0:00:01.2 Speaker 1: Sorry, I think the network was the challenge...

0:00:04.7 Speaker 2: Yeah, okay. Yeah, that's fine. I was saying to XXXX if...

0:00:12.5 S1: Please, I can't hear you. Can you do this because...

0:00:16.9 S2: You can't hear me?

0:00:17.8 S1: Yes, please, I can't hear you. It's better now.

0:00:20.6 S2: Okay great. I was saying to XXXX if this doesn't work, then maybe we'll find a different way, but I just continue with questions and then hopefully we will get the majority. In your opinion, what does equitable energy access mean to you?

0:00:39.3 S1: For me, I think we are all Ghanaians and we need equal opportunities, so when... It was a big shock to me when I got into the communities without lights. It was total darkness for them in the evenings, and life... I could imagine myself out there. That is why it became a passionate thing for me to introduce to them an alternative way. I believe that since we are all Ghanaians... I also did a research in a community whereby, they've given about 200 acres of their land for a solar panel company to use, but a lot of things went wrong in those establishment. Equal, no matter the differences we all need equal opportunities and access to energy, and there are alternatives they could also use to share. People can either choose to go off-grid or on-grid for those accesses. And then also we as a country, we need to also be innovative enough in solving such issues.

0:02:03.3 S2: Yeah.

0:02:03.6 S1: That's why as the youth we thought of introducing the solar and other things to such communities for them to have the energy. But at the end of the day, through our research we realised that, we have in terms of policy... Government has a lot of interventions, but when you go to the grassroots, it has to do with communication. They think that getting access to electricity is too expensive for them, so therefore, if the idea or the discussion of electricity comes to such communities they tell themselves, "I can't afford it". That is why when we get to the policy level we try to request that the sensitisation level should also be part of it in terms of energy access at the various levels.

0:02:56.5 S2: Yeah okay. And what does gender equity in energy access mean to you?

0:03:08.4 S1: You realise that at the end of the day, XXXX, sorry for saying this, but I have to say it, it's the women that have made better use of electricity, and need a better understanding and clarity in terms of how to use or access electricity. One thing that we do most often is that we try not to take out the women and give them the power they deserve to make them understand, because you realise that some of the times you go into communities, they just waste the electricity access they have. But if they are trained on how they can manage it, it's also beneficial at all levels.

0:03:53.3 S1: And so women must be on the front line when it comes to gender in energy, and then if they... Especially when they saw that young ladies like us were fronting this. One of us speakers is also a lady who is fair an expert in renewable energy. And so we encouraged the women in the community to know that, okay, when the concerns of energy issues comes up, they can also have a say, especially when we went to the place where we heard, they were going to establish coal in the community. I realised that the women, there was a particular woman who had in-depth knowledge about energy access, and could have fronted a lot of things for the community in terms of understanding and trying to put the requests to the front, but because she was a woman her voice was not clearly heard. She had a lot of ideas that could have fronted and helped the community in a lot of ways, but when the meetings are called, they call only the chiefs without the queen mothers.

0:04:58.6 S1: That was also one concern for us, and so for us to have her talk to us, it was a big deal for her. We gave her the audience to speak to the chief on the ideas she also had. Women fronting these things will go farther away than the men, because for them they always try to keep things to themselves and be in control. But as for a woman, if it gets to her she will spread it across and let others know about the access to energy and the alternatives that they can use. And also, it also helps them in their day-to-day activities as well.

0:05:41.3 S2: Yeah, so at household and community level then, how do you see equitable energy access there between men and women?

0:05:51.5 S1: At the community, it's a big deal because women don't have a voice, so it depends on the person intervening at that point, if you have a sense of introducing or including the agenda, they will allow you have the platform, but at the community level women don't have a voice. They always have to speak through the men before it gets to the top, and decisions are not taXXXX by women at the community level but by the men. Even if you have the best ideas or you're championing anything huge you need to also sit back and let them speak before you speak or come up with any idea. Women don't have enough access and the energy... Equity in energy actually is, at the community level, is more of family and it's the man that has to take that decision on whether they want to use the energy access available or not, it's not the woman that has that opportunity.

0:07:05.0 S2: Yeah, that's really interesting. And so that's household and community level. What about kind of your district or national level? Do you see that women are more involved in energy-related decision-making?

0:07:21.1 S1: This is a good question. I've not really put my mind to it before because I think most of the meetings... We had a few representative of women. But one thing that as the CSOs we try to draw our key stakeholders' or the policymakers' mind to include women in everything that they do and in their decisions they take. Because we are the front when it comes to the use of energy and how it affects us. It's just a few representatives we have at... They have a few, it's not something that they are cautious of, to include women at the higher level.

