**Transcript 9**

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INTERVIEWER: Let me start the backup recorder. Ok. So I am just going to start by taking you through a checklist of the things that we just want recorded. Before we start, I would like to check that you have completed and returned the consent form?

RESPONDENT: That is correct.

Through this interview we would request you to share your experience and expertise as someone working in the energy sector, not directly but indirectly – that is fine, as well as your views and opinions on gender equity in energy access.

RESPONDENT: Sure.

INTERVIEWER: Is it ok if we record this interview.

RESPONDENT: Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER: so the recorded interview will be transcribed for analysis and a copy of the transcript will be shared with you for your approval.

RESPONDENT: okay, fantastic. Thank you.

INTERVIEWER: All the information we obtain serves the sole purpose of this study and will be seen only by the research team. Your name and any other identifying features will not be used anywhere in reports and other publications emerging from this study.

RESPONDENT: Okay, thank you.

**Part 1: Introduction**

INTERVIEWER: Okay, roughly it will take us one hour depending on how long your answers are, so lets start. Can you start by briefly telling me a bit about your current role and the organization or the department, or basically what you are working for?

RESPONDENT: Sure. So umm the kind of cohesiveness that brings together the different work I do is the fact that it’s all within what is described as the inclusive creative economy. So um I run a social enterprise that basically brings to market or to a platform um small business, small batch handmade production from across Pakistan. We work with two kinds of actors, one we work with small businesses most of which are women owned but we also work directly with artisans especially home bound who are a women but also young men who are often left out of the conversation, particularly when there’s a dying skill and we feel that you know these men will not continue taking this graph forward unless the market is found for it. So, this is how I work in the cultural space and umm that, “Polly and Other Stories” umm that’s a um market facing um piece of work um that we do.

Umm the other work that I do is more sort of in the consulting or not for profit space. In that, work is pretty varied. I support these small not for profit called XXXX umm in the interest of full disclosure which was founded XXXX who currently on the board but not leading anymore. And some of the work that we do under this nonprofit, um even my role is not full time, we have a team managing it but in includes umm a variety of things because XXXX’s mandate is primarily women’s economic empowerment and with that comes you know gender rights, access umm little bit of you know umm political access as well. Umm but there’s a whole bunch of training and capacity development as well as network.. as well as network development work that we do. So one of the key things that XXXX has being doing over the past few years is, umm its role as a a curator for the XXXXwhich is where I take a lead on behalf of the organization. The women of the festival is a feminist festival that started in the UK back in 2010 and that is across 6 continents, over 2 million people have attended festivals all over the world. If I am not wrong these have happened in 60+ cities at this point.

Umm so this is the role that we play and the other things that we do is the whole bunch of work I guess is quite eclectic but it would include work um that we are doing right now for example with the XXXX in which we are working with the XXXX umm so they kind of meet a lot of the same have a lot of the same issues with the home bound women in Pakistan do in rural areas umm except the issues are augmented by their refugee status umm so a bit of skill building um as well as product development work. Umm we’ve got them, we’ve started looking at how to you know use digital technology increasingly in the work that we do so we’ve teach them simple skills like you know how to decode in marriages or how to market using you know using simple cell phones and things like that. Umm and finally as I said, in my consulting capacity and this is probably where I still do have a little bit of interest at with umm you know in, in a more linear way any way with sort of energy movement would be that I still do consulting work, I do a whole variety of it but currently I am working with the XXXX. There’s a whole bunch of environmental impact assessment reports that I am helping them finalize and umm yeah so that’s what I do.

INTERVIEWER: Excellent, so can you tell me a bit about your background and how and why you got into this line of work?

RESPONDENT: Umm, okay so my background um is, is not a linear path unfortunately so it’s a bit of convoluted story. Umm I completed of, my umm my first job was at the XXXX umm I had done my masters in international relations, I was very very keen on working in the environment umm and you know I was very passionate about animal rights really interested in endangered species, I was very young at this time. This is about you know umm XXXX years ago. Umm I was talking to a friend recently and I realized I was only XXXX when I was doing this but any way umm at that time, I was working with what eventually became XXXXs XXXX and is currently called its XXXX. So, this was kind of the people that I was working with. We did the whole bunch of work but I think what really stands out and kind of became formative to where I ended up later was a particular project that I did at that when I was there. There was a report at the time called umm you know released by a commission that was formed, called umm XXXX. Umm and at that time I just really became interested in the role of policy in all of this and I went abroad to study public policy. I came back thinking, I will work for the government, I did, I lasted XXXX. It is for a more patient person than I.. I left and I returned to the not-for-profit sector and I have been there since I guess you could say one which way form or the other. Umm but what’s interesting and what has remained kind of umm core of my work has been the focus on women particularly. So even when I was in XXXX I was doing technical work but with that gender focus. I don’t know if I gone off tract or answered your question.

INTERVIEWER: It’s perfect. I get a very clear understanding. It’s about your passion, your interest and how you got into this. So you have done it really well! So the next question really is about your involvement with energy issues. So can you tell me a bit specifically, about the work you have done with energy access, and what specific projects, or policies or technology development that you have worked with?

