0:00:03.8 Speaker 1: Okay, so I've just pressed the record button. Thank you for obviously agreeing to the interview today and also for submitting the consent form. So the first question is, can you tell us a little bit about your current role and the organisation that you work for?

0:00:24.4 Speaker 2: Yes. So... Currently, my role, I work with XXXX. I am the program coordinator for our XXXX. I've been working with XXXX since 2014 and coordinating this program since 2015. That's about five years now, in this role. And in this...

0:00:58.9 Speaker 1: Okay.

0:01:00.1 Speaker 2: Yeah, okay.

0:01:00.2 Speaker 1: No, you can continue, I'm sorry.

0:01:04.3 Speaker 2: Yeah so, in this role, basically we... This role focuses on campaigning on the various energy issues that we find to be pertinent in terms of ensuring that Ghana does not pursue a dirty... Or a path that leads to dirty energy dependence. And because XXXX basically, essentially focuses on ensuring that various countries or various governments make that transition from dependence on fossil fuels, dependence on dirty energy... What we call dirty energy sources, to more clean and renewable energy sources. So our campaigns have basically been based on that. So we promote... In this role we... I have campaigned on promoting renewable energy, specifically solar energy sources, and also campaigned against Ghana's dependence on, or increasing dependence on gas and other dirty energy sources.

0:02:33.6 S1: Just to clarify, so on the one hand, it's about campaigning against fossil fuels, on the other hand, it's about promoting renewables.

0:02:41.7 S2: Yes, please. That's... Are the two issues that... Area campaigns that we're focussed on.

0:02:48.4 S1: Okay, and in terms of campaigning, just again, to clarify, what does that... What does that entail?

0:02:57.0 S2: In the context of... Yeah, with XXXX we make sure that our approach or... Yes, our campaigns are tailored or remain aligned with XXXX International campaigns. The XXXX International, Climate Justice and Energy program, the main driver campaign has been the dirty energy campaign, which focuses on identifying various dirty energy projects that various governments are either starting or implementing. And then finding out what loopholes or what gaps that... What opportunities exist for us to be able to stop those dirty energy projects. Though in the context of Ghana, what we have mainly done is mobilizing local communities who are affected by various dirty energy projects, and building their capacity to be able to resist or raise their concerns about these dirty energy projects. Because in most cases, what is done is our constitution mandates the Ministry of Energy to the consent of the affected local community, affected communities or affected stakeholders, which of whom communities, local communities are an important part to get their consent before any dirty energy... Any energy project is implemented, but usually what happens is this process is not properly adhered to.

0:05:05.3 S2: By the time that... Usually you realize that the project would get to implementation stage before the public gets to know about it. Yes, the contract, the negotiation is done behind closed doors, the contract is signed behind closed doors, and then probably a week or two or sometimes a month later it is announced. That is the time that contract has already been signed, and it becomes very difficult for local communities' voices to be heard because the contract has already been signed. And so what we do is to, now go to the communities, educate them about the project, so that they properly understand what the energy project is about and how likely it will affect their livelihoods, their environment, their social and... Their social-cultural fate. And then, if they have any concerns, then they'll be able to raise it. But apart from local community, we have also sought to bring in the local media to also amplify the voice of local communities and other stakeholders, because usually a civil society would raise concerns about these energy projects and when the capacity of local communities is build, they also raise concerns. But without the media reporting about these concerns, the voices, the two voices are very small to be able to make an influence.

0:06:43.5 S2: Though we bring in the media also, you have to... We have to give them some capacity building, give them something about this particular energy project, what environmental issue it is expected to bring up, and then they would be able to report on it and that... When the media comes in then it amplified the voice of civil society and local community, and then the government begins to take notice and sometimes react to it. So we've had one success story back in 2016, where the government proposed the coal power plant, a coal power plant in western region in Ghana, which was supposed to be financed by the Chinese government in a country where we don't actually, we don't produce coal, so the coal was going to be imported from South Africa, and the project was going to be financed by the Chinese government to basically supplement our energy needs. So civil society raised concerns about the environmental implications of coal, for our country, as well as for our commitment to the Paris Agreement. And I think it started in [0:08:04.0] \_\_\_\_ 2016 the government decided to shelf it. So that project did not take off even though the contract and everything was signed. So the contract, it's not actually clear whether the contract has been cancelled but the government stated that it was not going to continue with the project and since then there has not been any signs that it's going to be [0:08:25.3] \_\_\_\_.

