0:00:00.9 Speaker 1: Okay, thank you very much sir. So my name is XXXX. I work with Friends of the Earth-Ghana. We are conducting a study on equitable energy access and gender equity, so we are working on this desk study in collaboration with two other universities in the UK, Anglia Ruskin university and then Leeds Beckett University. So we're trying to understand women's access to energy in Ghana and trying to understand, their... How electricity or energy benefits women. And then...

0:00:43.0 Speaker 2: Women?

0:00:43.4 S1: Yeah women and how we can enhance women's participation in decision making. Whether it's at the community or at the national level.

0:00:51.4 S2: Okay.

0:00:52.6 S1: Yeah so briefly, that's what the study is about so could you kindly introduce yourself and your business, what business you are in.

0:01:02.9 S2: Okay. My name is XXXX.

0:01:06.3 S1: Okay.

0:01:07.3 S2: And I am a System Administrator, I work on laptops, desktops and electricals. Electrical.

0:01:13.7 S1: Okay, Okay. Alright and you are also retailing...

0:01:18.6 S2: Yes, yes electrical, selling electricals. Electrical.

0:01:20.1 S1: Okay. So XXXX, what does energy equity... Now we are talking about energy access, what does equitable energy access means to you?

0:01:46.1 S2: Well... Energy...

0:01:46.1 S1: Yeah.

0:01:46.1 S2: It helps in so many ways in terms of business...

0:01:49.3 S1: Yeah.

0:01:49.8 S2: You know if there is lights out...

0:01:53.3 S1: Yeah.

0:01:55.6 S2: Everything is down, you know.

0:01:56.2 S1: Yeah.

0:01:56.2 S2: The town is very quiet. Energy, it helps in so many ways. It's just for business and...

0:02:11.0 S1: So from that perspective, would you say it's important for everybody to have access to energy?

0:02:18.1 S2: Sure... Yes.

0:02:20.5 S1: Okay. But do you think currently, everybody in the Ghanaian context, everybody has access to energy?

0:02:27.4 S2: Well... Looking at Ghana...

0:02:33.0 S1: Yeah.

0:02:33.9 S2: Yeah. So I can't tell but there is some places in the villages. I am not sure the place, some of them they have electricity there. I am not sure.

0:02:46.8 S1: Okay.

0:02:47.1 S2: I am not sure, some of... If you travel across the country, there might be places that... They might not have. It's just so obvious that... You will be surprised for you to travel across some of the villages and then you find out that they don't have power. Electricity.

0:03:02.8 S1: Oh Okay. Then how about within the urban areas like Accra.

0:03:06.5 S2: Oh yeah. Everywhere.

0:03:10.6 S1: Everybody has.

0:03:13.0 S2: Yeah there's power everywhere. If for you, you had issues issue with your meter and then it have issues you have to take off your power that is different. But all the same you still have power in the...

0:03:25.1 S1: Okay. You still have power in the house.

0:03:25.2 S2: Yes.

0:03:27.3 S1: Okay. So in that context, will you say it's important for a government to ensure that all of these rural communities have access to energy.

0:03:37.8 S2: Oh, yes. You see some of the machines that they use for example cornmeal machines and so forth, they use, what do you call it, power. For example, if like... I'm not sure, I don't know whether there is a... You see these machines, I don't know where whether there is a... They can't afford a generator to power the cornmeal machine. They need electricity. And energy also... If you don't have power, it affects the business. Oh yes, it affects business. Because power is like water that we drink. Yeah.

0:04:15.4 S1: Yeah. Okay, so how about gender equity? How do you understand it?

0:04:20.9 S2: Gender like... Equity like...

0:04:23.3 S1: Men, Women.

0:04:25.2 S2: Yeah.

0:04:26.1 S1: Yeah, how do you understand it?

0:04:32.7 S2: Relate to power?

0:04:33.8 S1: No, in general. So recently, we've had a lot of discussions on gender equality, men and women, and all of that. I just wanted to get your understanding of it.

0:04:50.2 S2: Oh with that... In fact, let me make a point.

0:04:52.6 S1: Okay.

0:04:53.0 S2: Yes... Your father, and then mother, they got married.

0:05:03.0 S1: Yeah.

0:05:03.7 S2: And then they give birth to you.

0:05:05.7 S1: Yeah.