RESPONDENT: Umm again I think none of this is recent but when I was with XXXX as I said we were working on both the impact of large hydro power dam development but we were also looking out to meet energy needs of communities. Umm small umm sort of community led um hydro dams. Umm those were really interesting projects and I think it was fascinating to look at both community perception and most this work was with rural populations, umm both upstream and downstream, so we did work in XXXX, we did work in the Punjab, we did work in as I said XXXX. I was with the XXXX for about 4 and a half years so you know this was a significant work we did at that period of time. And to me what was really interesting was umm the gender nature of both decision making and access when it came to what would happen once access to energy was established. Umm this was just as true for GB as it was for XXXX so you know things like there would be umm elders in the village who did not want the village electrified because they were worried about the impact of at that time television but I am guessing now its mobile, technology and internet on their young people. Umm I am sure some of the conversation has been taken away from them while everybody logs on to Tik Tok and does exactly as they feel umm but umm you know that was one thing that I did, one major piece of work and the second piece of work that I had the opportunity to do was when we were very heavily involved in umm as I said umm economic empowerment projects which take different forms but one piece we were doing was market access work umm you know particularly downtrodden communities in rural XXXX who had you know really nothing was working for them. Drought and water logging had damaged their lands so they no longer had access to that, fishing had taken a down turn because they don’t know how to manage that properly. They often trap… harvest the fish at the time when they should be allowing them to breed so there were a ton of issues that we were working on with putting in the fisheries space. But one of the things that we were able in the short term was to link them to crafts based umm employment. Umm ..umm because as I said the land was also damaged so we couldn’t do too much around you know the food industry as well. Umm but one of their key issues was the lack of consistent energy, they did have access in that electricity had reached these villages but access was poor. There would be no electricity for 3 days at a stretch. So we did some around solar power development. This was back in umm.. gosh this was a while ago 2007, 8 and 9 this is when the project happened. Umm We at that time, there were no real suppliers in Pakistan so we kind of imported stuff from xxxx. And… it was really you know we were doing a little bit of work on trying to build local capacity to repair and maintain these kits as well. But what was really interesting and even though this was very small teeny tiny pilot project because we were looking for solutions for these women because often during the day their domestic labor particularly when it comes to you know productive reproductive both umm you know they get of these livestock, whatever little fields they have, kitchen, garden, they have to manage that.. kids.. clothes.. food…. Their time was taken up by all of these activities the the only time they could really sit and focus on their work was towards the evening and then you know obviously the sun would set and those hours they were not able to use them. And therefore, delay orders or not be able to complete them on time and the market would respond by cancelling orders and not paying them. So, for us, this was a solution to an economic problem but it was a very interesting one to work on.

INTERVIEWER: Ok the next question then, in relation to the policy context, shaping your work, what current issues or development in policies, whether at the provincial or national level influence your work, if any?

RESPONDENT: Do you mean work within the energy space?

INTERVIEWER: I mean… yes .. but also more generally for example in your work at XXXX, are there any specific policies you have to work in relation to or under? Is there any such policy, maybe it provincial level or national level that influences you?

RESPONDENT: Absolutely, so I think the most significant one in recent times has been one which we were part for lobby in for as well is the home-based workers policy because one of issues with lot of the people we work with, particularly the women is that they often what people called the informal economy or they are undocumented or there are so many terms that are used for them. People call then home based workers as well, umm you know there are some interesting statistics around it which will kind of give you some idea of the scope or the… the scale of the issue but in Pakistan there are 20 million um documented um home based workers, right?! of which 12 million are women and girls. I mean not including women with an ex at this point because even they have been now addressed under the same policy for home based workers so I think you know the issue for us is mostly there is a lot of exploitation because of lack of policy because they don’t have any legal status at all, they don’t, their enterprises don’t umm and increasingly with the government coming down on ridiculous things. I called them ridiculous because they seem to have no meaning on the ground level is that you know now for example… I’ll give you a teeny tiny example umm it’s like so if you manage to get somebody like say XXXX to give these women an order right? You will go mad, even if you bring them this opportunity .., so now they will say that XXXX should be treat them as a vendor and deduct without holding tax umm so you can only imagine the impact at the community level where a lot of these women if they do even have their CNIC they are to, due to range of socio culture issues unable to give it and even if they do give it they are.. not registered therefore your tax rate the withholding tax for somebody whose unregistered is way higher than it is for somebody who is registered right?! So, the brand that is working with them is no longer interested in working with them because these women cannot take the hit so the brand has to take the hit. So, it’s already complicated and messed up, there’s no understanding of what their needs are, how they are to be treated in both legal and sort of um regulatory or compliance frameworks. Everybody wants to push this agenda, umm if you know empowerment and economic development but without any sense of, even if you take just the 20 million who are registered, they are small amount of our population whose needs were completely attained

**Part 2: Understanding the Issues**

INTERVIEWER: XXXX.. I can’t imagine. Where do we start addressing this problem? Okay, so part two, is about understanding of the issue. So the first question is what does equitable energy access mean to you?

RESPONDENT: So I guess for me, the key words here would be decision making, right! About its both access and use, so I think really when it comes to umm households or even if you will communities where access is limited or constrained for a variety of reasons, right! It’s, it’s umm usage becomes increasingly gendered so you know men would you still go out I mean if, if a village has poor electrification or poor access umm so men will still go out to you know sit at their road side hotels or like you know tea houses or whatever you want to call them and their I think with the promulgation of solar technology you will still find that if nothing else, they will have the facility of mobile charging for example right! Men’s phones get charged but the poor women because they don’t get out and because their work and their voice is not considered important they sometimes can’t even charge their device. And I know I keep go, hoping on about the digital but to me it is.. it is a human right, right! And I think, particularly during covid where all of us, those of us who survived it with some degree of sanity have done so because we had access to technology and energy so when was to turn our laptops or televisions or our internet or even now you know when we have houses that we can keep warm I think those issues are endemic in the community where women just don’t, I mean they keep warm using their kitchen stoves, they don’t have access to anything else. Even if there is a heater, the men gets it right! So so those issues do exist in the community.