0:08:28.1 S1: Okay, so we've covered a little bit of the specific energy and some areas that you've been working on, could you tell me little bit about your background and how you actually got involved in this type of work?

0:08:42.4 S2: Yes, so I started getting into, getting interested or getting involved in energy back in 2010... Actually I studied development planning. So after my studies back in XXXX, I did my national service as a research assistant in XXXX, and during... That was XXXX. So during that period, I got opportunity to work with XXXX on an energy access project, a World Bank energy, a World Bank financed Energy Access Project that was basically to identify or to assess energy access challenges in farm communities in Ghana. And so that gave me a bit of exposure to the outstanding energy issues in Ghana, as far as slums are concerned and from there, I went ahead to do my MSC thesis in energy looking at how we can use a transition from rural dependence on, should I say wood fuels to... Or wood fuels and paraffin. Okay, let me give a brief background to that, so that study was done, my MSc research was done in XXXX. And in XXXX one of the major issues with energy access is the rural dependence on bio fuels or wood energy, and paraffin.

0:10:53.0 S2: So a majority of rural households in Kenya still depend on paraffin for lighting and bio... Wood fuels for cooking and heating. So we... The study was basically looking at what would it take or what are the challenges for... What would it take for households to be able to transition from their dependence on these energy sources, which are not so clean, which are not, they're dirty. Which are not renewable. Which are not climate-friendly, to more renewable energy source like solar home systems. Because in Kenya, again, one of the... We realized that there has been a significant increase in rural adoption of solar home systems. So which means that this is an opportunity for households to be able to use. So my study basically was looking at the technical as well as the financial, addressing the technical as well as the financial challenges, to be able to enable households to move away from wood fuel dependence and paraffin or kerosene dependence to more of solar home systems. So that was another experience, so that gave me a brief understanding of the renewable energy situation in Africa, and coming back to Ghana, I got the opportunity to work with XXXX where I was given the opportunity to coordinate the climate change and then plus this program.

0:12:48.7 S2: And again, this role has also been focused on, as I mentioned earlier, energy transition process, and then the policy, as well as the technical issues or gaps that need to be filled in order to ensure there is a transition from fossil fuels to more renewable energy sources.

0:13:12.6 S1: Okay, which actually leads me now into the next question, which you already touched on a little bit, but in relation to the policy context, which is shaping your work today, what are the current and main issues or developments in policy at a national level which are influencing your work?

0:13:34.9 S2: So in the national contexts there are so many. [laughter] Generally, we have a... Or relatively, Ghana has more of a higher energy access, or should I say, rural energy access than some of our neighboring countries, some of other African countries. And part of that is because of the rural electrification program, which was implemented between... I don't remember the starting date, but in the 1990s to 2000s. That program actually aimed at ensuring, or connecting the majority of households or communities to the national grid. As you know, Ghana, our electrification or energy has largely been dependent on hydro. Though we depend... About 50% of our energy is coming from the Akosombo dam, which is a hydro powered energy source. So there hasn't... Because of that high or relative high energy access, and also relatively renewable source of energy, there hasn't been a lot of policy focus on energy transition. Much of the energy discussion has been on promoting access to, or promoting energy access. And yes, but there hasn't been so much of a discussion on energy transition, because it is seen like, compared to other countries that are highly dependent on bio fossil fuels, like South Africa and others, which are dependent on coal. Ghana is more... Ghana is seen as, we are depending to a large extent on hydro, which is renewable.

0:16:21.5 S2: But in recent times, we have seen that the hydro power plant or the hydro dam is not very reliable because of the influence of climate change affecting the water levels. There has been in high fluctuation in the water levels. So between 2004 to 2016 there have been... Ghana experienced a period of relatively power instability. So there was high power rationing between that period. And that has actually influenced our energy policy to a large extent. So that experience of the dam not being, seen as not being reliable, and that leading to power fluctuations over close to about 10 years, led the government to make a shift towards more of fossil fuel dependence. So that is what led the government to initiate that coal power project, which was not... Which has now been shelved. But again, it has also led the government to place more emphasis on fossil fuel, or let me say natural gas-dependent energy sources. So before... If you look at our recent energy projects, you'll realize that, gradually, natural gas has been climbing from about 45% to about 48% now. And that indicates the direction in which the government is going when it comes to energy policy. So the... In terms of energy policy, the focus has been more on promoting energy access, but the focus, hasn't been a lot of talk on where, what is the source of that energy? Yeah.

