Transcript 3

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| Interviewer name | XXXX |
| Sub-contractor organisation | ARU |
| Interview date | 16 December, 2020 |
| Duration of interview audio recording | 50 mins 17 secs |
| Face-to-face or virtual interview | Virtual |
| Interview participant | |
| * Code | P3 |
| * Participant name | XXXX |
| * Organisation name | XXXX |
| * Gender | Female |
| * Stakeholder category | Energy Finance / Delivering Services and Solutions |
| * Country | Pakistan |

**Part 1: Overview of Role & Work Priorities**

INTERVIEWER: Work experience or based on your different practical experiences you have had in the energy sector, we would be expecting you to respond in terms of what you think and feel about it in relation to the existing norms and policies. So, for documentation purposes, we will be recording this interview, voice only. However only the reserachers will have access to the interview and we wont be sharing this with any one outside the research team. Roughly, it would take about one hour to complete the interview. It concludes faster if you do it faster, but roughly takes one hour. So are you ready to begin?

RESPONDENT Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Perfect. So can you begin by telling me about your current role and position? Which organization you work for, which department you work for?

RESPONDENT I am working as an Energy Specialist at the XXXX, XXXX. And there are a number of projects I am involved with as energy specialist. Most of the projects are to do with large project financing like XXXX, or XXXX. XXXXX

INTERVIEWER: perfect, so there is a lot of exciting stuff happening. Can you talk a little bit about your background and how and why you got into this line of work? And how did you end up at the XXXX?

RESPONDENT Right, so I have done economics from XXXX and then I worked at XXXX

INTERVIEWER: Right, and more or less your work has been focused on energy access right?

RESPONDENT no, so it’s been renewable energy, energy efficiency. Energy access work, I have actually started now. So it’s been more on like power sector reforms, energy efficiency, renewable energy to some extent. Initially the XXXX work was research but it wasn’t any major ground work. The actual work I am doing on energy access, which I am very hopeful that will inform policy, is this work that I am doing as the XXXX (at the XXXX)

INTERVIEWER: so specifically if we get into the energy access areas issues that you are working on is the XXXX project you just spoke about?

RESPONDENT Essential the idea is that the XXXX has not had any energy access project, they only have the XXXX that has an energy access component. And when I joined the xxxx, I thought that we should expand the work and do more on energy access as Bank so, this is basically analytical work to inform banks future energy access projects. So main purpose / objective is that any projects we wish to do in future related to mini-grids, or solar home systems, so we have the analytical data to tell us where does it make the most sense to have grid extension or to have mini-grids.

INTERVIEWER: In relation to the policy context shaping your work, what current issues or developments in policies at state and national level influence your work?

RESPONDENT energy access related?

INTERVIEWER: Yeah, your current work, what are the issues or developments in policy that actually influence you? Or are you guys influencing policy in days to come?

RESPONDENT Yeah, its two ways. I mean our analytical work is meant to inform government policy and also influence policy in a way, but I don’t want to say influence to make it seem that the XXXX is influencing policy, but the focus of the current government for example compared to the focus of the previous government, because they had an 7000 MW power shortage and they had the objective to fill the demand supply gap – and there was the issue of circular debt. So we then worked … at that time the bank worked with the government to address the circular debt issue. And this government when it came, the demand supply gap was filled but it was more like cost of electricity was very high and there was not much renewable energy in the electricity mix so the focus of this government was clean energy and that’s what influenced our work on renewable energy – the variable energy integration study that we did that informed our xxx targets so again, PM Imran Khan spoke about clean energy at the climate summit and in the previous tenure the last government also worked on micro-hydro projects in KP province, so you can see that the focus of the government is to make sure there is electrification – universal energy access. Given this priority of the government, we discussed with XXXX and came up with the idea of the study for least cost electrification plan, national household energy survey, mini-grid readiness assessment portfolio so all these studies can inform government energy access strategies. So, yes our work is influenced by the objectives the government has, the road map the government has, the vision the government has for the energy sector. And the power sector reforms obviously stems from the reforms that the government has announced, for example the minister of energy has announced that power cost has to be reduced or the renegotiations with IPPs or subsidy reforms, tariff reforms, that is also something that the XXXX is advising or helping the government on.

**Part 2: Understanding the Issues**

INTERVIEWER: Perfect. That sounds great. So if I move on to the second part of this interview, which is about understanding the issues. What does equitable energy access mean to you? What would it look like if we talk in terms of SDG 7?

