energy sector, their roles and opportunities. According to the Georgian Statistical department, the Production and distribution of electricity, gas and water sector average monthly salary between man and woman almost the same. The recent available data from 2014, shows that woman make only 21% of employees in industry and energy sector. While there is slight improvement in comparison with 2010, when only 17% women have been employed it still far to be genderly balanced<sup>11</sup>.

## Conclusions and Recommendations related to energy and gender issues in Georgia

The Gender Equality Action plan should involve more clear result oriented activities. Indicators should focus not only on the numbers of undertaken activities, but also measure changes and improvements to the lives of women and men resulting from increased access to energy, including the reduction of energy poverty, application of energy efficiency, cleaner technologies and etc. The reporting on energy projects aimed to increase the welfare should contain disaggregate data by sex, rather than household.

The energy policy making should be genderly balanced and addressed the needs and aspirations both man and woman. To achieve that it's important to integrate gender consideration in the formulation of energy policies and programs, as well as during project implementation, therefore it's important that State will:

- Ensure that women and men have equal representation in decision-making on energy policy, including both energy production and consumption;
- Increase women's participation in the Georgian energy sector, which is currently male dominated;
- Require conducting gender-impact assessment studies regarding the particular energy infrastructure projects, review its mitigation plans and monitor its implementation.

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11 <http://www.sida.se/contentassets/1d7e165f86b349f7a4629d30ffdcde83/final-report---gender-analysis-of-eu-aadcfta-with-georgia-moldova-and-ukraine-29-jan-2016.pdf>



The views expressed in this policy brief reflect Green Alternative's position and should not be taken to represent those of Bread for the World-Protestant Development Service and the Both ENDS.



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39b Paliashvili St.  
0179 Tbilisi, Georgia  
Tel: (995 32) 229 27 73  
[greenalt@greenalt.org](mailto:greenalt@greenalt.org)  
[www.greenalt.org](http://www.greenalt.org)