0:18:55.0 S1: Okay, yeah, I think that's really useful to understand, yeah, how the sort of policy... Completely the context is shaping energy, and actually what the emphasis is. Yeah.

0:19:07.5 S2: Just to add to that, so when you look at our energy policy, the government has [0:19:14.4] \_\_\_\_ at 10% renewable energy by 2020. I think that started in 2010, but now we are in 2020, and the renewable energy composition is still less than 2%. The policy says one thing, but actually what the government is doing is a bit different. Now the policy has been revised to ensuring 10% renewable energy by 2030, in a way they pushed the deadline back to 2030. And so we are looking at whether that is going to be a reality or, again, is going to be something that eludes the government.

0:20:03.2 S1: Interesting. Yeah. Okay, moving on, I think my next question is, what does equitable energy access mean to you?

0:20:19.2 S2: I think if you clarify a little bit, is it to XXXX, my organisation, or to me as a professional?

0:20:26.5 S1: I think to you as a professional, but equally, if there is a difference between you and XXXX, I think we can hear both. But it's really to you as a professional, working in this context.

0:20:45.2 S2: To XXXX... Let me start from XXXX, personally.

0:20:50.7 S1: Okay. [chuckle]

0:20:51.5 S2: To XXXX, energy equity... Or was that the question?

0:20:51.9 S1: Yeah. So, yeah, equitable energy access.

0:20:52.1 S2: Equitable energy access. Equitable energy access basically suggests a number of things. One is supporting what the government has been trying to do, which is ensuring that every household has access to modern energy, but also ensuring that that energy access is produced and transmitted in a socially just manner. And then also ensuring that there is more of a systemic shift towards community-owned energy, should I say, infrastructure. And then also ensuring that vulnerable communities, or the production and the transmission of energy does not affect vulnerable communities in a negative way. What I mean by that is we should ensure that... Maybe take fossil fuel, or energy projects, for instance, if you take a coal power plant, coal production, or even natural gas, it has climate implications, and that we all know that the climate implications affect local... Rural communities, vulnerable communities more... Have more implications for vulnerable communities than for high-income or urban communities who have access to, should I say, a better coping capacity. That is the definition of XXXX's... The perspective of XXXX when it comes to equitable energy access.

0:23:17.1 S2: Having said that, I think, in the context of Ghana, what I can say is, equitable energy access should... Can be looked at in two areas, that is, rural energy access versus urban energy access, because in Ghana, these are very different situations. The energy access... If you look at energy access in urban areas, there is a high energy access for lighting and heating and cooling for urban households than there is for rural households. And again, the sources of energy that is available or accessible to urban households is not that readily accessible to rural households. If you take LPG, liquefied petroleum gas, for instance, urban households depend more on this energy, LPG, for cooking, but when you go to rural households, they don't have that, they don't have access to... They mostly don't have access to LPG. They depend more on wood fuels like charcoal and firewood for cooking, and to a large extent also their access to the national grid is also very, very less as compared to urban households.

0:25:09.5 S2: So equity, I think, should take into consideration these gaps and ensure that rural households, if you are promoting access in rural households, it should be something that takes into consideration, for instance, the effect that wood fuel dependence or firewood and charcoal, the health effects that it has for women, for example. Because in rural households, you realise that the cause of the... The women are always close to the firewood or the wood fuels, they tend to develop respiratory-related diseases or illnesses. I think equitable energy access should take into consideration that dependence and then look at what would be the best form of alternative for rural households. If you're looking at clean cooking stoves, then we ensure that we promote clean cooking stoves and... Yeah, for rural households.

0:26:33.0 S1: Yeah, I think that's quite interesting 'cause it leads also, nicely, to this question, which is, What does gender equity in energy access mean to you?