RESPONDENT The first thing that comes to my mind when I think of equitable energy access is exactly what I am working on is to make sure that everybody has access to basic, sorry, not just basic lighting and heating – not just fulfilling basic lighting / heating needs which is what we have focused on that they should have access to a light bulb or they have a fan and radio or mobile charger. That’s how we define energy access. But on the energy ladder, that is at the very basic level – the minimum that you can provide but once that energy need is met, then you have other needs like you need heating, cooling, productive use e.g. women who can power their businesses, run a salon, have a stitching business. Then farmers can be running a tube well or other agricultural tools. In Pakistan around 73% areas of areas are electrified. And when you talk about access to energy, it is not just power, it is also your gas. Only 27% of the population actually has piped gas network and the rest other 20-30% are using LPG who are meeting their cooking and heating needs and the rest of them are actually just burning firewood. So there is huge gaps in equitable energy access but there is a lot of gaps in reliable data as well. So, as a policy maker or as someone who can influence policy, the first step for me is finding out what the actual situation is on the ground and then coming up with policies and then making sure that the electricity access – when these households get electricity, it does not only benefit the men, but also benefit the women as well, because they are sitting at home. They are sitting in the dark, they need to teach their kids, they have to do their chores – it is evening by the time the finish collecting firewood, there are security hazards as well, safety hazard as well – the kind of cook stoves that they have are not too safe.

INTERVIEWER: Right, so you have already sort of started getting into it but more specifically if we speak about gender equity in energy access, what does it mean to you? Do you think it should be a priority for policy and interventions?

RESPONDENT It should be, it must be, except that it’s not been a priority or concern at all. But I’ll be talking about the access related gender concerns or overall?

INTERVIEWER: Gender equity in energy access.

RESPONDENT Energy access ok. So exactly what I was talking about. The domestic use in homes is largely women, they are the ones who are sitting at home. I won’t generalize but, in our population, generally, the women stay at home and the men go outside to earn / work in the office. And therefore… especially when we are talking about poor-grid areas / off-grid areas, we have seen, there are statistics on the number of women and children who are affected because of the smoke that comes out of the cooking stoves that they use, which are not safe, or environmentally safe / healthy at all. So for them it is extremely important that when we are... and that’s why because it affects women more than men. I have been in meetings for the XXXX action plan in which we were working with provincial stakeholders, national stakeholders and then we would start talking about cooking stoves and men would go, oh that’s not a problem for Pakistan. Our women have been using these cooking stoves since forever and there are no issues with them. They don’t even think of it as a problem. Again because 1) they are too far; policy makers are too far removed from the ground reality in areas where there is this problem and 2) because they are not the ones who are being affected. If you speak to men who live in rural areas, they will not know also because its women who are being affected. So, the gender concerns or aspects, incorporating them in policy is extremely important. And its not just about health, its also about safety. Women and children are the one who go and collect firewood, how safe is that. If there is no electricity at night, and then moving on, if there is electricity at home, beyond doing household chores these women can actually engage in productive business-like stitching, sewing, running a salon, and having a computer at home, where they can do remote work. So, all these opportunities can only happen when there is electricity access, basic electricity need in households in being fulfilled.

INTERVIEWER: So, in terms of the XXXX for example, how do you understand the consumer needs? The question being that do you rely on existing statistics or government reports or do you do your own research and on-ground surveys?

RESPONDENT Its mostly our own research and on ground surveys. So, the energy access team that I was talking about, one part of that is national household energy survey that are going to do. That will also give us gender disaggregated data on what kind of consumption needs, electricity consumption needs that there are, how they differ across men and women in those areas where the respondent households are or willingness to pay, what are the loads, what are the electricity demands. If the XXXX has to do any kind of big project that involves strategy and planning of policies that we advise the government, help the government with is informed by our own research and ground survey.

INTERVIEWER: How important is gender as a criterion in this?

RESPONDENT Gender is an extremely important criteria in this because this is an XXXX so XXXX has its own requirements in terms of gender, I mean we have to make sure that whatever we are doing has gender considerations and that is why the data we will be collecting, the questionnaire that will be used to collect household energy data will actually have questions on who is head of households, what does the head of household do, what is the consumption for the head of household, what are the demands of energy for female members, and then the interventions that are designed after we get the data – we actually use this data to design interventions which benefit women. We make sure that women benefit from any projects that we do.

