0:00:02.5 Speaker 1: Okay, so there should be a red dot that's popped up so that will show you that we have started the recording, and essentially our first question is about what is your... Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and what your current role is in the organisation?

0:00:18.0 Speaker 2: Okay, so my name is XXXX. I have worked freelance as an electrical engineer for about six years, and I've done some consulting in the fields of renewable energy and energy efficiency. So in August this year, I have joined the XXXX as a technical advisor for an energy service center that is being hosted by the XXXX, that's the XXXX. So my role there is an eye on the project. The project is titled XXXX. So what we are seeking to do... So there were questions asked us as to why large consumers of electricity are not really using renewable energy like they need to, and so yeah, so this project was carved out to sort of encourage especially large consumers of electricity to consider energy audits, to consider RE feasibility studies.

0:01:46.0 S2: So my role there as a technical adviser is to oversee all of that which includes training, training of the staff of these companies, also includes subsidized services, subsidized technical services in the form of energy audits, in the form of RE feasibility studies, in the form of load measurements for factories, yeah.

0:02:16.7 S1: Yeah, okay.

0:02:17.9 S2: Yeah, and other renewable energies, not just solar, so there are training modules for those as well.

0:02:24.9 S1: Yeah, okay, brilliant. Yeah, I'm just... Because you're sort of limited for time, I'm sort of I'm gonna just push on with questions.

0:02:34.1 S2: That's good.

0:02:36.6 S1: Can you please tell me a little bit more about the specific energy access areas that you work on, so you've covered some of that, but you mentioned that obviously you lead this sort of area on the kind of technical advice, but is there a specific electrification program or a policy or something that you're also working on?

0:03:00.5 S2: Not currently, no, not on the government side. As I started with, I have largely been in private sector. So yes, I have helped a company called XXXX in Ghana with some proposals that's yeah, that would lead to energy access in a larger picture, but those are just consulting services. Currently, I'm not doing anything in that regard.

0:03:30.9 S1: Yeah, no, that's fine. It's great. In relation to the sort of policy context in Ghana, what do you see as the current issues and developments in policies that are influencing your work?

0:03:47.2 S2: Policy, if net metering falls under that, that is a major thing that is on our tables right now, that is something that we are trying to push advocacy with the XXXX, which is the XXXX. Yeah, net metering is a big deal, we just hope that soon we are able to cross all the challenges that seem to come with it. Other policies, I would say, of course renewable energy is doing well, the challenge now has been that because industries were hoping to have net metering thing going on, they invested in renewable energy. And now some have excess capacity over the weekends that go to waste literally 'cause they are not able to send them back or sell it to the utility or anything, yeah. So yeah, I'll say net metering.

0:04:57.6 S1: Yeah, just as an aside, is there a feed-in tariff in Ghana?

0:05:02.5 S2: Yeah, there... Yes, was... Hold on, sorry.

0:05:07.7 S1: Okay, no problem. XXXX, if you're here as well, so we have, in terms of the... Hi, we had to start 'cause we're so pressed for time but...

0:05:17.1 Speaker 3: Yeah, I know.

0:05:17.5 S1: We've moved through the first section, and we're now moving into part two.

0:05:21.8 S3: That's fine. My internet was a bit slow, so.

0:05:26.6 S1: Yeah, don't worry, don't worry. We're just glad we now can carry out the interview. Yeah, so we've done the first part basically but I'm not sure how much time we'll actually have, so.

0:05:41.2 S3: Okay, well, I think it will depend on XXXX.

0:05:48.0 S1: Yeah, yeah, that's what I mean. I think she's quite time scarce, and so I was like, I'm running.

[pause]

0:06:22.2 S1: Yeah, I think she just had to pick up the phone.

0:06:26.6 S3: Yeah, yeah.

[pause]

0:07:20.8 S3: I think she's on the phone...

0:07:28.7 S1: Yeah.

0:07:31.2 S3: Oh, okay. Well, I think we should be able to finish it in an hour time or.

0:07:38.3 S2: Hello, hello, hello, sorry.

0:07:41.3 S1: Hi, no problem, no problem. I think we're just... Yeah, we'll jump straight to the next section, I think.

0:07:47.8 S2: Okay.

0:07:49.1 S1: Yeah, so we have a number of questions which are sort of better understandings of energy issues and in relation to gender and just sort of equity, and one of our questions is, what does equitable energy access mean to you?

0:08:04.4 S2: Equitable energy access?

0:08:10.7 S1: Yes.

0:08:11.7 S2: Okay, it sounds like I'm in an examination now but... [chuckle]

0:08:17.6 S1: Sorry.