INTERVIEWER: Ok so you have answered yourself the second question that was about gender equity, that what does gender equity in energy access mean to you? If you want to add something else to this please, go ahead.

RESPONDENT: I mean for me and I think this is just probably a strong bias of the work I do, a lot of this lack of equity if you will umm or lack of access or decision making whatever you want to call it comes from umm obviously comes from power differentials which are gendered. That is given… but so the women in ability to understand their rights with in this context, right! So we always as a culture we reward the, we reward women for for victimizing themselves, right.. for for sacrifing themselves. Umm I think therefore you know when it comes to things like energy as well, you you will see that right, the women will say sacrifice her needs or the girls sacrifice their needs for the male members of the family because that is considered umm desirable trait. And I think that’s just one of the issues that is critical to any kind of access conversation that we have in this country. As long as we continue to glorify this role, women themselves will not fight for anything else.

INTERVIEWER: and do you think it should be a priority for policy and intervention to look at gender and equity in energy access?

RESPONDENT: Umm, yeah I mean of course it should be. Umm I just think I mean you’ll have to forgive me for being a cynic, I just think we are so far from that conversation that I don’t know quite how to umm answer this.

INTERVIEWER: that is ok. We will record your, lack of.. maybe some sort off..

RESPONDENT: lack of faith?

INTERVIEWER: in the system which is quite understandable. Okay, next question is, how is demand for energy determined? How does your organization come to understand consumer needs? You can talk a bit about what work do you do on ground, any surveys or any research that you do? How is basically this demand understood and is gender a criteria in understanding that demand?

RESPONDENT: Umm, so I won’t be addressing energy access directly because to be honest we when we go into the community we absolutely do… before we begin any work, we absolutely do base line surveys and yes that is gender segregated so we do look at that. Umm we look at you know um young people, we look at the elderly separately so we try and keep it umm as intersectional as we can. Umm we are a small organization so no matter what hat I am wearing, I say this for any hat whether its consultant, polly or the XXXX hat,it’s all small so there are resource limitations umm to what we are able to do but our work, we definitely use gender lens on it. Umm in terms of we look at, obviously power dynamics umm this effect the lighten effects everything else, right! So we work into communities sometimes you have focus groups, sometimes you have discussions and conversations but people are not always honest about them. When you then we do a bit of you know umm survey as well and when we kind of look at the information that we have received from these data sources. Try and try as best as we can and come up with where the opportunities for the women lie, to be able to make the best games in terms of umm gender equity I guess.

INTERVIEWER: And how.. obviously you have mentioned its at small scale and you have to do a lot of ground work yourself, but do you rely on any government reports and statistics or not?

RESPONDENT: Umm.. I mean very broad ones, what is the total population of Pakistan like stuff but no, not really otherwise. So we do look at umm obviously we do look at the labor survey and all of that but just for the big ones otherwise to be honest if I looking for data or any kind we are more likely to rely on.. after having looked at you know the labor statistics and everything we will rely on umm.. you know things like UN agencies, the world bank. We are more likely to look at bilateral um agencies doing this work because they just do a better job presenting it as well, it’s not just that the government does not do adequate collection, they, going through their data means downloading a bunch of excel documents and trying to make sense of them. Whereas you know we were looking at something like the world bank this ready easy data and then if you want to look at their raw data you can go back but most people don’t want to look at raw data right.. cause they just wanna.

INTERVIEWER: So the next question is, how equitable is energy access at community and household level in terms of gender equity? Please elaborate.

RESPONDENT: So look, I mean where communities have real energy issues whether for example they don’t have access to energy to run a tube well or light or electricity is constantly coming and going. Just by the nature of the problem it is pretty equitable punishment right.. because everybody suffers. I would say that in villages or in rural parts of Pakistan where energy is an issue only the.. the women are suffering. I think it becomes umm more of a class and poverty issue rather than an issue at that sort of stage.

However, I think where there is limited access as I said that men will still manage to step out and maybe go sit in a fan, if it’s a hot day, if there is no electricity at home they will go out, go sit in a fan at a roadside tea stall.. whereas women because they are in confined spaces will have to beat heat. Moreover, they have to go in kitchen in that heat and cook. So you know, umm yeah I think that is one issue but when you get for example energy um…I just remembered from kitchen when you are looking at… we were doing some work in um um XXXX last year and one of the questions in obviously this issue of deforestation, huge issue of deforestation and we were talking to you know um young men and women in the community about why these issues persist. Obviously men are responsible for the most part, umm that they go up to the mountains and um you know get the fire wood which is still used as the primary source of fuel especially for heating and cooking in most households um in the north of Pakistan. Not just GB, swat, chitral, lots of parts of KP as well um but in that.. I mean obviously.. so we had, we did talked to them about whether why they are not looking at replantation right.. because earlier their elders did that… as a mat of fact young people told me that when their grandfathers would go and I was a young boy and I used to go with him so we used to take a hand full of seeds with us and they would not plant but they would throw the seeds. I mean now fantastic work but at least if they threw 10 then maybe one of them would plant. Now that kind of commitment to the land also or owning your own heritage in that way if it’s a natural heritage is also diminishing and you see this again in sort of communities near the Indus river, you see this in communities that are in forested parts of Pakistan and I don’t think this issue is gender, I think it’s just a terrible issue that is across umm across the communities of all ages and it’s really really depressing and sad um speak no good for the future.

INTERVIEWER: Ok. So the next question is how does gender affect the way that energy is used in households? You have already touched upon this but if you could elaborate on responsibilities and tasks in which energy is consumed. So how is this distributed in households?