0:08:06.2 S2: Yeah, interesting. And then going back to the household level. How does gender affect the way energy is used in households?

0:08:18.5 S1: That is one thing that as a team, we realised and we tried to empower the women on how to use the energy. How they can use the access they have with energy, because you realise that it's the women that have control about that entirely. If you're educated at that level, they try to manage it to the best of everyone. And it also saves costs as well, and also helps them to also appreciate the returns they are bringing in because you go to a household, the fan is on, the TV is on at the same time, another the room is empty, but its fan is on. But when the woman is cautious of it she makes sure all this... And knowing how much... And we also go to the extent of helping them to calculate how much they can save, how much energy they can save if they are be able to do all these things. And it also helps them to now be cautious of what they can do in order to help in this hard direction.

0:09:30.8 S2: Yeah, interesting. And when... And in terms of sort of women... And do you think that different groups of women benefit from access to energy differently, for example, women in rural versus urban areas or younger versus older women or different income groups within rural communities?

0:09:52.6 S1: The energy access has some levels. Some communities, they have to travel a distance, especially the youth. Maybe your uncle has sent you a phone from outside or maybe you came to the city and bought you a phone, so you should rather visit the next town just to charge their phone and come. I think when it comes to the rural level, access to energy is more important to the youths than to the older ages, because we realised, too, that, at the middle age, people, they have what we call... They have this kind of... It looks like a radio, which they can just use a battery, so to them it's enough. But the youth, they wants to know more, probably there is homework or something they need lights for and other things, so it's more for the youths than... And when they...

0:10:54.0 S2: Yeah, that's really interesting. Sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you. You finish your sentence please.

0:11:04.9 S1: For them at that level it's more about the youth than the old age.

0:11:13.7 S2: Yeah, yeah. I think that's really fascinating, and when new energy infrastructure or technologies are provided or become available, what's the difference between men and women in terms of who benefits?

0:11:31.6 S1: Okay. I don't know whether XXXX can bail me out here. In Ghana, specifically, it's more of the men fronts everything, but in terms of access, when it's given out, it's more of the women that use this. Do you understand? It's more of a household thing. It's a conscious effort that we all need to have. If I speak to you now and I'm being frank with you, I'll say in my house it's my husband that is more cautious of energy than myself, because he'll wake up at 6:00 and make sure he just leaves his bed to switch off all the lights that is not needed, that doesn't need to be used and come back to bed. But I'll wake up and it's until I come out that I would think of switching off all these things. In this aspect, it's most of a household thing and the population of women is higher in Ghana than the men. If you balance the equation, you could probably say it's for all. Rating from eight to 10, the women have about six and then the men will have about seven.

0:13:02.1 S2: Okay, we only have a few more questions. I'm hoping, because we don't wanna keep you too long, but to what extent does gender equity factor in your work on energy access? You've already touched on that. But I just wondered if you could elaborate a little bit more on that.

0:13:20.1 S1: Okay, we are cautious of women, so at every level we try to sensitise... Make our sensitisation more on women, at the community and then at the national level. We always try to make them understand that women have the power to make the changes we want to see, more than the men. They'd rather have to empower the women, and fortunately, as the coordinator, I'm also a woman so I have the opportunity to also express it at that level. In explaining how we use... The use of energy is in a household level, you realise that its the woman that has more control, the man just goes out to work and the woman is left home with the children. If she has that understanding about it, she can be able to balance it out for us to have equitable energy, as we require... Than a man. And then, we also have the tendency of having more impact at various levels than the men, but they always leave us out when they are taking the decisions.

0:14:45.6 S2: Yeah, I think that is what I'm really getting, yeah. Sorry go.

0:14:50.4 S1: We believe that even at the least opportunity, they should also find out the views of women in terms of energy access and how they are able to utilise it at that level. And how it can also help as required.

0:15:09.5 S2: How effective do you feel the action your organisation has taXXXX... How effective do you feel that that has been in making energy access more gender-equitable, if you like?

0:15:27.8 S1: Especially at the rural areas, you realise that we made a huge impact, now the voices of the women were being heard because, through our interventions, we got the women to speak with the chiefs on the ideas they have in that regard, so we are more of... We are not policymakers but what we believe in is that we are more of the advocates, we try to draw the attention to what the facts are and the essence of including women in every aspect, especially with the energy access that we want. I think we've really made a huge impact, the communities without light, through our interventions, have the solar power, even though it's off-grid, at least it solved the problems for some Ghanaians. And then also at the policy level we try to send our feedback to the Energy Ministry to get them to also help us acknowledge those things that are at the grassroot level and add it to their plans in the future.