0:08:20.0 S2: So to me, that means that maybe energy access to both male and female is equal or yeah... Or so the access that males have to energy is in proportion to the access that females have to energy, that's what it means to me.

0:08:43.1 S1: Yeah. Okay, so for you sort of energy... Equitable energy access includes the gender element, so we can't have gender... So you can't have equitable gender... Oh, I can't say it, equitable energy access without also having gender equality in terms of access, is that what you're saying?

0:09:11.1 S1: Oh, I think she put us on hold.

0:09:14.1 S2: Sorry. I lost you shortly, sorry.

0:09:16.1 S1: Oh, no worries, no worries. So in terms of equitable energy access for you, you have to... From your perspective, you have to have gender as a... That's a fundamental part of that.

0:09:29.8 S2: Okay, yeah.

0:09:30.7 S1: Is that, is that... Have I understood that correctly?

0:09:33.4 S2: Yes.

0:09:34.0 S1: Okay, and how does... How equitable is energy access at community and household level in terms of gender equity in Ghana? What do you think?

0:09:51.0 S2: So if I got that right, what is the access level for...

0:09:57.5 S1: Yeah, how equitable is the access level at community and household level in terms of gender, and gender equity?

0:10:07.4 S2: I would say there's not much of a distinction, if you ask me. It's as not as though communities have energy access points that are accessible to a particular gender. Whatever is available in the community is used by all. If we come maybe to cooking, that aspect of energy may be female-dominated in some parts of the country, but yeah, I think access-wise, it is there. For instance, if it's just firewood, definitely that's not clean cooking. If it is firewood that somebody is looking for in the community, there are no restrictions as to whether a male can go and take it, or a female. I don't know if there are specific may be taboos in the various communities but as far as I know, it's pretty fair for males and females.

0:11:08.2 S1: So the access is essentially the same, and how about the... You sort of mentioned that perhaps women are more at work in cooking, so is that one of the examples, if I asked you so how does gender affect the way that energy is used at household level?

0:11:26.2 S2: Yeah, so for some communities and for most of the communities, it's females that do the cooking, so yeah for some, they go for the firewood and the male provide. So if it is the usage of the energy, then maybe the females in some communities use more of the maybe cooking energy than the male.

0:11:54.7 S1: Okay. Do you think there's a difference between different groups of women, so for example, women in rural areas versus urban areas, or older women versus younger women, or different religious or ethnic groups?

0:12:11.6 S2: Of course, with the way cooking is done in rural areas is different from the way we cook in urban areas. So what I have said in comments earlier, it largely had to do with the woman in rural areas who use firewood. So in urban areas or cities, it's fair. It depends on who does the cooking in which household. For some homes, it's men and yeah, it's quite fair, yeah.

0:12:52.3 S1: Okay. And when energy infrastructure and technologies are provided, do you think there's any difference between, sort of in terms of genders, who benefits? So thinking about things like household gadgets like kettles, washing machines, that kind of thing, would that be more a gendered, of benefit to some, to let's say women, whereas if it's maybe transport technologies or something like that, will that benefit men more, or do you think it's also fair depending on where you are in the country?

0:13:31.4 S2: So yeah, it will depend on where you are, and it will also depend on the level of education of the home users. If it is a complex technology... Yeah, it depends on... Because if it is a male in the house and his level of education is not as high as the woman in the house, she could be inclined more towards the use of maybe a kettle or a water heater with a smart plug, for instance, for energy efficiency if it's a smart plug usage and there's a software that is on the phone or something, it depends on how techy the person is, their level of education and...

0:14:21.2 S2: Yeah, I wouldn't classify that much under gender, at least for the cities. In the rural areas, it depends on what exactly it is. For instance, if it's a solar plant, that needs to be... I don't know... The technical knowledge, it could be male, for a rural area, maybe you turn it on, maybe street lighting, solar street lighting, yeah, it depends.

0:14:53.0 S1: And I suppose in your experience, when it comes to decision-making about energy access, so reflecting on your own professional experience, for example, but also what you've observed in rural and urban areas, is there a difference between men and women when it comes to deciding who makes... Who uses what type of energy or where... How infrastructure is installed at community level or regional level?

0:15:23.2 S2: So at community level, usually maybe the traditional rulers would need to be involved, and our traditional councils are mainly male-dominated, aside queen mothers in some places, the elders, the chiefs are all male. So, yeah if an investor, approached with maybe something, a waste energy solution or something, the decision could be made by maybe 70% male and very little input from the females just because of the way our traditional system is structured, yeah.

0:16:06.6 S1: Yeah. And at the more national level?

0:16:11.0 S2: Pardon.

0:16:11.8 S1: And at national level?