0:05:06.4 S2: So if you are alive, you are a lady or a guy.

0:05:11.4 S1: Yeah.

0:05:12.0 S2: But you said, You want to... You want in the other way rather in terms of maybe your sexual or other things. So how do you give birth? If your parents they thought of that, that idea, you wouldn't be here. It's not by magic, it's by through them by the grace of God that you are here. So how possibly is that? That one can't... It can't work. It doesn't make sense. Or is it man that give birth to you?

0:05:46.5 S1: No.

0:05:47.5 S2: There is no man. So how can you stop that. How can you say... No, it just doesn't make sense at all. Yes it doesn't make sense.

0:05:55.2 S1: Okay. Alright. So, let's bring it to the household level. So in the house, usually we have a man and a woman, a husband and a wife or your mom and your dad.

0:06:08.5 S2: Yes.

0:06:09.1 S1: Do you think there is some level of equality between men and women in the Ghanaian society?

0:06:16.9 S2: Well, in terms of in the house, let's say, a father has his own qualities, unique way and as well as the mother. Every parent have a role to play in the house, it is not only the man nor the woman. You see, they both assigned to a work that they are doing together. It's not like... You know... There's no... This one, a man is rather, it doesn't... That doesn't make sometimes... If you want to think in that way, that's why the Bible said you are from your family, also from a family, and then you become one. You are... You think together, you do everything together. So, to me it is all the same.

0:07:21.4 S1: Oh okay.

0:07:21.5 S2: Yes.

0:07:22.5 S1: Okay. So I like that reasoning. So let's bring that into energy, energy use. Do you think at the household level, there is some level of responsibilities in terms of energy use that the man is in charge of this, the woman is in charge of this, is there any distribution like that?

0:07:41.0 S2: It depends. You see sometimes, for example someone might decide, "Oh okay, we have two children, what do we do?" Based on both understanding. Okay, pay for school fees or the man pay for school fees, let me also pay for feeding fee or let me take care of the house and then the other things depending on the two however they want to split the work they are doing in the house.

0:08:11.7 S1: Okay, so it's the same when it comes to paying for electricity, buying charcoal...

0:08:15.1 S2: Yes, it's the same thing.

0:08:15.2 S1: Oh, okay.

0:08:15.3 S2: Do you get it? They decide. Every home... I think there's every home there's a strategy in the house of leading the house.

0:08:27.3 S1: Okay. Do you think in some households, it's the men who are in charge?

0:08:32.5 S2: If you get woman out of the house in terms of charge, you are wrong.

0:08:37.7 S1: Okay, the woman should have a role to play.

0:08:39.7 S2: Yes. They have a role to play. If it comes to family, there's so many things that is involved. Sometimes it is not always financially otherwise. It's a home and the woman is responsible for so many things in the house. Do you want to say that if a woman wake up, bathed the children, and then they went to school, they are back, prepared food for them, does it mean she's not doing anything? It's part of the house.

0:09:19.2 S1: Alright, I like that broad definition. [laughter] Okay, so, would you say that... Okay you've already talked a little bit about it but would you say that women influence the way energy is used in the house, like electricity or if it is charcoal or gas, women influence the way this energy is used?

0:09:45.8 S2: I think if you have a the proper, in terms of managing the house, all orders shouldn't come from the man. As they are growing together, they you should know that you've grown enough not to do this thing. You see, if you go out and then you go to market and you get a fan... It depends on how you're going to fetch the fan for it to blow however you want it to blow. "Oh, sweetheart, don't... This thing, the moment you finish, kindly put it off because it's dangerous to the children," You know, so if she becomes used to that.

0:10:36.0 S1: Okay.

0:10:36.1 S2: You know if you leave a fan on and you're not in the house, it consumes. It's a consumable item. They consume. So she's aware. "If you're going, please kindly switch off the fan," She will have has to do that to save the household, to save everything, I mean the consuming items of... Your credit, save that and then the risk involved whereby if you're not in the house. Electricity... Like anything happens to the children, it doesn't matter whether... So you you have to be very active in terms of the electricity in the house. You man have to take full responsibility of that and make sure everything works according to the terms of... If it comes to power in the house.

0:11:25.4 S1: Yeah. Okay. That's great. Okay, so the next question is... So if... Do you also think in terms of electricity access and use, and the use of electricity, there's a difference between households that are poor and then households that are rich, the way they access energy, the way they use it. Do you see any differences?