0:26:43.8 S2: Yes, so gender equity, I would say, is promoting an energy environment in which women, girls, the youth and other vulnerable societies have an equal opportunity to be able to access modern forms of energy to meet their energy needs without necessarily having to incur more costs or having to sacrifice their time or other resources to be able to access this. So in the context of Ghana, like I mentioned earlier, gender equity again would subdivide into a rural versus urban definitions. The urban context would be more of the access to new technologies, for instance... Or should I say, environmentally-friendly technologies. Ghana happens to be a member of the... Have ratified the Kigali Amendment on HFCs. I mean for... The Kigali Amendment basically seeks to phase out, should I say, carbon-emitting cooling systems. Air conditioners, home household air conditioners, to cars, to commercial refrigeration. In the context of that, I would say, we should be ensuring that this infrastructure, this... New forms of infrastructure that is environmentally-friendly, is also made more accessible and affordable to women in urban households because these technologies are mostly used in urban areas.

0:29:37.8 S2: When you go to the rural area, I think there isn't much talk on refrigeration, there isn't much talk on cooling systems, so the access or equity in terms of gender, I would say, the critical issue would be ensuring that rural women have access to clean cooking systems or stoves. So that... Because currently, as it is, what we have observed, is rural women have to walk long distances to be able to get firewood, and that takes up their time as well as energy. And again, they come back home and they spend a lot of time in the kitchen, in a kitchen that is filled with... Usually filled with smoke, and so that has negative implications for their health. And again in the evenings if they don't have access to the national grid, and if they don't have solar home systems, then they are still using kerosene or paraffin, using the... That's the local lantern, which also has health implications, respiratory implications for women. I think, in the context of rural households, those would be the critical issues, so I would say, there would be the need for the promoting of solar home systems, so that rural women do not have to depend on paraffin. Also there would be the need for clean cooking, or cooking stoves, so that rural women would not have to depend on wood fuels.

0:31:45.3 S1: You talked a little bit about the difference, I suppose, between women in rural areas and their ways of consuming energy, and women in urban areas. Are there any other differences between different groups of women in terms of how they access and consume energy, for example, younger versus older women, or different income groups or religious groups?

0:32:11.6 S2: Yes, so I think what we've observed would be the difference in income groups. Again, even if you look... There is still, there are still about... I think about 34% of households depending on wood fuels in urban households. So... Please, can you hear me?

0:32:38.4 S1: Yes, I can hear you. Yeah, I was just quite amazed. Yeah.

0:32:41.3 S2: Okay, so there is still a substantial or significant number of households in urban set-ups who are still depending on wood fuels and that brings in the... That is where you can see the issue of differences in income, so we see low-income households still dependent on wood fuels like charcoal and even firewood in urban households. And high-income households depending on natural gas and... Electric cooking stoves. There is still that distinction in urban households. But again, if you go to rural communities too, we see that distinction in income levels. Relatively there are high-income households and very poor-income households in urban areas as well. You see some level of what we've seen with... For instance, the uptake or the adoption of solar home systems and even clean cooking stoves, it's usually the high or relatively high-income households that are able to adopt these technologies, whilst the poorer or extremely poor households find it very difficult to adopt these technologies, even when they are made available. I think that's one distinction that we still see in terms of the genders.

0:34:27.9 S1: Yeah, okay. And in terms of... Yeah, so it's household income. How equitable do you think energy access is at the community and household level in terms of gender equity? I guess we could maybe sort of... You've already touched on the rural, urban, and high-income, low-income. Is that the key difference in terms of... Or the key deciding factor in terms of levels of equitable access?

0:35:03.1 S2: Yes, I think the rural set-up... It's a number of factors. The rural set-up is a factor, and the income distribution or income levels is also a key factor, but then also, there are also infrastructure and technological factors. Generally, like I mentioned earlier, rural... Not all the rural areas have access to the national grid. That would mean that their access to energy or... Yeah, their access to energy is already to an extent limited, as compared to urban communities, so the rural set-up in terms of national electrification is a factor. But again, the income levels is also a major factor as in... Even when you look at the urban households, we had distinction in terms of... In the energy. We see a distinction in that you would realise the majority of low-income households would have access to the national grid, alright, in urban households, but they'll probably use it just for lighting and maybe refrigeration. But when you [0:36:47.1] \_\_\_\_ high-income households, they probably would have refrigeration, lighting, cooking and air-conditioning. That's again... That is where the income levels play... Becomes a major factor. Yeah. And it's the same in rural set-ups as well. Even for rural communities who have access to the national grid, majority of them would only probably use it for a few bulbs. They...