Just to give an example of this, on the XXXX, the energy access component is sort of result-based lending. And there they will actually… the firms who will be selling solar home systems to the consumers in off-grid areas in XXXX, will get a higher subsidy if they provide this solar home system / sell this solar home system to a household that is headed by a female. So, these sorts of interventions are there. Some other things we can consider and we will consider is what kind of businesses are being run for example the household energy survey also has a micro-enterprise component / survey where we can get information on in these off-grid / poor grid rural areas, what kind of business women are involved in and how those businesses can be benefitted from access to electricity.

INTERVIEWER: perfect and probably, we got into this a little bit earlier, but how equitable is energy access at community and household level in terms of gender equity?

RESPONDENT I am not such an expert on this as I haven’t gone to the ground and actually seen how this differs, but in my knowledge, what I have heard from people and what I have read from reports and stories, I don’t think my answer will differ from what I have said already. Meaning in the areas where there is no light, they will still be burning kerosene or using candles. I mean I am talking about the poor of the poor. Over there of course, if there is only limited financial strength, when the man is going out, he will take the lamp and the women will be sitting with the children in the dark. Or there will be an arrangement that even if the lamp is at home, that is dangerous for the woman or child sitting inside. If it’s a better household, then they will have a diesel generator or an alternate source of energy, even a solar home system – if it has to power a business, it will power the business of the man, not the business of the woman.

INTERVIEWER: So how does gender affect the way that energy is used in households? I know you already spoke a little bit about cooking, you’ve also briefly touched on lighting for example, but if you could elaborate a little bit on how men and women use energy differently?

RESPONDENT If we look at urban cities, women are the ones who are sitting at home, or generally cooking, using lighting, doing household chores and then of course where you have television access - In better off households… again should I just talk about rural areas or off-grid, where there is no energy access or there is little access.

INTERVIEWER: General. We are talking about households.

RESPONDENT So in terms of households of course, there is more usage of television, washing machine, microwaves. This will be a bit more generalized again, in cities, men are usually the ones who pay electricity bills, women are not paying electricity bills so they do not know what electricity tariffs are, what off-peak rates are and that’s why behind our electricity bills it is also written that women should reduce their electricity usage, specially when there was electricity shortage and there were issues with peak and off-peak consumption. And they are the major consumers of electricity in your... at your homes. Similarly, if we look in the low-income areas or the poor of the poor, the reason that women would be using electricity in a house to do household chores, whereas the men would be generally coming back in the evening, and their use would be mostly lighting because they are coming at night.

INTERVIEWER: Do different groups of women benefit from access to energy differently; for example, older and younger women or if income groups are different or where they are based in the community, maybe religious or ethnic and cultural groups?

RESPONDENT I don’t know about ethnic or cultural groups, again, I don’t have any on ground experience as such, but of course if its an educated woman or if its … a woman from a better income area they can use their access to electricity for running their business, working remotely, she will have access to a computer, she will have access to resources for running a business. If we are talking about a very low income group they don’t have access to any finance, access to any resources, they don’t have time to be able to do anything than taking care of their families. Whatever their social income status determines how they can benefit from energy access, electricity access.

INTERVIEWER: Right, and so is the XXXX or your project going to be providing any energy infrastructure or its just the research kind of project you are doing?

RESPONDENT So for now, as I said, my project is XXXX, its technical assistance. XXXX funding is only for research but then moving on, this will inform our investment project. Because, at the end of the day it’s the XXXX and we do invest as well. Our research is to inform policy but its to inform our investment projects as well. The idea is to have a mini-grid project or energy access project. We are doing a small one in XXXX but we would like to extend to other provinces, particularly KP and Balochistan which have huge access gaps.

INTERVIEWER: Pretty good. So, of course in your experience, when new energy infrastructure and technologies are provided, what is the difference between who benefits more, men or women?

RESPONDENT Generally, men benefit more because that is something, our projects take into consideration as well.. when your project is designed its crucial that you have community engagement as well. What happens in that community engagement is there are stakeholder consultations - especially when you go into rural areas, because of the cultural norms, you will see that the women don’t come to stakeholder consultations and only the men are there. Hence when your project is being designed or results of consultations overlook the voice of women. That is why its extremely important, that’s why we have a very big.. our social safeguards group ensures that the consultations that are being done involve women as well, because they are generally left out. Even our teams are mostly male dominant – any policy that they are going to come up with or any technology design or intervention they will come up with, generally, they will think with a male mindset. With that lens. So its extremely important to have females in our team and also important to have females on the stakeholder consultation groups as well because they are the ones who are going to benefit the most from this as well.