0:12:02.5 S2: Yes of course, there's a difference.

0:12:04.1 S1: Okay.

0:12:04.7 S2: Yes.

0:12:06.3 S1: Can you explain a little bit?

0:12:08.3 S2: Yes, a rich man has air conditioning in the house, has a deep freezer in the house, electric cooker, oven and then electric cooker, washing machine. Those are some of the things that consume a lot. But if you come to poor home. Let's say one fan, one bulb. So if you compare the two, all the things that the rich man is using in the house are consumable items. 220 items, so they consume a lot.

0:12:56.3 S1: 220?

0:12:57.0 S2: Yes, 220. If it comes to in terms of what do you call it? Gadgets like air conditioning, microwave, and so forth, their power is not 110 power. Do you get it? Air conditioning is 220, fridge 220, as a matter of fact deep freezer is 220. Do you get it? Iron, the steamer iron. They use steamer iron, they don't use normal irons. [laughter] They consume. They all... They... All the things that I have mentioned right now. They fall into that 220 power consumable. Yes, so it consumes, the bulb doesn't consume. Do you get it? They don't have much in terms of consumable gadgets in their homes so if you want to compare the air conditioning to a fan, there is far differences.

0:13:50.0 S1: Okay, okay. All right. What do you think when energy infrastructure is provided, like, you mentioned the gas, the electric stove, the washing machine, and all of that. These infrastructure, do you think it benefits women more than men or men benefit more than women?

0:14:10.9 S2: In general?

0:14:13.9 S1: Yeah.

0:14:16.5 S2: You see, if it comes to that. It benefit both. You might think it benefits only the lady.

0:14:29.0 S1: Okay.

0:14:29.0 S2: You presume that... That's a lot of people's, what do you call it, understanding that. If you have a washing machine, you have an electric cooker in the house, it helps the woman. People believe that, but you've also forgotten that the food you are going to prepare in the house you are not going to... How fast do you want it... Do you need it? You are going to work, okay. She quickly need to prepare... What do you call it, hot water, tea for the children and you yourself to take some tea before you leave. Okay, so if you don't have all those these things inside your home, what do you do? That moment, are you going to look for charcoal and set fire or firewood and set fire? No you see, so if you put... It's not only the lady.

0:15:30.5 S1: Okay, so it's not only the women who benefit. How about infrastructure, like, street lights? Yeah, if such infrastructure is provided in the community, do you think it benefits women more than men or it benefits both?

0:15:50.5 S2: It benefits everybody.

0:15:52.1 S1: Everybody equally. Okay. So we've already talked a little bit about decision making. But if we can go deep a little bit in the household or in your house, for instance, who is usually in charge of making decisions? Like, how much electricity do we buy? How much do we use? Should we buy charcoal? Should we buy gas? Who makes those decisions? Is it the man or the woman?

0:16:18.4 S2: They both think about this and make a decision.

0:16:23.3 S1: Okay.

0:16:24.0 S2: Because you need to talk about, there's less, for example, there's issue in the house. Okay, so you alone, you can't think about the issue alone, you need to communicate with your partner. To talk more about it so their solution only doesn't come from you, the man, but it comes from the both... They have to agree... They should be in a mutual agreement.

0:16:57.0 S1: Okay.

0:16:57.5 S2: Based on that. You can't say, I'm the man of the house let me do this. You know, sometimes you make the person feel, oh, or, maybe the lady feel, I'm not important in your life. Or if you only take decision anytime, anyhow you wanted it to be but by the course of the day, we are living together. So any decisions that you take which is wrong, I also feel the heat, the consequences that comes also touched me. So we need to be together, think about it and then you make the decision.

0:17:31.8 S1: I really like that response. I really like... Do you think this is the general perception or is based on your personal experience that both the man and the woman have to be making their decisions together. Is this a general... Everybody's view or it is based on your personal experiences?

0:17:50.3 S2: You know, everybody thinks different. Differently.

0:17:52.3 S1: Okay.

