0:00:00.0 Interviewer: Let's start. My first question is really what is your current role? What's the organisation you work for? What's your current role and how did you get into that?

0:00:12.5 Respondent: Okay, my organisation is XXXX, we are a local NGO that is committed to empowering communities to come up with innovative solutions to address their own development challenges. I don't know how well you know about Ghana or maybe in the Sub-Saharan Africa or let me say Africa, due to the challenges, the enormous challenges that we have, a lot of time we tend to rely on our national governments to bring interventions that are geared toward poverty alleviation, growth and economic development and empowerment. And because our governments are also handicapped, we also tend to rely on foreign supports and all that.

0:01:07.2 Respondent: But I believe that our communities or us as individuals we have certain resources available to us that we can use to address some of the challenges that we face as we support our government to do more for us. So that is the vision or the objective of us as an organisation, we work with communities at the grassroot level. We are a youth led organisation, as you can tell I am a very young person and I am the founder of the organisation and we have been in existence for three years now. So I found this organisation as a result of the passion I have for communities. I studied community development at the University, and I worked with an organisation called XXXXas a XXXX and I have always been in the field working with local people, young people and when I was leaving the organisation I said no let me have an organisation that would directly meet the needs of local communities, and young people, so we are a youth led organisation that is poised in ensuring sustainable development in our community.

0:02:42.7 Interviewer: Okay, that's really great. And I'm just thinking in terms of your mentions of policies and government or the government... So you are doing grassroots work with communities, are you then also linking that to national policies or to what extent do national policies and programs influence your work? .

0:03:06.0 RESPONDENT: What we normally do is that, because we are a grassroots based organisation, then we are attached with community, we also work hand in hand with state institutions and we sit with them on the tables, especially the local authorities or the district assemblies, they are by constitution mandated to oversee the development of a district or local communities, so we believe that they are very important when it comes to community development and as a result of that when we engage with the communities and we are able identify their problems we try to connect what is on the ground to national policies and also monitor and ensure that the local authorities... You know in Ghana we have what we call the medium term development plans which the district assemblies implement as the district plan for a four year period, it's always renewed after every four years.

0:04:16.4 RESPONDENT: And we ensure that these national policies are integrated in the medium term development plans so that the communities can actually benefit from these national policies. Most of the time in Ghana you see a disconnect or a lack of coordination in national policies trickling down to to the local level. So one of the things that we try to ensure is that at the district level they integrate the national policies within their medium term development plans, so that communities can actually benefit and hold their local authorities accountable.

0:05:02.0 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, and you said that you then monitor that as well?

0:05:07.6 RESPONDENT: Yes.

0:05:09.0 INTERVIEWER: Okay, I think that's really useful to understand that the translation of what's happening at national level into local level and then how that then enables those as far as what's happening at community level. By the way when I'm looking to the left, I have another screen so I'm not being distracted it's just where I have the interview questions. Yeah. Okay, so in terms of what you currently work on, what are your current project programs that you're working on?

0:05:42.3 RESPONDENT: Okay, so the organisation that I have experience of my work the natural resource governance agriculture and environment issues and currently we have a few projects, that we are conducting a research. We launched the report, and we are moving to the next phase of the project which is documentation of the work of export credit agencies in the energy sector.

0:06:23.3 RESPONDENT: We look at the impact of fossil fuel projects, in communities in the oil enclave and also in Tema, where we have a lot of Tema plants. And we are looking at how these communities have been affected, the fisher folks and the women and children especially. And the next phase of the project is how we are going to influence policies and in government program. Currently the government is looking at creating a petroleum hub in the western region of Ghana and one of the key things that we are looking at is how the community concerns are going to be addressed in such projects.

0:07:16.7 RESPONDENT: It is obviously very difficult to get the government to back out on its intentions, when it comes to fossil fuel development, especially now that you are using fossil fuel revenues, revenues generated from fossil fuel to finance a major education policy in the country, which is the Free SHS and people have come to agree that yes the oil revenues have to be used to finance education. Now we make people understand that these are the impact and then therefore government have to shift from fossil fuel. It's a long term thing that people are going to adopt to so what we are looking at is to ensure that communities have to get t he best out of these fossil fuels projects and that we try to mitigate as much as possible the impacts of these fossil fuel projects on the communities.

0:08:23.0 RESPONDENT: So currently that is one of the things that we are doing. And also we have a school government project where we are integrating Moringa and [0:08:36.7] \_\_\_\_ in the schools purposely to address three things. To improve the nutrition of the school children at the same time to have them have the mindset of agriculture. In Ghana one of the major challenges that we have is that the agriculture sector which used to be the major boost to our economy has now dwindled and contributes to less than 4 percent of our GDP. So, agriculture is one of the areas that can provide sustainable livelihoods for a lot of young people so we are trying to reintroduce the concept of conservation farming based on the Tema culture principles with the school government projects. So these are some of the projects that we are currently running in the industry.

0:09:47.5 INTERVIEWER: Okay, I think that's useful to understand as a sort of background to what you do and how you operate as an organisation. In terms of energy, next question is; what does equitable energy access mean to you?