INTERVIEWER: And so I can understand your response to mean that men and women don’t participate equally in decision making about energy access?

RESPONDENT Yeah, I mean it varies from household to household, but generally in rural areas and urban areas as well, males are head of the household. So energy access decisions are co-dominated by men.

INTERVIEWER: and in relation to finance related to energy access what is the participation like again, men vs women?

RESPONDENT say that again, access to finance or decision making?

INTERVIEWER: In relation to making decisions about finance related to energy technologies or energy access, who has or you know what is the participation of men and women like?

RESPONDENT Again, I am trying to understand the questions, financing like people who are financing these interventions or technologies or talking about the people in the household?

INTERVIEWER: you could probably answer from both scales, so lets’ say the household level, the larger level, larger scale as well.

RESPONDENT I think at household or larger level its quite similar. I mean at the larger level we have men as policy makers and heading all the finances or making decisions about financing as well, people who head or lead financial institutions. I mean if we look at microfinance banks, they provide with a lot of small loans given to such businesses that include female led / female run business. They are now being given priority. But in terms of households, if its male headed, you will see the energy access finance decision is taken by men, if it’s a female headed household then maybe a woman, but then again financial decisions in that situation are taken by men as well.

There are very few households where the financial decision is.. because it depends, if the woman is earning, there are a lot of households where the man of the household is not earning, the woman is earning, even in those we will see a large percentage of the men not contributing financially but they will be the ones, because of cultural norms women will leave financial decisions to them.

INTERVIEWER: and in terms of urban and rural context, is gender equity in energy access different between the two contexts?

RESPONDENT In urban areas, yeah because there is grid electricity. Where there is grid electricity it doesn’t differ between men and women. It’s just the usage that differs. But in terms of when you go to rural areas, where there is no electricity, where you have to run a diesel generator, or a solar home system or whatever else – there are limited resources and you do not get 24/7 electricity, then if you have to run the diesel gen set, they will run it in the evening when the men are coming home. Or they will be using the diesel generator, the limited resource that they have, to power the tube well or whatever or any business the man has while the women and children stay at home without lights / fans during the day.

INTERVIEWER: How do you know about all these issues; is there some evidence that you are drawing on or experience that you have with this?

RESPONDENT Experience as well as talking to people around me who come from small cities in rural areas so their stories. As well as some research that has been done. There hasn’t been much research done about energy access unfortunately but whatever little research XXXX has done on that basis.

**Part 3: Policies and Interventions**

INTERVIEWER: Right. Fair enough. So I am going to move on to the next part of the interview which is about policies and interventions. To what extent does gender equity factor in your work on energy access? If you could give one or two clear examples of projects and priorities.

RESPONDENT As I mentioned the XXXX in terms of energy access, where the higher subsidy is going to be given to suppliers who ensure solar assets are being sold to female headed households. Again on energy access, since I haven’t worked on project yet, we are still at the study stage, we are just going to make sure that our research captures this gender disaggregated data. And this difference in energy access between females and males. And then based on that we will be designing interventions to ensure that females also benefit from energy access and not just men benefitting.

INTERVIEWER: Thinking beyond your specific work, do you think energy access policies in your region/ sector should be gender sensitive? And in what ways?

RESPONDENT Yes, I mean gender specific, especially when we are talking about access. I mean all the problems that we talk about how there is, there isn’t equity in access to energy between males and females in Pakistan so it is important that when the government talks about energy access it does not just benefit men only. So, the consideration in that is how do women use energy, what kind of... what are their electricity consumption needs? If we talk about cooking so if it’s a health hazard the kind of cooking stove they are using, if they are burning biomass or firewood, and if it’s a health hazard then how can you design cooking stoves or how will you reduce this safety hazard, whether its extending grid, whether its different kinds of technologies for cooking which is more secure. Or is more environmentally friendly as well. And then for lighting, we replace kerosene, we make sure that females do not have to go and collect firewood which is a security hazard, they should have gas, electricity, electricity to power businesses and productive use of electricity and what kind of access to finance they can have to be able to run their businesses as well as obtain electricity for households. There are several ways in which policy can make sure that energy access is equitable across genders.

INTERVIEWER: And if you think about Pakistan’s policy, what are the sort of gaps that you feel there are in it, if at all?