0:16:13.0 S2: At national level where the chiefs are not... So it depends on where it is, so if it is a ministry of energy, or in parliament, it depends on the ratios between the men and women there. So Energy Commission or wherever the decision is being made, the decision being made will depend on who is there. Yeah. And that... I mean now there are quite a number of females in such institutions, not just in the institution, but even in... Within the institution, we have to check at which level the lady is... Is the person at a decision making level or just a member of the organisation, yeah.

0:17:07.9 S1: Yeah. Okay. And how do you... So the things that we've discussed so far. So what types of evidence and experience do you draw on, is that your professional experience in the work that you described at the beginning, or other experiences that you've had in relation to energy access in Ghana.

0:17:31.8 S2: So, are you asking what percentage of women I have seen in my practice who are at decision-making levels or...

0:17:41.6 S1: No, this is actually more generally about what we've discussed so far, not just the decision making, but also the levels of access and things like that, so one of the questions that we have to ask is about... How do you know about all of these issues? What kind of evidence or experience do you draw on?

0:18:03.7 S2: Okay. That is not very clear.

0:18:07.2 S1: I would feed that back.

0:18:10.8 S2: Could you rephrase it? What would you like to know based on my experience?

0:18:16.9 S1: Yeah, I think just the things that we've discussed so far. So this is... What we've talked about is based on your professional insights. Is that right?

0:18:28.0 S2: Yes.

0:18:28.5 S1: Yes, that's fine. Yeah. I will ask if we can change this question actually. And do you think there's a big difference in terms of gender equity and energy access between then the rural and urban areas? Sort of just building on what we discussed a bit earlier...

0:18:46.8 S2: Yes, there's a big difference which is based mainly on levels of education and the level of influence the larger community has on the individual, so for instance, if it is a taboo for a man to do cooking in a certain community and the traditional leaders are able to enforce that. It won't be seen in the city. So, yes it depends on the community and yes, there's a difference between the rural view of things and the city. I mean if we are in a home, there's nobody to enforce anything here in the city, but if you're in a community where when the man is seen doing a certain action there's trouble, then you could be penalised for it, depending on where you are. So in the city, people are more independent and... Yeah, so it depends on the enforcement, where you are and your level of education I would say.

0:20:05.2 S1: Yeah, I think the education aspect is really interesting.

0:20:07.6 S2: Yeah.

0:20:09.6 S1: To what extent... So reflecting on your own work your day-to-day kind of professional engagement in the sector, to what extent does gender equity factor in your work on energy access?

0:20:21.1 S2: Okay. Am I on mute. Hi, Ann.

0:20:32.3 S1: Hi, there.

0:20:32.4 S2: Okay, could you rephrase that?

0:20:34.8 S1: Yes. To what extent does gender equity come into your own work on energy access on a day-to-day?

0:20:49.0 S2: To what extent on my day-to-day... I haven't had any, maybe harsh experiences about gender in my field of work, I think it's more about who is where, if it's a decision-making body that has fewer women, and the vote is based on majority, of course, the majority would win, with or without the gender bits of it, I don't know if it's clear.

0:21:28.3 S1: Yeah, so I guess, that's your experience of being, yeah, a woman in the sector, but I suppose there's also, are you ever asked to specifically look at, for example, the role of women in energy access in your work or is it mainly technical?

0:21:48.0 S2: Okay, so I have been interviewed by other researchers, maybe mainly because there are not many women actively in the sectors. So for clean cook-stove programmes, I have encountered more women there than in maybe fields of perhaps energy efficiency or the other aspects of energy.

0:22:17.2 S1: Yeah.

0:22:17.3 S2: So I see more involvement with the clean cook-stoves with regards to women. I've seen more women there than men actually, I have seen very few men, maybe 20% with clean cook-stoves, but for the others, there are very few women spread across the other things, at least, as far as I have experienced in my field of work.

0:22:42.8 S1: Yeah, okay, that's really interesting. And do you think that energy policies in your sector are particularly gender sensitive, other than... We've kind of build on this, other than cook-stoves... Do you feel like there's any gaps in terms of considering gender or particularly the role of women?

0:23:10.4 S2: I think for now, the decisions have been made based on... Purely based on who knows what about the topic being discussed and not deliberately to skew it towards men, but because there are more men in the sectors, yeah, that's how it looks. So for instance, if there's a board of 10 people and there's just one female, I don't know if it would be prudent to just ask that one individual, what her views are on a particular topic. I have seen a few people do that. I call out one person and find out what she thinks about something, but yeah, again, if there are 10 people and it's just one female, I don't know to what extent her views on the subject would fly, yeah.

0:24:12.1 S1: And how do you think gender equity in energy access could be improved at different levels? For example, talking about the energy efficiency that you mentioned and other non-female sort of areas? Are there any opportunities?