0:16:46.5 S2: Do you think that energy access policies in Ghana are gender-sensitive at all at the moment?

0:16:53.8 S1: That's not... I won't say 100% no.

0:17:01.1 S2: What are the gaps?

0:17:05.0 S1: It all has to do with our culture.

0:17:11.8 S2: Yeah, okay. And how do you think... Can gender equity in terms of energy access be improved... Yeah, broadly at local district and national level?

0:17:28.8 S1: Yes so... In terms of policy women must also have a voice in terms of... At the stakeholder level, at the grassroots... The communities also have to create a room when it comes to talk... Issues of energy. Women also have to have a representative at that level as well. And then they are... It's more of... The way of life.

0:18:07.4 S2: What do you mean by that?

0:18:09.5 S1: The way of life in terms of getting the woman to understand that you have the power to... You can reduce a lot of costs, if you are to do A, B, C and D in order to help another party who is not having access to any energy to have access to energy. It's a cycle that has to run for all... And it will go a long way to help us. And women have to know the power they have as well. And it affects job creation and other things.

0:18:55.3 S2: Yeah, imagining there was no policy or financial constraints, what in your view would be the best practice for achieving gender equity in energy access?

0:19:10.0 S1: For me, I think that it's more about the consciousness of including women in... At the gender... In anything related to energy. And making them have the power they need and then the impact they can make at that level. And giving them access to all that is required when it comes to energy policies and gender equity.

0:19:42.9 S2: And then I have just... Three or so more questions kind of focused on energy transitions, I think you already touched on the sort of, the wider context, and that in terms of energy transitions that it hasn't been such commitment in terms of renewal energy, or there is commitment in policy, but the targets haven't quite been achieved and so on. And so I just wondered, in the last 10 years, have you observed any shift in terms of the kind of energy sources which are being used that households depend on for heating, lighting, cooling, and so on?

0:20:20.9 S1: I think that the renewable energy fair at the urban level has made a lot of impacts because, at the fair, which is run by Ministry of... Energy Commission you realise that a lot of stakeholders meet with these renewable energy companies, they have an exhibition stands and other things, so people are able to have access. We went to about five communities to understand how they are using the renewable energy products and realised that in the, I think, eastern region, they call both now... The Ministry of Agriculture intends to either give farmers solar products as part of the packages they give them on Farmers' Day. And then also others were also using a water heater in the Volta region and other things. And then we also realised that the idea of renewable energy is sinking down gradually, but government keeps on saying it's doing it with the private sector. And at the end of the day you get to the private sector, and they are telling you they are not getting the supports expected from government, so it makes it become a struggle at that level. I would say that we are about just as we are 2%. We are just at that level. As our measuring requests, we still have more to do in terms of sensitisation.

0:22:15.8 S2: And in a similar time frame, in the last of 10 years, have you seen a shift in terms of women's access and use of energy for heating, lighting, cooling?

0:22:30.2 S1: A few of them because to a normal Ghanaian renewable energy is super expensive, but they rather forget the long-term impact it has on them. And a lot of them also have shifted to the clean energy as well through some of the sensitisations of other NGOs and CSOs, and private companies as well. We went to another community to... That also had a new technology of heating and smoking fish. I realised that women have... There are some interventions at a point, so we are getting there gradually in terms of women.

0:23:22.6 S2: And finally, how easy is it to access gendered data in relation to access and use of energy?

0:23:34.3 S1: Can you come again with your question?

0:23:36.0 S2: Yeah. Thinking about data that supports or data that informs you about different... How men and women use and access and make decisions about energy differently, how easy is it to access such data for your work, or do you have to do all of that research from the bottom up?

0:24:00.3 S1: It's bottom up in Ghana...

0:24:01.8 S2: So there's no...

0:24:03.6 S1: Even though when you go to... Interestingly, we had one issue, Ministry of Energy, we had to do a program and they stopped us from... They wanted to stop us from doing it, so we had to go there for a meeting and then they were trying to pull out all the data they had on what we wanted to have a meeting and a workshop on. And we realised they've done a lot, but the information wasn't out there. Then we told them that it's better for them to come to our program and say what they are showing us to the public, we are rather giving them the platform, but they rather thought that since we want them onboard we should rather follow their terms. But you realise that when you go into their office, they have a lot of research and lots of information, but it takes the big man to tell them to release it this before it comes out there even... You ask of it from their website level, you don't get anything, you even go there with a letter by... It just took one of their heads to pull out all those data. You have to do it from bottom up, if you have to... In Ghana here when you have to run a research.