0:10:06.5 RESPONDENT: That's a very interesting question. I am trying to remember in 2018 when we started running as an organisation. We had an energy project that we developed a cook stove implants that we were giving to the rural women and that cook stove implants helped to reduce indoor pollution and also helps to improve cooking time and save money on fuel. Now, I can send you some documents of that energy project afterwards. We believe that equitable energy access. Is that what you asked?

0:11:00.0 INTERVIEWER: Yes, equitable energy access, what does it mean to you?

0:11:05.3 RESPONDENT: Energy access. Yes. What it means to me is that households are able to have access to affordable modern energy in forms of electricity for their household energy demands and also for cooking. It's been equitable in the sense that energy is used at different levels by different people in terms of men and women. Even energy access among men and women is also very different and most of the women use energy for cooking for the households while the men use it for manufacturing production, for income generation activities.

0:12:01.7 RESPONDENT: And because of the challenges in the energy sector a lot of women are unable to use energy for other means. So for example, because of the poor cooking conditions of women they spend a lot of time cooking and collecting wood fuel for cooking and all that and are unable to undertake other activities such as education such as income generation activities and all that. All this comes to play when you are looking at equitable access to energy.

0:12:44.7 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I think you've already then basically touched on or more or less answered the next question, which is really, What does gender equity in energy access mean to you?

0:13:00.1 RESPONDENT: So as I said earlier on, men and women have different uses of energy and different levels of access to specially modern and affordable energy and therefore when we talk about gender...

[background conversation]

0:13:39.9 RESPONDENT: Yeah, so... Uses of energy? It's different across resources.

0:13:56.0 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Okay, yeah, I think you already explained that how energy is used differently between men and women. I'm wondering if you could tell me a little bit about what you think, how different groups of women access energy differently? So for example, what's the difference between women in rural versus urban households or older women versus younger women? Are there any differences in the way that women benefit from access to energy?

0:14:23.0 RESPONDENT: Yes, there are different ways that women have access or benefit from modern energy. When we look at the rural women versus the urban women, in terms of the different forms of energy, we have the LPG, we have cookstoves, that are easily accessible to the urban women than the rural women. So when you go to the rural communities, you'll still find women using the traditional cookstoves... We call them Muchia in Ghana, and it's a lot... And as a result of that, a lot of women die annually, as result of household air pollution and indirect pollution. When we look at access, urban women have access to finance and are able to purchase or provide energy for their various needs, compared to rural women, who do not have access to finance. Also, due to the fact that modern energy, instead of it being affordable, it's not that affordable. So when we look at clean cooking stoves, for example, they are not that affordable, due to adoption of the technology, due to the cost of production of the technologies, most often, it is being imported into the country.

0:16:08.3 RESPONDENT: And the importation costs a lot of... Increases the cost of production and therefore the prices of it is very high. Rural women do not have access to... Lack access to finance. In modern times, microfinance companies which are mainly established to support the rural poor, are not able to access loans and stuff due to high interest rates and all that. So it leads to inequalities in... Even among women, in the access to energy. So these are some of the factors that brings about such inequalities in access to energy and also in their productive uses.

0:17:00.5 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, I think that the notion of other productive uses... It's really interesting. And I think sometimes also, actually overlooked. But in terms of... So when new energy infrastructure or technologies, appliances become available, is there a difference between men and women, in terms of who benefits more?

0:17:27.2 RESPONDENT: Yes, I... There is that difference... You would say that even though gender has been mainstreamed, even at the national level in our policies and all that, there is still the lack of capacity. And that will also be a contributing factor to the gaps and then the differences that you will have. And secondly, issues of finance still play a major role and would also definitely influence access and uses, because, for example, men use energy in terms of electricity for income generation activities. Now, women are still behind in access to finance and other economic activities, and therefore, will be limited in their access to modern energy to fuel their income activities.

0:18:47.2 RESPONDENT: When we even look at the communities say there is an irrigation system, a solar irrigation system, that maybe is done for a community or is given to a community. We have seen issues where, instances where men have access to these solar irrigation systems for their farms, as to women having access to such irrigation system, also due to they are unpaid work and home care roles that they have. So, one of the things that we have done, or we are continuing to do is also to let men understand that this unpaid labour and home care that the women have as their roles, men can also play a major role in supporting them, and thereby reduce the time spent in cooking and on these unpaid work, so that they will also give them the opportunity to undertake certain income generation activities and that will also help them to have access to energy for sustainable livelihoods.

0:20:09.3 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, interesting. So it kind of suggests, so challenging the role of the woman in being the primary person perhaps for carrying out household roles. Yeah.

0:20:35.5 RESPONDENT: Yes, because like... Sorry to cut you...

0:20:35.9 INTERVIEWER: No, no.

0:20:36.0 RESPONDENT: In Ghana, it is mainly... It's women who do cooking and it is seen as a woman's duty, so a lot of Ghanaian men do not cook or do not help their wives at home. Even though the narrative is changing. There's a lot more that needs to be done so that men can also support women and empower them to undertake higher activities of economic importance to also, as a means of supporting the home and then the care of the children and the entire household.