RESPONDENT: So um, it’s really interesting but you know a lots of kitchen are also the source of heating particularly in poorer households. Are we speaking of poorer house only right? Because that’s the sort of work we do so I am just constantly going on about them..

INTERVIEWER: Yeah that is fine. I mean you can obviously .. you can build on your own experiences in the urban sector if you want to, because we do want your opinions and your experience and your evidence whether that is professional or personal. So speak about both. Rural perspective will be more from professional and urban from personal point of view.

RESPONDENT: No, I think it’s really interesting because we worked with a lot of small entrepreneurs in urban space whether it was tailors or carpenters or you know a lot of them.

INTERVIEWER: Please do talk about them too.

RESPONDENT: because it’s a very interesting thing that fascinates me a lot as well because there are a lot of these people live at reallyyyy like you know I mean, absolutely basic, I mean most of them don’t even make what you would call a living wage, right! So they many of them or their employees will make a minimum wage but if you look at their commercial set ups, they all have basic generators because the reality is, that even in the large cities, I can speak more for Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad, I am not as familiar with the rest of the urban landscape but because the energy is such a major issue right.. that they’ll all have to invest umm beyond a UPS. Most of the people have UPS but when they are like running machines, a UPS is never good enough so they need umm generators. And they’ve become umm so common umm and there’s still large second hand market for these things as a result of it. And one of my concerns has always been is that umm you know the, the health and safety implications of this because um you know okay the people of privilege may decide to upgrade whatever generator or energy source they are using to um make up for the fact that KE or Lahore…. LESCO is not very reliable. Umm what happens is that these people who buy their umm discarded um generators or UPS’es or whatever you wanna call them, there is no grading for these, neither are they checked for safety. They are only checked for one thing that do they work. They deliver the power but nobody checks things like fumes or you know energy consumption levels or anything like that. Umm and I think that’s very dangerous and we often, umm I know there’s been no study on this for the fact at least I never found one on it coz I looked at one time but I wonder about a lot of these workers, skilled workers who used these um are dependent for their livelihoods on these um you know small um what would you called these I guess, you would called them personal energy production whatever they have kept. I do wonder about the long-term health impacts of these umm and as the fuel has gone up and it has end that and you know they are forced to continue investing in it, and they take less and less care of it because they don’t have the ability to do it.

INTERVIEWER: Absolutely. I completely agree with you. Okay, can you talk about that do men and women use energy differently in domestic uses?

RESPONDENT: Umm yeah of course! I mean every umm, so sorry my dog is attacking the child, just one second! Yeah, umm there is I think we this is, this super gender drived like women will I mean again I am not speaking of privileged households where 24 hours, since everyone has converted to solar, people will brag to you, that we run the aircon 24 hours because we have solar and I am like it’s not a good reason to keep your.. Any way but that’s a different conversation. But umm you know umm it’s interesting in a where, households where there is less economic privilege, you will see this that you know dad is coming home so open the aircon. And every, the whole day the mother in the kitchen have not used the air conditioning for example, right! Umm but when it comes to I think umm other things so the the expensive energy used like obviously women do watch television, they will turn on the fan, they will use umm gas you know um for cooking particularly umm when it comes to the man I think he must be cool in the summer and he must have generator … um what you call that thing .. that geyser’s hot water to be with in the winters umm and that’s I think very gender where there is umm where there is um inability to have it for all so when there is a facility, so definitely the men will get it but that’s true for everything. I think it’s not just energy.

INTERVIEWER: And talking about women, do different groups of women benefit from access to energy differently; for example, does energy use or access differ among older and younger women, income groups, where they are based in the community, or whether there are any religious, ethnic or cultural differences do you think?

ASF: I can’t speak to ethnic for sure, we discuss of energy use to be honest, I can’t think of it. Definitely I think there is a massive class divide um energy use as an access because energy is expensive in this country in any form of energy, right! Umm I personally looking into you know installing solar system into my house and we’ve had several conversations but it’s not a quick or let me just go buy myself a burger kind of situation. You just really have to think about it, it’s a significant investment. Umm I think umm and obviously umm you know we’ve already spoken about the gendered access and again I think as you go lower down chain of privilege whether that is class privilege, whether that is privilege due to education or employment whether that is privilege due to your gender, as you down that scale you will find greater issues in terms of, I think it becomes more and more gendered umm and I do think umm therefore you know poverty is a big part of the conversation that people need to be having around access to energy. And you asked me about the older people, I think that’s a very interesting question. I am not sure I know the answer um about how older people use energy. I am not sure but definitely something I would be thinking about after this interview.

INTERVIEWER: And the difference in age. Would that matter for women? Do let me know if you come up with a solid answer to that. Ok next question, because … I’ll just ask it but since you have mentioned before and maybe it is not directly related to you but any way… What key energy infrastructure is your organization involved in providing? So you spoke about solar home systems…

RESPONDENT: Yeah for a long time. And we do now so anytime we do something like umm a food drive, umm XXXX knows it as well. We try and include a small solar lamp because I think at that level you know um so any kind of giving work that we do, we try and include a small solar lamp and I think we’ve always had very very good feedback in communities about it in the fact that they all clearly need to use it.

INTERVIEWER: Ok. When new energy infrastructure and technologies are provided, what in your view are the differences between men and women in terms of who benefits?

RESPONDENT: Umm sorry can you repeat the question?

INTERVIEWER: So, whenever a new energy technology or infrastructure is provided, if you take your own example, you spoke about lamps or the solar home systems for example, is there a difference between men and women in terms of who benefits from these technologies?