0:25:19.0 S2: I think that's really interesting because that's perhaps also a lesson for people like me who are kind of international researchers who come and collect data, and how actually useful it would be if it would then be available to someone like you for instance, rather than collecting dust on a shelf. And is there anything else that we have not discussed on the topic that you would like to add?

0:25:46.0 S1: Okay. For me, one of my greatest concerns which I always talk to 350 about is... About the fact that I think that I always want to draw the attention of researchers. After our researching, what impact are we able to leave? I believe in leaving a mark at every point and making issues related. After this research, we want to be able to come up with an idea whereby it solves the problem we've researched on. How well can we equip our youth to have this gender sensitivity and energy... Gender in energy access, go into the grassroots level for people to appreciate what it means, for that to be represented at each level. I think that's all that I would require.

0:26:50.6 S2: Yeah, I will try and answer that, very briefly. I think from my perspective, I think the first thing I should probably mention is a little bit about my background. I'm a researcher, I work in academia, but I also used to work as a XXXX. And then I've done research on energy access for about XXXX in XXXX, and once briefly... So field trips, regular field trips, and briefly, I came to Ghana last year, I should have come back this year, and I spent a short time in an area near XXXX, which is kind of like... Not so far from XXXX.

0:27:37.7 S1: Yeah, of course.

0:27:39.9 S2: Yeah, and so while there, I was kind of hosted by a health center. In the Gambia, I had this sort of relationship that enables me to actually stay in the community. I very much hear what you're saying about actually needing to listen and be in the community, not in some nice hotel, but be local and participate in local life. And I guess my... What I would like to contribute to is both change in terms of policy, but also linking the kind of the grassroots voices with the sort of, kind of policy stakeholders.

0:28:17.7 S2: And what I think this particular research, which is basically just focused on energy professionals, I think what that is already highlighting is a difference between... We've only done in Ghana sort of three interviews so far, but I think it's already highlighting a difference between people who are engaging in the community, people who are participating and visiting and spending time, or are from rural communities versus urban areas and perhaps more privileged kind of backgrounds. And so I think having decision makers based in the city who are not actually, who lack a kind of sense of empathy of what it really means to... Not be able to charge a phone and not have light. I think to me, that's a really interesting gap, and I hope that we can raise awareness of that and raise awareness of the importance for people to actually leave the city and spend some time, not just talking about people in rural areas, but getting to know and speaking with and involving people in rural areas, and hopefully a lot of that will be focused on women, so...

0:29:30.5 S1: Awesome, and I'm glad you're a woman representing in this research, so well done.

0:29:38.3 S2: Well, it's been an absolute pleasure. Do you think there's anybody else that we should speak to? That we should interview?

0:29:45.9 S1: Yes, I think Alliance for... I don't know whether, XXXX, you remember XXXX, from Iman?

0:29:57.2 S2: Are you on mute?

0:30:00.8 XXXX: Yes, XXXX. I was actually thinking of him...

0:30:05.8 S1: Yes, I don't know... Yes, so he has this guy called XXXX, I don't know whether you know him.

0:30:12.9 XXXX: Yeah, XXXX. Yeah, yeah.

0:30:13.2 S1: Yes. He's, yeah, he's a good... He's done a lot of research. We recently did a research on renewable energy, solar power plants in Ghana. I think, you can talk to XXXX, it's true.

0:30:29.9 XXXX: Okay, thank you very much.

0:30:31.8 S2: Well, thank you very much. Thank you very much for your time. That was really, really great, and I hope we, we'll stay in touch.

0:30:39.0 S1: I'm glad that I was... I helped, I will say, much.

0:30:43.0 S2: Yes, definitely.

0:30:45.5 S1: Thank you.

0:30:45.9 S2: Brilliant. Thank you, bye.

0:30:50.9 S1: Bye.

0:30:51.7 XXXX: Okay, bye-bye.

0:30:54.4 S2: Bye. Right, XXXX, time to go home. That was great.

0:31:00.5 XXXX: Yeah. Yeah, this one was a lot better.

0:31:06.4 S2: Yeah, but I think...

0:31:08.3 XXXX: You're still recording.

0:31:10.8 S2: Oh, I'm still recording. I should stop, shouldn't I? Thank you very much, before we talk about this. Yeah.