0:37:27.2 S2: They probably would not have the money to buy a refrigerator or an electric cooking stove. They would only be using it for lighting in the evenings, and that would be the only thing that they use it for. That's also the major factor. The infrastructure or the technological part is more associated with the costs involved. If you look at solar home systems, for instance, there are rural communities who are using solar home systems and they are perfectly happy with it, using it alongside clean cooking stoves. And so, if you look at... If a household is using solar home systems, combining it with clean cooking stoves, you can say that they have a relatively sustainable source of energy or high energy access, but if a similar or a neighboring household which is... Which would also like to use solar home systems would not be able to afford the initial cost that is involved to be able to acquire a solar home system, and the infrastructure is there or the technology is there, alright, but they would not be able, because of the cost of the technology, they would not be able to access or make use of it.

0:39:14.0 S1: Okay. Yeah. And in terms of households, how does gender affect the way that energy is consumed at household level? For example, are men and women responsible for certain tasks that involve energy differently?

0:39:30.3 S2: In Ghana the majority of... Should I say that there is no clear data on it, but I would say the majority of energy, household energy decisions is made by women because... The majority of households still depend on wood fuels for cooking and for heating, and that is the major, should I say, energy need of most households. And because women are usually in charge, let me put it that way for... In charge of decisions related to the kitchen, it's usually the women who make the decisions on what source of energy to use, whether it's charcoal or firewood or LPG, it's the women who make the decision on which source to use, it's the women who make the decision on how much is needed and what times it is used.

0:40:43.7 S2: It's the women who make the decisions on those... The majority of the decisions on energy for cooking. I think the difference... The slight difference would be in urban or high-income households where they are probably depending on... They are probably depending more on the national grid, probably if they are using electric cooking stoves, then... But even in that, I think it is the women who make the majority of the decisions, even though it is probably in most households, it's probably the men who pay the bill at the end of the day. But because it is the women who are usually in charge of the use of the energy, I think it is the women who make the decisions on the source, the amount and the times that the energy is used, I mean at the household level.

0:41:54.3 S1: The household level, there's like energy for the wider community or... Yeah, energy-related decisions at different levels and local governance and so on, do women and men participate equally?

0:42:14.1 S2: Yes. So at the community... Moving to the community level, the district level, the national level, I think it becomes more of a political process and more of a technical process. And in that context, what we notice from a recent study on oil and gas decision-making in Ghana, is that usually it is the men who are involved in these decision-making processes because it's the men who are more involved in the political positions, even at the community level, at the district level and at the national level, the decisions has to... For instance getting access to the national grid or connecting a community to the national grid is usually made by the men because... Mostly by men because it's mostly the men who are in the... Should I say, the traditional authority is usually composed mostly of men. And when you go to the district level, again, the majority of the key positions are... In most districts, let me put it that way, is occupied by men, so it's usually the men who make those decisions. And even at the national level to a large extent you would say the involvement of men in making decisions related to energy access is higher than that of women, because it's more of a political and a technical process and it's the men who are usually in this key positions.

0:44:11.7 S1: So beyond household level-type decisions, it becomes more... The decision then becomes more male. In terms of the energy infrastructure and... So when new energy infrastructure like grid is provided or new technologies are kind of provided, what's the difference between men and women in terms of who benefits?

0:44:35.3 S2: Sorry, I didn't get that...

0:44:37.7 S1: I can repeat that. When new energy infrastructure and technologies are provided, what's the difference between men and women in terms of who benefits?

0:44:53.5 S2: I think it would depend a lot on the two things. I think it would depend on who is providing it, whether it's a private entity that's providing it, for instance, private... Independent private providers or whether it is government that's providing it. And again, it would also depend on the type of infrastructure, whether it's... Is it infrastructure for... Or technology for cooking or for lighting. If it is lighting, I think, to a large extent, again, at the household level, it's the women who benefit the most, because at the household level, in the Ghanaian context, it's usually the women who make the energy decisions. So it would be the women who benefit the most because they use the energy for cooking mostly, they use the energy for refrigeration and other lighting purposes. The men usually in a Ghanaian household, when it comes to energy, do not... I don't think in terms of benefit, I would say, it would be 60% women, and 40% men.