RESPONDENT: To be honest, I think again when you, this is again really interesting because I think umm when it comes to you know um household that is without electricity and it’s night and they have a solar lamp usually these would be used in a center place, right! Because it’s not like they have enough, you know so they, they will all kind of share it but I, I’m sure I mean I don’t have any personal experience to share. Most of the stories that we have received back involving umm you know that do not involved the whole family using it. Instances umm instances are you know I mean some of them are shocking instances but like usually children had to study regardless of gender umm we had to umm you know there was a burial at night and there was no electricity in the village so we used the solar lamps umm we did not have electricity for like you know two weeks for example and the solar lamp was the only way we could sit at home and you know still um do something productive or see each other at or u know stay up talking. So those kind of things but they still seem to have a community element to it. Umm it 100% seem to be gendered because there is so little that umm yeah, it’s not adequate enough to make them really able to meet very much of it without each other.

INTERVIEWER: At home or at the community level, who in your view makes the decisions about what technologies or appliances are purchased and used in the home?

RESPONDENT: Umm so, I think it depends on the cost of it. Umm because most energy solutions are expensive therefore men do that. Umm women um would not make those decisions traditionally unless it was something small so if it’s a small affordable lamp perhaps women would be brought in the conversation or if they can link it to their work they can definitely be a part of the conversation but when it comes to like you know larger investments like for example you are putting on sonar, solar panels in the house or you’re buying a generator or you’re buying a ups, these are definitely male decisions.

INTERVIEWER: So would you say any decisions that need to be taken around financials, there will be a difference in gender do you think?

RESPONDENT: Um financing a, umm.. yeah absolutely like anything um see most women cannot afford umm anything.. I think that is not cheap. Um even in privilege households women do not have control over the big part of money so umm it’s definitely a male decision whether there will be a generator at home or not. I don’t think k women take those decisions really.

INTERVIEWER: Is gender equity in energy access different between urban and rural contexts, do you think?

RESPONDENT: Umm yes I think… so the basic thing is that for the most, again I mean I am painting it with very broad brush or um it you know at least in Pakistani context umm urban centers tend to have more better energy supply and energy sources as well. Whether that’s gas, electricity um whether that’s um you know solar or whatever and I think because in the rural setting there is limited availability so definitely there is in, there is an urban rural divide, if that makes any sense.

INTERVIEWER: and does that divide exist in terms of gender equity?

RESPONDENT: Umm so umm I gue, I mean yes because women are able to afford so like if there’s a women headed household for some reason right, then that is very much likely not to have the same level of energy access as a male headed household.

INTERVIEWER: In urban or rural?

RESPONDENT: In urban and rural I think..

INTERVIEWER: so there is no difference between urban and rural?

RESPONDENT: I think it’s more of an economic class difference so um um it depends on it, I don’t think urban and rural, I find these terms really complicated right, so if you are saying rural and if I mean the land-lords’ wife or daughter in that rural setting of course she likelihood of a better stuff rather than some women in slum area or in urban setting. I think the bit or poverty bit of it umm definitely a big deal.

Like if you look like you know in the rural setting the one thing that like does happen I think is that women and men of course, I am not gonna take away from the fact that a lot of the work they do is so men valid, so physical its um you know that men maybe fetching the fuel wood but quite often in Pakistan women will fetch water because there is no pipe to water etc etc. um where I think the only big thing I can say for women in urban setting is that they do have access to you know piped gas for example right, so they don’t have to chop fuel wood every time they want to make tea or they will you know use gas which is, if it is coming in. even if they don’t have gas they will have a cylinder, they are not using firewood or they might have you know appliances to help them in the kitchen which women in the rural areas cannot dream of because they don’t really have you know like electrical sockets or wires coming in to their villages so everything and I think particularly the kitchen because it takes up so much of women’s time and um I think the biggest one and this is I think I know we talk about, people talk a lot about like you know how appliances have changed women’s life whether that’s washing machines or microwave ovens or whatever but I think the biggest one is the refrigerator. Umm because you know when women don’t have the ability to store food like I batch food of course because I could freeze it but if I couldn’t freeze, I have to cook every single day, it would be gaudery even with all of my appliances even with my microwave right. Umm I think that’s the biggest thing every time they cook or they do something they kind of have to start from scratch, they do dry and salt some foods of course umm there’s limited amount that is they can safe that way. I think the refrigerator is probably like one of the most radical gender empowerment tools there is.

**Part 3: Policies and Interventions**

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Lets move on to part three which is about policies and interventions. So the first question isto what extent does gender equity factor in your work on energy access and can you give some examples or mention some projects or policies that you have worked on?

RESPONDENT: So I don’t really have experience, I mean the only policy that I ever worked on that was directly related to gender was back in my XXXX time when we were working on XXXX. Umm looking at disseminating and influencing hydel power policy through the work that the XXXX had done. It’s really fascinating and it’s amazing by the way, I recently looked at it up again not because of this conversation but because of something else that I was doing and I was amazed, you know a lot of work that you did decade ago dates really badly like oh man I didn’t engage a fifty things, umm you know I mean but this till not date, it was creepy like nowadays in a decade for something not to date is impressive so I think we’re looking at, that was a cohesive report, I mean anything can be improved umm so I am really proud of the work that we did do under that although it unfortunately um because of lack of buying from government and policy makers we were not able to, it was a policy dialogue that we did across Pakistan. Every, we didn’t only go to FATA… but other than that we went everywhere, umm we spoke to everybody, we spoke to communities, we spoke to policy makers and I think it’s amazing to me how much of that worked even at over a decade later still needs to be done, like it feels like we haven’t made any progress.

INTERVIEWER: Did gender equity factor into it?