0:17:53.5 S2: Okay. So depending on how you communicate with your partner in the relationship. Do you get it? You need to... You see women. They are fast, they always think for us. But we make a strong case as if we are the man so, [0:18:20.0] \_\_\_\_ you know. No, the truth of the matter is, you see, you may might be having difficulty in something, making decision in something. If you think about it, think about it, think about it. But the moment you get close to your partner, discuss with her, within a second, there might be a solution. Because we have a whole lot of instinct thinking. For example. I'm saying that, you see, decision in the house. To be very honest with you. Decisions shouldn't only come from a man. It they should come from both...

0:18:54.0 S1: Both sexes...

0:18:56.9 S2: Make it a decision. Do you get it? That will make it a very good decision because you can't think alone. You can say, let me do this alone. No.

0:19:05.0 S1: Yeah. How about at the national level? Do you think women are given the opportunity to participate in say the Energy ministry, the Energy Commission? Do you see women, I mean, making decisions at that level? Have you seen it?

0:19:23.4 S2: We believe women.

0:19:26.9 S1: Okay, yeah.

0:19:28.2 S2: If we take it to the national level, we believe women is women.

0:19:36.2 S1: Okay.

0:19:36.9 S2: Okay. So, it is our mentality that makes it that way because we shouldn't think like that. We know. They are fast in thinking, they think for us, but because we say the man is the head, so everything, man has to do everything. No. If you give them a chance. Okay. That's what they say behind a successful man is a woman. Why is it that behind a successful man is a woman? Why? They are very sharp in thinking. They have opportunities. God listen to them the most. If they speak, He hears, you get it? We are not giving them opportunity because we believe they can do better.

0:20:25.7 S2: If you come to national assembly, that's the believe that they can't do better. But we should try very hard and give the women the opportunity to do something, to showcase something for us, they will do better.

0:20:40.1 S1: Okay, that's great. Let's bring it down to your business. So within your business, in your service provision, do you take into consideration, specifically these are the needs of women, these are the needs of men, do you give different services to women and different services to men or your service is general for everybody.

0:21:10.1 S2: I believe if it comes to business, service have to be equal. Because for example, if you are coming to buy [0:21:39.1] \_\_\_\_, for a good customer relationship it should be accordingly, it shouldn't be, Oh I know this person so I should save this one [0:21:57.5] \_\_\_\_. A customer is a customer. It doesn't matter, if it goes to that person, then serve the person. It should be, Oh I know this person. That's the problem we have in Ghana. That's our big problem. We know this person so, Oh let me... No, if it's accordingly, it shouldn't be two positions.

0:22:20.7 S2: We are all... As a matter of fact, they are all coming... They are coming to buy something. They are coming to buy. So why do you... The first person that came in, was standing, and they leave that person and say, Oh Uma, so let me serve Uma. You know, when it comes to business that is that. It is... If it comes to house, it's a different story. Some of it is, we don't differentiate between them, we put them together, that is an issue. To make a solid point.

0:23:01.7 S1: Okay I get you. Do you think that government policies, energy policies, also see it the same way? Like they are providing equal service to men and to women, or the government tend to differentiate the needs of women versus the needs of men when energy...

0:23:22.6 S2: In terms of energy, in house, no...

[laughter]

0:23:32.7 S1: Okay, okay. Currently do you see any gaps that the government need to address in terms of their energy provision?

0:23:46.5 S2: Well, what I can say about that is... I don't know what area where there is a solution either way. Okay, yeah figure out the collapsing, lights out...

[background conversation]

0:24:20.9 S2: On how energy helps businesses, yes, across... I think that you work other, energy efficient... Do our business. That was, you know energy was one control there. You may think it doesn't control, but it's also part, a key part in the economy.

0:24:54.4 S1: Economy. Oh okay, perfect. I think the next question, you already touched a little bit on it but I want us to go a bit deeper. So we want to understand how can we make women participation more effective. So at the national level you already said there is a mentality that women can not be second base. So from you view, how do you think we can make women to participate more effectively kind decision making at the national level?

0:25:25.1 S2: Yes, based on that... Because we put a lot of fears that, Oh women, oh... That is an issue that, we should give them courage.

0:25:38.6 S1: We should.

0:25:40.1 S2: We should encourage them, we should give them courage. Give them more support, that would make a difference. For example [0:25:49.2] \_\_\_\_. Maybe if we make an example like...