0:46:28.8 S1: Okay. Yeah, interesting. I suppose in terms of household level, but I guess if, let's say, grid infrastructure, reaches a community, that one also brings with it, not just the opportunity for household level electrification, but also for people to set up businesses and things like that. Do you think here, there's a difference between men and women?

0:46:53.6 S2: Yes. That's what I was referring to by saying, it depends on who is providing it.

0:47:04.4 S1: Okay.

0:47:05.0 S2: So again, if it is the government providing it, the process of producing the energy and distributing the energy along that chain. If... You'll realize that the majority of the benefits accruing from that process is most likely going to go to men, because usually the men makes those decisions along that chain. It is usually the men who would be... Mostly men who would get the majority of that benefit in terms of the production and the distribution, and even the provision of the infrastructure. Yes, I think in that context, it would be the men who are likely to get the majority of the benefits, financial benefits and... Yeah.

0:48:06.9 S1: Yeah, and just in terms of reflecting on the insights that we've discussed so far, how do you know about all of those issues? What kinds of evidence or experience do you draw? And does it all come through your work and your previous studies?

0:48:23.3 S2: Yes, to a large extent. Because our work has been... My role has mainly been focused on energy and climate change. These are the issues that I am daily dealing with, part of it through the campaigns that we are involved in, and also through, should I say, workshops and seminars that usually we are invited to attend because of our work. Yes, my experience is coming from my studies, the projects that I've been involved in, the campaigns that we have been involved in. And then also, seminars and workshops that we have attended. And again, interacting with local communities daily, and knowing exactly... Or to a large extent what their needs are.

0:49:35.6 S1: Yeah, and in your work, to what extent does gender equity factor in your work on energy access?

0:49:49.1 S2: Yes, in our work, gender equity is a major factor. With my program, the Climate Justice and Energy Program, we have placed, should I say, gender justice as an integral part of every program, not just the Climate Justice and Energy Program. Gender justice is a critical part of every campaign that we organise. When you look at the... Currently, the XXXX International, there's a new program called Just Energy Transition. And by the definition or the scope of that program, what we see to be a just energy transition is a systemic shift from a corporate-dominated energy provision and distribution to more of a socially-owned, community-owned, locally-owned energy production and distribution systems. And also, a system in which the political as well as the technical processes and decisions, women should have or women have a bigger participation, in that process. Because when you look at, like I mentioned earlier, when you go to the community level, and the majority of our focus has been on the community level.

0:51:41.3 S2: When you go to the community level, in some, the majority of local communities in Ghana, if you are doing a community forum on energy, if you're doing any community forum, it's usually... The majority of the participants would be men. And even when the men... The women... In some communities where the women are there, they would not be willing to contribute or to talk, and sometimes... Yeah, those are the challenges that we have identified, that we are seeking to, as part of the Just Energy Transition process, to address and make sure that women actually participate in the political process.

0:52:30.1 S1: And how effective do you think, do you feel that that work has been so far... In regards to... Sorry. In regards to gender equity or promoting women's participation, as I think you put it.

0:52:48.0 S2: At the community level, we can say there is a gradual increase in awareness levels. And women in most of the communities are beginning to realise the importance of... The need or the importance of them participating in these processes and influencing the decision, because at the end of the day, they use the energy more, they benefit more from the energy access. Or access to renewable energy, should I say, would be to their benefit because they don't have to walk long distances to fetch firewood, they don't have to stay in the smoke every evening. Women are beginning to realise the need for them to contribute to these decision-making processes, just that the challenge has been because most of these have a cultural influence, the shift is not... You're not seeing that... A quick shift in the level of women participation because it's something that has a cultural influence. Women still feel like even though they are aware, they probably... In some cases they probably would prefer to tell their husbands that this... When you go to this meeting, this is what we want, or this is, yeah... Rather than being part of the meeting and then speaking to the issues.