RESPONDENT: Of course, of course, that was one of my primary roles in that project was to look at the women’s point of view so I think there are such few women umm if you look at WAPDA or NEPRA where are the women there? I mean you know they are not part of these umm grow networks or power position.. they’re not there. In the energy sector women are not decision makers anywhere, right. So I mean we spoke a lot about the household level I know I did that because that’s the thing that I deal with on daily basis in my work but if I reflect back to my XXXX time when we were trying to work with policy makers, we would have these large consultative workshops. There would be a 100 men in the room. I have often been the only women in the room because I was with the XXXX and I don’t think that’s changed in any radical way.

I think some organizations have become smarter about the optics of it so they often have a female face or a female spoke person umm I thing increasingly women in communication roles, right. So even if we worked in the oil and gas sector where women would be there but they would be on the CSR side pe that we look at the health initiative or maybe they would be in HR right, traditionally. They are not technical experts in the organizations. And as I said recently I’ve been doing some work with XXXX on environmental impact assessment umm and what’s and by the way interestingly hydro power so it’s a fun time for me to having this conversation with you because after many many years I’ve kind of gone down that rabbit hole myself and one of the things that I was reading when I was looking at these reports and you know sort of fine tune them was you know they did these large stake holder conversations and you know they were like.. you know how you add a stakeholders annex at the end. There were like a hundred something names on them and um, everybody from people who are in charge of forests and parks and agriculture in livestock, planning and developments everyone. All male! right so umm it’s, I don’t know, I don’t know what to say, there’s, now it’s just leaves bamboozles me that nothing has changed. Your NTDC, PTDC, all these departments, the EPA I don’t, I don’t think they, they are female friendly so when you don’t have women in things like the PWD or you know um planning and development and all of that um how how are they, how are they gonna take those people like women interests. It’s nowhere on the agenda.

INTERVIEWER: Ok, so like you mentioned, please tell us exactly what work you did for gender equity?

RESPONDENT: The work condition of dams projects was basically that the report was released, the idea was released that each country was supposed to take it on, take it to all stakeholders, disseminate the results which would obviously as you can imagine, I mean I won’t say empty big dams but they had laid so many conditions that big dams should only be constructed when XYZ happens because in our country, it will never happen. Umm you know there were environmental concerns, there were gender concerns, there were community concerns and there was a lot in it that only dams should develop if they should be developed in this way so we took that dialogue across Pakistan for a year and a half, we took it to cities, we took it villages and we would have stake holder conversations and the idea was to generate feedback and to make a Pakistani version of this to present it to the government that you know what, we talked to everybody, you know there was this global report, here is what pakistanis want to do around this important piece of work. We all know that hydra is one of the biggest pieces of the energy puzzle um so you know here’s what we should do and here’s how we should move forward. It was at the end of that when I realized that government will not do anything that I went and studied public policy because I became really interested in trying to figure out why this didn’t work.

INTERVIEWER: so what are the challenges do you think there are for gender equity that you had to face and that Pakistan has to face in general?

RESPONDENT: I mean, where’s, we’re in I know, I mean if you look at it and read. The more you read the more depressing it gets right, I mean if you look at the access and if you look at the last, I mean this year was a horrible year on so many notes that it seems hard to isolate to adjust just energy but if u look at just generally of where Pakistan’s umm you know when you look at climate change for example right, I mean energy has a big part of that puzzle as well. And you know Pakistan being what number… 7 most effected by what’s coming in the future, yeah right. And I mean I keep forgetting whether we are 7th or 6th but I mean it’s just crazy. We are in top 10, that’s all I know right. And it’s not good and what’s more depressing is that we are doing nothing to redress it and all are like as I’ve said, we have talked about the work I did 15 years ago in which even at that time um redressing any of the equities, whether it be gender equities, class equities, rural urban divides whatever it was in that discourse umm particularly when it looks at role of energy and sustainable energy for the future, was not something that people were even with, by people I mean anybody in power, of course community were interlucent umm you know and basically as we transiti, transition now to the world or the post covid world or whatever it is umm us covid and the climate change now world basically, really more serious effort is needed both in terms of general development of energy access as well as gender equality be central of the conversation about I don’t know, sustainability, efficiency, effectiveness you know, all of that.

INTERVIEWER: How do you think energy access policies in Pakistan can be made more gender sensitive? What would be the way to make them more gender sensitive?

RESPONDENT: I mean for once let’s hire some women in, in WAPDA, in NEPRA and see what happens okay, I am just saying meaning not even like women I like, let’s say hire women that nobody likes you know I swear! You know energy, now we all talked about you know how energy and you have never even given any woman a chance to I mean, to do anything. You know people talk about an act of this. You know it’s a lot of interesting that now I am thinking a lot more and more about the work that we did under the XXXX dams, by the way you are really making me think back to 15 years ago. I am realizing, I did absolutely even you first started talking to me, I think everybody instinctively does is start talking about the women in the kitchen and the heat and the smoke inhalation. I even spoke about smoke inhalation and you know possible umm exposure to you know um um toxic elements by tailors. I was looking at direct impacts right, because that I think we can all understand immediately. It’s something that we umm there’s a physicality to it, what don’t understand because it’s much more abstract is that women are left out of you know technical training or leadership positions. They are completely left out of the gender angle. It’s already out of the decision-making process when it comes to umm energy policies and obviously massive missed opportunity for the country and for all our communities um for the way forward given where Pakistan ranks right now. umm I don’t know how one would change this, you know there’s such few women engineers, there’s such few women interested themselves as well as the men are encouraged to become you know environmental engineers or engineers working with energy. It’s still men that do this so I don’t know how much this going to change in the for seeable future as well.