0:24:32.3 S2: Of course, there are many opportunities, mainly in the areas of capacity building or education. If the women, especially in rural areas are educated on what to do, they move their households, they can let the children know, "Okay, turn off your lights at this time... " Yeah, the simple things, simple energy efficiency interventions that can be made, once the women understand they are more able to. So for instance, they'll talk about it in the market, talk about it on their way to take firewood... Women are more in community, they do more things together... If it's shea-butter production, they do it together, so they are able to do that.

0:25:32.1 S2: The men too do some activities together, but for most of the rural communities, it's more women, maybe farming together, harvesting together, so the communication goes round so that they... "I heard that when your fan... Or you're not in the room, don't leave your fan on because the fan will cool people and not the room," so... Yeah, so they get it passed round, their children hear it, they're more able to enforce some of these things in their homes, once they know. So more of education and, yeah, awareness creation, I would say.

0:26:08.9 S1: I think, yeah, so that's really interesting, so awareness creation, building on the kind of cultural networks that people already have, and particularly women have... Yeah, so that's interesting. And imXXXXning if policy and finance was not an issue, there was no constraint, what in your view would be best practice for achieving gender equity in energy access and perhaps specifically in rural energy access?

0:26:39.0 S2: Okay, so like you have just said, capitalising on what the existing structures are, where are the women, what do they do, how do they spend their days, how do we influence that? If we are harvesting in a way that is not environmentally friendly or not sustainable and how we have to reach them at their level. So I would say one a study of who the people are because it's community specific. What happens in the Volta region may not be the same as what's happening in the north. So, yeah, who they are. What are the things that come naturally to them, what are there strengths? What is in the area? For instance, if it is thatched roofs, that would cool their rooms better and they are already into that. How do we use what is available by way of research or information to help them at their level?

0:27:57.6 S1: And what role could you play within that in achieving that?

0:28:07.9 S2: I think from where I stand or if I have the opportunity to?

0:28:14.4 S1: Either.

0:28:18.8 S2: It will be interesting to meet them at their level. Find out what they do and find out what's better, more environmentally friendly, more sustainable ways of doing the same things without giving them the sense of like taking out from them who they really are. So what are we doing? We are making a certain kind of food. We make it over two days. Is it... Can we make it in one day? What interventions would we need to make it in one day? Or we are using candles for a certain activity. What else could be used? What is in the area. And yeah, just coming from base up, not from up down. So it won't be as if we have invented something or found out something and then we just go and dump it in the community. But just start from the base and what is there and how could we help it up, that way they feel more involved.

0:29:32.8 S1: Yeah, I like that. And in terms of Ghana, what do you think how... Do you think the government is committed to the energy transition?

0:29:42.1 S2: If you say energy transition, so transition from where to where?

0:29:45.1 S1: As in transition to modern energy services based on renewables?

0:29:53.5 S2: They are available. Yeah, but as one consultant I work with will say something like energy efficiency is not something you can easily boast about. It's not like a wind farm that you call people... So you call other countries or the UN or [0:30:14.5] \_\_\_\_ or somebody to come and say, hey, I have installed 50 megawatts of a wind farm. But energy efficiency too has its inputs. So I would say for the government, they are more interested in the visible things, something that can be commissioned, something that is visible. But it is not all the branches of the energy access that could fall in that category. So, yeah, so.

0:30:45.1 S1: So not all energy access is sexy basically in terms of energy?

0:30:48.5 S2: Exactly, exactly.

0:30:52.7 S1: And in the last 10 years, have you observed any shift in terms of energy sources and sources...

0:31:02.2 S2: Okay. So one I would please request that we pause with this? What time is it 2:14.

0:31:07.7 S1: Yeah.

0:31:07.7 S2: How many more questions?

0:31:12.5 S1: Three.

0:31:12.6 S2: Three more. Okay, so what, what other time works for you. Can we talk again, how soon? Let me see.

0:31:23.0 S1: Yeah, I'm available till Thursday and then I'm away. But also XXXX could pick up this last part if you wanted to.

0:31:29.9 S2: So Thursday?

0:31:32.1 S1: Yeah.

0:31:33.9 S2: Okay, so what is tomorrow? Okay. I will let XXXX know which other time just to round off.

0:31:47.7 S1: But thank you very much for your time so far. It's really appreciated.

0:31:53.7 S2: It is my pleasure.

0:31:53.8 S1: It's been great. Okay. Thank you very much. Bye bye. Cheers.

0:31:55.8 S2: Cheers. Bye. Thank you.

0:32:05.4 S1: Right. XXXX, you're still there? Could you... I'm just gonna stop recording this.