[background conversation]

0:26:13.0 S2: You have to make... Encourage, you can buy, you can buy, don't worry. It's a matter of them, you have to work at the buy, you can't... We have to give them courage. We have to support them. We have to coach them for them to understand, Oh women can do something, women also can do something. It's not only men that can do something, women, they can do better. So let's... It's about encouragement, if we give them encouragement they can do better. Oh yes, fair better.

0:26:50.9 S1: Who do you think should lead the encouragement, is it their education system? Is it the government? Is it the individuals for the household?

0:27:00.3 S2: Across. Across can do it.

0:27:03.2 S1: Everybody?

0:27:03.8 S2: Everybody. If you have confidence in someone. You know they have that belief in them, always there's a section that women... Women should be in the house and cook. That perception is there already, you see? But if you give them opportunity, they can do better. We need to encourage them, they have that facing them because that perception is there already. It is not physically said, it hasn't been said by me, but still it happens. Yes, they have that perception that women...

0:28:00.3 S1: So we need to be able to change that perception?

0:28:01.4 S2: Oh yeah we need to change that perception. If we change that perception, women... We've got to.

0:28:11.8 S1: Okay.

0:28:14.7 S2: They have more to say. Women [0:28:16.0] \_\_\_\_. I dont know but apart from your generation, okay, over here, I cry here. You can only see a few babies, here's why, they are afraid. Because we don't give them confidence, we don't support them, "Oh you can do it. Oh you can do it. You can. You can do it."

[noise]

0:28:47.2 S2: We just have to be smart people, we can it.

[overlapping conversation]

0:29:01.0 S2: They are afraid.

0:29:02.1 S1: In Ghana?

0:29:02.5 S2: Yes in Ghana, they've always put the fears into them. Okay, I'm just using motorcycle... You put fears in them, that is the issue. They need our support.

0:29:21.5 S1: I really... I like the perspective.

[overlapping conversation]

0:29:34.6 S1: I think you've actually addressed the next question, so I was about to ask like, what would be the best practice, in an ideal situation what should we do? And I think you've addressed that.

0:29:49.4 S2: Yeah.

0:29:53.4 S1: So, let's talk a little bit about the different sources of energy that's available. So currently in a typical Ghanaian household, they usually have like electricity, that's the national grid, they have maybe charcoal, some people also use wood, some people also use LPG.

0:30:22.0 S2: Yeah LPG.

0:30:23.3 S1: Yeah, yeah. On a household level have you seen any changes in terms of the type of energy that people are using?

0:30:33.4 S2: Those are some of the common...

[noise]

0:30:47.1 S2: Gas, stove and then electric and so forth. That's what...

0:30:56.7 S1: Which one do you think is the majority at the household level? Which energy source do people use?

0:31:00.6 S2: LPG.

0:31:01.4 S1: LPG?

0:31:02.1 S2: Yes LPG.

0:31:03.5 S1: Okay. As compared to charcoal and others?

0:31:08.7 S2: Yes, the reason is that electric cooker [0:31:17.9] \_\_\_\_. So that LPG runs the home. Yes.

0:31:37.9 S1: How about solar energy? Have you seen people using solar energy?

0:31:42.0 S2: I think solar is expensive.

0:31:45.3 S1: Oh okay.

0:31:46.8 S2: Yes, solar is expensive, that's the reason why. But the sun is very hot here, solar can help us but I think the cost involved in solar is a little bit... So it makes it more, electricity, in terms of the distance there. Energy, [0:32:20.3] \_\_\_\_.

0:32:23.3 S1: Okay, so apart from the cost involved, are there any other challenges that inhibit or limit people or womens use of like Solar Energy and others?

0:32:37.8 S2: It is not common. Solar is not common use. Solar is not common. If some companies tried to start... The cost involved is too expensive. That's the reason why. It is not common.

0:33:05.1 S1: Yeah, I think that was the last question.

0:33:08.1 S2: Solar is expensive, installing and everything, it's far too expensive.

0:33:14.2 S1: Okay, I see.

0:33:19.2 S2: We like to please, Africans, we like things that are durable, that we can consume that wouldn't cost that much. So I think [0:33:38.2] \_\_\_\_, I think we can do much better sourcing the power, in general, in terms of the...

[overlapping conversation]

0:33:58.5 S1: Thank you very much. I really appreciate your time. So it's an ongoing research so maybe later... Later we'll probably... Thank you.