INTERVIEWER: so the next question is what related social policies do you feel have an impact on energy equity?

RESPONDENT: Umm you know I am trying to answer as directly as possible but I will remind you I am not an energy expert so I am, I am thinking on my feet what social policies could be.

INTERVIEWER: Like you had mentioned that your work is predominantly economic empowerment, so you can talk in context of that. Which are the social policies that give or take…

RESPONDENT: One that I can think of immediately, I mean and again coming back to the consumption level right or coming back to the household level and is you know simple things like creating cost effective local sustainable energy solutions and technologies that are accessible to um more households than they are right now you, know like simple things like Yasmeen Lari has done a lot of um.. around clean cooking stoves so you know this is also a local solution that.. and she is not somebody who are people are not aware of, she is a very prominent person, prominent speaker well known for her work but we are never able to take that work to that scale so whether that’s you know clean stoves or clean lighting devices which um which would obviously have an immediate impact even in you know sort of rural or poorer urban settings um on women and their contribution to clean energy umm u know.

So there is, there is that, those kind of um sort, I mean I see that as a social policy because it has, of course it has an impact on um you know um clean house catenation and all of that but it also have an immediate impact, probably a bigger impact on um you know the household levels where women’s health in the informal sector um you know we used to have these like you know we do a lot of work around tradition practices and how we’ve kind of given them up at great cost and when you think about things like um you know biomass um which may energy source and you know these people make dung patties that people don’t do now. They had their own issues obviously but women are giving that up because of the toil and the disease and and how hard that work was but you know because women are um trapped in their home so you know they inhale everything that they produce on those stoves um they’ll call um in the health and safety sector what we call indoor air pollution you know um so… We you know did some work around this as well, a couple of years ago. Now that I think about it we are doing some work with umm women in the glass bangle industry um you know glass bangles that are um I don’t know again how familiar are with the industry but basically they burn them on the stove top. Like it’s two pieces and they kind of burn them into one… involved in the industry but my gosh health and safety transport will make your hair stand on it. It is insane to me that in the 21st century this can happen, it’s a regulated industry it’s not even informal industry like it’s, there are factories its not that they are doing them in their home. You know it is ridiculous. Um I guess what we um allow to happen and obviously one of the biggest concern and a this is a community level concern and a country level concern is um you know when we have, when you have poor users um who are obviously um when they use fuel wood um wo end up doing for, this is very interesting again a piece of work that I’ve done with XXXX is just was editing a report but as part of privilege of editing report I got to read about it and have nightmares, umm was the fact that Pakistan is um is a contributes 15%, 1 5 percent… of the entire pine nut or chilghoza of the entire world, okay. So um which is that communities are chopping those forest down because that area is most of where these are grown um obviously KP, Balochistan, you know FATA um they are very cold areas with very poor or sources of alternate energy so they depend on those forests for everything and they are devastating them, um I mean I don’t think I need to tell you that this is a horror story that I just told you right, I mean it’s a horror story from every angle that you look at. Um whether it’s the export angle, the economic angle, the cultural angle I mean it’s all horrifying and this is not something that government is unaware of. I am guessing that we contribute to the worlds’ supply, such high number is not something that has gone unnoticed so I don’t understand the lack of inertia at all, I wish I did. It just makes me angry.

INTERVIEWER: I can’t imagine what we are doing. I mean its just crazy. I don’t know when our government is going to wake up and realize… when 10 years will pass and everything will get out of their hands, then they will get up.

RESPONDENT: A lot of these, and we have these special kind of forests that are 100 of years old like it is, it’s not like you are not just getting rid of, before I forgot, it’s like nuts. I don’t have words and it’s such a solvable problem such a solvable problem I can’t tell you, it’s just I don’t understand what it would take for um them to take it seriously.

INTERVIEWER: Ok. Next question. So imagine there was no policy or financial constraints, in an ideal world, what in your view would be best practice for achieving gender equity in energy access?

RESPONDENT: XXXX! Okay, I am loving the fact that I now prime minister of Pakistan and obviously he has no power. We can now come to like I don’t know, head of WAPDA. Um obviously I think you know the key word in all of this we do not allow anything modern to touch the common men. So what we need is sustainable modern energy sources. In a, there are, there are locally contextualized and made available so people can make better choices as long as we put the onus on the consumers, they will continue make poorer choices, right. Because primary motivator is often economic so even where there is awareness, if they are not able to afford a better solution they will simply not gona do it. It’s the same thing that you see, I mean the common is so, the problem is so common across so many areas that I worked that, I do a lot of work around fast fashion and wht it is horrible right and same thing the people will continue to buy fast fashion umm as long as that’s the only thing they could afford. With…villages, of course it helps but it will not make the problem go away. Umm when you have you know um solid fuel dependent communities umm un, what are we expecting from the poor people, you know I think many of them kind of even understand they are ruining things.

Now forget future generations they are ruining things for themselves in the next 15 years, they, they recognize that they are over harvesting, they recognize things to have better sustainable practices, they recognized all of it but they just seem to be you know unable to do more. Education as I said is a part of it, of course you know there needs to be and I think I am very passionate about this, um more equitable access to the electricity for god sake, I can’t believe I am having to say this in the 21st century, it’s like you know electricity was important always but its increasingly important as the world becomes more digitally connected because by giving these people electricity you are basically cutting them off from the grid. Not just the electricity grid, but the global grid, the grid that learns, the grid that earns. There are a lot of parts of it and it’s ridiculous, its a violation of basic human rights so any kind of infrastructural development which again is the something that government does best, umm that would promote this whether you know it would obviously it would, it would increase everything, it would increase education, it would increase employment, it would increase it would mean a massive change in the standard of living um it would have positive impacts on, on climate change as people stop over harvesting there um indigenous resources. I mean I guess um I don’t know that’s what you are looking for but that’s what I think.