RESPONDENT In terms of Pakistan, one, there is no policy on access. There is nothing, no strategy access, leave alone having any gender concerns on that policy. There are gaps in regulation as well – first there is even gap in data to know through GIS where electricity is available or not available, what is the population density, what are the needs of schools and what are the needs of hospitals – there is so much that you require in terms of information in terms of what exactly are the energy needs today and are going to be in the next 10 years. Then what is the need of households, how does it differ across provinces, how does it differ across communities and then informing policy and then coming up with a strategy as well. Even our market for solar home systems is very small compared to the size of the off-grid market.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of… are you aware of any social policies that have an impact on energy equity?

RESPONDENT I cannot think of any right now, I am sure there are some –the Ehsaas program for example, the cash transfer programs for poor people, but again once they have access to money, they can use this money to have access to, buy small solar home systems – they can at least meet their needs. So different social programs like this but I am not an expert on social programs.

INTERVIEWER: Imagining there is no policy or financial constraints, in an ideal situation, what in your view would be the best practice for achieving gender equity in energy access for Pakistan?

RESPONDENT One would be to make sure that everybody is getting affordable and reliable electricity, that is the basic. We are talking about the scenario where there is no constraint on resources so getting quality electricity that is not go and that effects everyone, not just people in off-grid / poor grid areas, but it affects us as well because businesses are dependent on that – if you have 20 hours of load shedding, ok that used to be the case 5 years back, but now in rural areas for example there are 8 hours of load shedding, how are they going to do anything, how is any one going to function if there is no light and they have to bear the extreme heat and don’t have access to cooling. And then of course it’s not just about getting an electric connection, there are many areas in Pakistan that are electric poor – that does not necesarrily mean that they are using their electricity because it is expensive to either get a connection or there is no current in those wires. So not just Pakistan in the case of all developing countries it is important and it will affect both genders and benefit both genders when you are getting affordable electricity. Because if it’s not affordable then you have to make a decision right that there are limited resources so who will use them. So, it has to be affordable and reliable.

INTERVIEWER: In terms of your current position, what role could you or your organization play in achieving this?

RESPONDENT XXXX is an important partner and one of the biggest investors and donors in the energy sector, we have a very very big portfolio in energy. It is not just through investment projects that we can help the government but also in prioritizing energy access and coming up with strategies and influencing policies that we were talking about earlier, in terms of government access targets and make sure they are prioritized. RE is becoming a priority for the bank and gender is a priority as well, in terms of the partnerships that we are working on – gender and green jobs are a very big part of that strategy. So when we talk about energy access and gender equity, we can now provide energy to all these off-grid areas through renewable energy and also create jobs. For example in Bangladesh and India there is a group of solar sisters, women have been trained as technicians to repair solar systems and sell solar. So, you are not only making sure that they get electricity for use but there are jobs for women as well in this sector.

**Part 4: Topical Questions**

INTERVIEWER: So just to sort of … concluding couple of questions. How balanced is gender representation in various decision-making bodies within energy governance structures in Pakistan?

RESPONDENT So… what there 5% or 6% of women in the energy sector, so you.. when you go to the upper bodies that are making policies, the representation is probably like 1% or 2% so its highly unbalanced.

INTERVIEWER: Right, and do you think (renewable) energy access finance processes are gender aware or gender sensitive? You could consider for example any national financing or local financing, like you spoke about microfinance. XXXX has a Green Loan Policy?

RESPONDENT so what about them, in terms of gender considerations?

INTERVIEWER: yeah so are these financing processes gender aware or sensitive or are they kind of developed in oblivion.

RESPONDENT I think they are gender neutral and developed in oblivion. I don’t know of any financing schemes that actually benefits (Women) – I don’t know so much about micro-finance maybe it does because there are some incentives like they get a bonus or they get something on providing loans to women led businesses. But the larger state bank policies have nothing like that.

**Part 5: Closing**

INTERVIEWER: Right. You have already spoken about the key challenges in terms of finance, you are not probably aware of that but that is also fine. Okay, is there anything we have not discussed on this topic that you would like to add – thinking about SDG 7, energy access and gender equity.

RESPONDENT no, I don’t think so. I can’t think of anything right now.

INTERVIEWER: and would you be available for any follow-up questions should they arise?

RESPONDENT sure. Over email.

INTERVIEWER: anybody else you think, we should be interviewing on this topic?

RESPONDENT you can speak with xxxx.

INTERVIEWER: thank you very much for your time. In terms of the transcript, once I am done, I would like to share it with you. Maybe you can review and give feedback this makes sense or doesn’t add up. Won’t keep you any longer, thank you so much for your time and we will be in touch.