0:54:48.1 S2: We would say there has been an increase in the level of awareness of the need for women to participate in these processes, not just among the women but also the men. We have raised that level of awareness, but there are still some cultural and traditional setbacks that need to be overcome. But at the national level, again, there is a growing level of awareness of gender equity across all the sectors, but... We haven't seen... I think it will take some time before we see that shift.

0:55:39.8 S1: Yeah. Okay, yeah, I guess, yeah, that makes sense. Do you think that energy access policies in your region... The energy... Yeah, thinking about energy access policies in Ghana, do you think that they are gender-sensitive or do you think there's any gaps?

0:56:05.0 S2: Sorry, can you repeat the question?

0:56:08.1 S1: Sure. The... In terms of energy access-related policies in Ghana, either at district or at national level, are they... Do you think that they are gender-sensitive?

0:56:23.7 S2: I think my network is breaking, so I cannot...

0:56:26.7 S1: Oh. Okay, I'll repeat it. Do you think that... Can you hear me now, if I say something?

0:56:34.6 S2: Yes, I can hear you.

0:56:35.7 S1: Okay, fine.

0:56:36.4 S2: I can hear you now.

0:56:37.7 S1: Yeah. Do you think there are... Do you think energy access policies in Ghana are gender-sensitive?

0:56:54.7 S2: To an extent, yes, because, as I mentioned earlier, Ghana has been, in the context of the... Extending electricity to rural communities, [0:57:17.9] \_\_\_\_ benefitting a lot from it. And so in that context you would say... I think that is explicit in that particular policy, the rural electrification policy, the gender-sensitivity, what we see is once the rural communities are connected to the national grid, women, they're more... And also Ghana has been committed to... Please can you hear me?

0:58:02.9 S1: Yeah, it just broke up a little bit. I think I heard everything, perhaps when you said, "Ghana has also committed to". And then it stopped.

0:58:12.5 S2: Okay. Again, Ghana has been committed to the SEforALL programme which basically seeks to ensure that every household has access to modern energy, and in the definition of Ghana, modern energy... There are a few components, so we are looking at liquefied petroleum gas, natural gas, hydro power, and maybe solar, solar home systems as well as clean cooking stoves. In that context if... Again if that programme is well implemented and very successful, I think we would see women benefiting a lot, as in it would reduce their dependence on wood fuels and the associated health implications and then... The associated negative implications it has. But we don't... I haven't really seen an explicit... Should I say, gender-specific initiative, that is... That I would say, that for me qualifies to be a highly-sensitive gender energy policy. But a part of that, again, I would say is, because we, in the energy context, we also don't have that clear data on what forms of energy is benefitting which genders.

1:00:19.2 S1: That's interesting. Yeah.

1:00:20.9 S2: Yes, and what... Who uses... There isn't that clear data or gender-disaggregated data on energy. So it's a bit... It's not surprising that you don't see it feature more clearly in the energy policy.

1:00:47.0 S1: Yeah, it's really interesting. Do you think that there are policy gaps around women's access to energy at sort of local, district and national level?

1:01:00.5 S2: Yes, I think there are policy gaps, so for instance, if you take the rural electrification programme, that is one programme that could easily, could have been well-tailored to the needs of rural women. Because if you're connecting rural households to electricity, and the majority of these rural households would only use the electricity for lightning in the evening, then you are addressing 30% of the problem. Because what's the energy... The main energy need is the energy for cooking and for heating. I think the rural electrification programme could easily have been redefined or repackaged to something like rural modern energy access, or something. So that it takes into consideration the need for energy for cooking, as well as the gender needs of rural households. That is one gap that I think exists in that policy. But again, also the... When you look at the Sustainable Energy for All, again, it is seeking to promote, in terms of the rural context, it is seeking to promote clean cooking stoves, but what is the financing mechanism for those clean cooking stoves?

1:02:56.3 S2: Because it is not going to be given to the households for free, they still have to buy it. And when you look... When you take a household that's earning less than $5 a day, it's very difficult to get that household to take out, say, 1000 Cedis, that's about $200 or something, to pay for a cooking stove, when he could easily get it for free from his... I mean, her backyard. I think if you take the Sustainable Energy for All, for instance, again, that's a gap. It needs to also look at the financing mechanism for accessing these options that have been made available, not just making the technology available, but also making it easy for households to be able to finance that.