INTERVIEWER: So in this scenario, to improve gender equity for energy access, what role might you play in your current position in your organization?

RESPONDENT: So um.. we obviously um already I mean you know are kind of, the name of the game is promising new business models rights, like that’s what we do. Um part of that is obviously access to technology um energy umm we we do try and do it but as I said at a very small scale. I am not gonna say we’ve done well, we do you know sometimes give people access to solar lamps and umm cell phone technology in which we contribute the pre-paid credit amount because they can’t afford to do that themselves but these are teeny tiny initiatives, right. They are not, I mean how many people are is one small organization is going to be able help. You need either organizations or banding together to you know what we all are gonna do this now, this is something that’s gonna happen and I think it some kind of in happened Covid where you, I mean at a much um higher ladder up the, the economic ladder but you know where organizations give their… It was so interesting to me every time I read this, and I read this across the world right. So somehow people who worked from MNC’s and this is again super super privileged people right, both of us who have stuff like that are super privileged umm even if we are cooperate slaves which is a different story. But in terms of economic privilege you do have it. Even those organizations felt the need to give their staff umm you know comfortable chairs to sit on and internet devices and thinking XXXX that is clearly a need for that. I always thought the need was at the, you know sort of the bottom of the pyramid but no apparently higher up people also have issues. So yeah, I think you know basically you need much of this kind of been a normal way in which people work.

**Part 4: Topical Questions**

INTERVIEWER: Okay, let’s come to the last part. You have already answered this, how balanced is gender representation in various decision-making bodies within energy governance structures. So basically, no.

So next question is, I don’t know if you have any experience in energy finance. Would you be able to answer questions around energy finance?

RESPONDENT: Umm I, the, I could tell you just one thing that I know about it which is teeny tiny umm and and is definitely not what you are looking for but I will tell you anyway which is um that when we did that solar lamp project, the pilot that I told you about, we did looked at um setting it up in a micro financing way so that you know you could um, um you know that pay as you go type of schemes, we piloted 2 or 3 different types of scheme. Um you know had people offering you know um for a small commission we even mobilized um some you know sales agents um who were many of whom were women or young men who could earn that you know you sell this and then you get um we did do that but I think for us, we’re not an technical expert on this and we did this as I said way back in the day. Um it was..

INTERVIEWER: but my question is around gender. So my question is that renewable energy finance processes are gender aware or gender sensitive?

RESPONDENT: No, I mean I don’t know there are any, let’s start there. Umm you would need to have them got them to have this sort. Even if there are, they are all pilots I mean whose doing this, I can name you three startups that are trying to do this that’s it right, I can’t name you anybody who is doing this at a scale. There are some commercial interest now, I think with the growing interest in the solar and people realizing it umm but they are not doing too much at this level as they should be because there’s a lot of money to be made and they should go make it.

INTERVIEWER: So what are the key challenges for gender equity in terms of energy access finance, let’s say for renewables, and let’s say for purchasing decisions regarding finance related to clean cooking stoves and solar home systems etc etc?

RESPONDENT: So I think it’s all in the finch, right. If the business model makes sense there is no challenge, it is you develop a good business model because that was not our challenge with the solar lamp way back in the day. One, there is a much greater awareness, there is much greater need, there’s a lot of companies all working together. As I said we actually had to import our lamps into Pakistan because um they were not locally available, that is definitely not case now so people do have a greater understanding that what is this and what is the benefit of getting it. Um I think the big issue is much like with all of microfinance in Pakistan, I mean you know this right?! I love to discuss another depressing one for you which is that k, 2% um of microfinance in Pakistan is actually effective and this is not me, I am.. this is not my data. Um there’s all, there’s more depressing data that of all the loans that women took on ever, forget just for solar, only 6% were actually used by women so you know I mean the issues are not so much at the technology end, I think you need to figure out the best model. I don’t think uptake is the issue because it benefits the whole of household. Particularly when it comes to heating, yes when it goes I think um if it is a viable solution I think in small pockets and as I said in pilot projects it has clearly worked. Communities do buy in to these things if, if they are taken to them.

INTERVIEWER: Ok. So from your gender equity point of view do you see any issue in decision making or not?

RESPONDENT: Umm.. when you’re buying new stuff I think we talked about it a little bit. It depends on the level of which you are buying, so if it’s a small solar lamp for the house which is not expensive then no, but if it is like an entire energy system or you know like, something like a big chimney or something then yeah of course, absolutely, decision making because women access to household finance is limited by its amount.

**Part 5: Conclusion**

INTERVIEWER: Okay, so we come to the end of our interview. Is there anything that you would like to add, any comments?

RESPONDENT: Umm I would just say thanks so much for including me. This was a really interesting conversation um.

INTERVIEWER: No, you gave such great answers. And I learnt so many new things that I would be definitely be looking into. Specially the staistics around pine nut exports that we do and we are chopping down … definitely lots to think about. Thank you so much for your time. If we have any other question can we just email it to you?

Of course, of course. Absolutely!

INTERVIEWER: Okay, thank you so much. And of course we will send you a transcript of the interview, once the interview has been transcribed by XXXX , just for your approval and you can go through it and see if you are okay with it, before we send it forward.

RESPONDENT: Thank you so much, I think that I will just add that’s a really nice touch. I never had that happened to me before.

INTERVIEWER: I will make sure XXXX gives it to you.