1:03:58.5 S1: With the example of the rural electrification, actually putting gender in there alone isn't sufficient if there's no finance, as an example.

1:04:08.2 S2: Yes, again, that's true. That's true.

1:04:09.7 S1: Yeah. Okay, well imagining there's no policy or financial constraints, for the moment, what in your view would be the best practice for achieving gender equity in energy access?

1:04:29.0 S2: Sorry, imagine there is no policy...

1:04:31.7 S1: Yeah, imagine there's no political or financial constraints, we're just parking them to the side. What in your view would be the best practice for achieving gender equity in energy access? What would it look like in practice and how would it be achieved?

1:04:48.9 S2: What we would like to see would have been more affordable, renewable energy infrastructure, more community-owned energy systems, a complete shift away from fossil fuel dependence to renewable energy for energy sources. And government putting in place a better financing infrastructure for households to be able to use to finance these renewable energy sources of energy and... Yeah. We would want a complete system change. [chuckle] We want to see a complete system change in... Because currently, what we see is the policy that's in play. The policy infrastructure is gradually moving towards more of a corporate-dominated, owned, corporate-dominated production and distribution of energy systems. And when that happens, what we see is, it becomes very difficult for low-income households to be able to access and use the energy to be able to meet their daily needs, because they probably would not be able to afford the infrastructure or the cost of using or the utility bills. They tend to limit themselves to a few uses, and what that means is that rural households will continue to depend on bio fuels, wood, charcoal and firewood, which again have both climate and health implications, but if we have more of community-owned, generated like green mini-grids.

1:07:29.8 S2: If we have green mini-grids installed in, say, at a community level, it is owned and operated by local community or even the district, then the decision-making process is... The decision-making has more community participation, and I think that we would have a better chance of having that transition from fossil fuel dependence to renewable energy, I mean more quicker than if it is in corporate and government area.

1:08:10.8 S1: And what do you think your role as an organisation is in achieving that?

[laughter]

1:08:20.9 S2: Yeah, so for us as an organisation, our role would be to first educate or raise the national awareness of the implications, the climate implications, the economic and the social implications of fossil fuel dependence, because we know, the data is suggesting that globally, the world is gradually moving away from fossil fuel and energy sources. For us to continue to invest in fossil fuel infrastructure means that we... The country is investing in infrastructure that is, or in a sector that is gradually dying out. It would get to a time in 20, 30 years where that infrastructure will become not usable because there isn't... The world is moving towards more renewable energy sources, so we would continue to raise the national level awareness on the need for us to start investing in renewable sources now rather than waiting for later, instead of putting... Opening up our economy for foreign investment into fossil fuels, we should rather be creating that environment, investment environment for investment into renewable energy sources, so that [1:10:06.9] \_\_\_\_ Yes, both for climate and economic purposes.

1:10:10.2 S2: At the national level that's... What we can do, is to raise that awareness and also, again, like I mentioned earlier, bring, build the capacity of the media to realise, to become more abreast with these issues and the trend that... The global trend. And also be able to amplify the voices of civil society and then local communities, and then also go down to the community level to both build the capacity of communities and mobilise local communities to be able to resist some of these dirty energy or fossil fuel energy projects. Which would not be to... Which would have a direct impact on their livelihoods. From an organisational perspective, I think that is the role that we can play.

1:11:03.1 S1: Yeah, okay. We're coming to an end. Is there anything else that we have not discussed that you would like to add at this point?

1:11:16.8 S2: No, I think we've pretty much covered all the issues.

[chuckle]

1:11:20.7 S1: Yeah. Would you... If any follow-up questions come up, would you be available for us to get in touch again?

1:11:27.8 S2: Yes.

1:11:28.6 S1: Yeah. And is there anyone else you think that we should be asking about this particular topic around gender in energy access?

1:11:37.1 S2: Yes, I think it would be good to get in touch with all the civil society organisations, a number of civil society organisation that have an energy programme.

1:11:49.6 S1: Yeah.

1:11:50.0 S2: They'll also be able to contribute to that research.

1:11:53.9 S1: Yeah. Okay, that's great. And in that case, thank you very much for your time. And I'll stop here, but normally I would then talk you through what will happen with the data next and the outputs and so on, but because we both know this is a pilot interview, I'll stop here and I'll stop the recording.