0:21:26.7 INTERVIEWER: So related to that, do men and women participate equally in decision-making about energy access? Either at households or national or district level. Yeah, you're laughing.

[chuckle]

0:21:46.6 RESPONDENT: Okay, so at the household level, I would say that there has been significant improvement in women participation in decision-making with regards to use of energy and energy access at the homes, and a lot of men are becoming to an understand that when the energy use of the women are not considered, it has dire consequences on them.

0:22:21.2 RESPONDENT: For example, instead of purchasing an improved cookstove for your wife to cook, to save her health condition, when you don't do that, you'll end up spending a lot more of the household income on the health of the woman and the children, which could have been avoided and those monies could have been re-invested in the livelihood, to make it much more sustainable and produce more income.

0:22:51.9 RESPONDENT: So at the household level, the narrative, as I said, is changing, you have women playing major roles in decision making. And when we look at the national level, a lot of initiative is being done. Gender has been mainstreamed in our nationally determined contributions. And in the implementation of the nationally determined contributions in Ghana, there is even a committee that has been formed to ensure gender mainstream at all levels of the implementation of Ghana's NDCs.

0:23:40.9 RESPONDENT: So at the national level a lot of efforts are being made. Similar thing also is done with our national adaptation plan as well. So from that perspective, I would say that it's a good start if it's mainstreamed in the policies. Then at the implementation level, we as civil society organisations have a major role in ensuring that that is done. Currently, our Renewable Energy Act has been reviewed and a gender component has been mainstreamed into it. Before the Renewable Energy Act, A32, did not have... Or did not focus on women partaking in decision making.

0:24:32.5 RESPONDENT: But the current review, has created opportunities for that. When we even look at our renewable energy master plan as well, it has gender mainstreamed in the plan. And, yeah, so, at the national level we would say that we have made headway in mainstreaming gender in our key development plans when it comes to energy and climate change. Now, with the implementation, and that cannot be done only by the state bodies that are mandated to do so. I think that civil society organisations and women groups as well, have a key role in ensuring that gender is key when it comes to implementation of these development plans and programmes.

0:25:42.3 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, okay, and I suppose, what do you think... How could gender equity then be improved at different levels when it comes to energy access? So is that... So if the policies are already there, how can the implementation be improved, I suppose?

0:26:01.8 RESPONDENT: Okay, well, one of the key ways that implementation of such policies can be effectively done is that at the ministry level, gender desks have been created. So for example, when you go to ministry of local government, we have a gender desk there, then you go to ministry of environment and energy, they also have... Now, these are, let me say, very key institutions when it comes to the implementation of those policies. One of the things that can ensure equity is that we resource within the ministries, because the ministries are in charge of policy formulation and coordination. So when these departmental units are resourced, the personnel are resourced they will play a key role in ensuring that there is equity, say for example, when there is a distribution exercise of solar lanterns they will ensure that the quota is given to men and this quota is also given to women to ensure equitable access.

0:27:42.3 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

0:27:43.1 RESPONDENT: Another step that I think is also very key is that we do a lot of advocacy and empowerment of our women groups so that they understand how important equitable access to energy is. A lot of women empowerment issues have been geared towards social and economic empowerment and women are pleased to get that leadership roles and all that, neglecting certain technical areas such as the energy spaces. So when such groups are made to understand that when we talk about equity and equality it must be in all forms at all levels and at all sectors. And that will play a major role because we can have the government saying we are distributing 10,000 lanterns and 20,000 cook stoves and then when we go to the communities, because the man is the head of the family, these items will be given to the men with the notion that as the head, they will give it to the women or it will translate into giving it to the women but that is not actually the case.

0:29:12.9 RESPONDENT: So, when such groups also understand the critical roles that women play in energy access, then they will also give much attention to these sectors like the energy sectors. So that we can ensure equitable and just distribution of such technologies at the community level.

0:29:47.8 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I just wonder, sort of building on that, there's an element of so you mentioned as there's a kind of the decision making in terms of distribution at different levels, there's the social and economic consideration, and then you mentioned the technical bits, and I wonder what your experience is or what do you think in relation to technical training for women in energy? Is that something that you think is a part of that equitable?

0:30:22.4 RESPONDENT: Yes, I strongly believe. I have seen some quite a number of organisations like the GIZ organise a technical training for women in the energy sector, but we don't often see much of this.

0:30:45.0 INTERVIEWER: Okay. Yeah.

0:30:46.0 RESPONDENT: In Ghana, specifically, here, we don't see much of this. These are areas that need much attention, especially also in the clean cooking sector. I think that a lot of women have to be trained in the design and manufacturing of such technologies, since we are building these stoves even the industrial stoves for fish smoking, garri processing and all that. I think that women have to be involved in the training of... In the building of such technologies as they are the major beneficiaries of these innovations. So, much has to be done in these areas in having a lot of women expertise in the energy sector.

0:31:56.0 INTERVIEWER: So, imagining that, for a second, that policy and finances, they're not constraints... Just for a second, just imagining that, what, in your view would be best practice for achieving gender equity in energy access?

0:32:12.4 RESPONDENT: That's a very interesting one. Okay, well, best practices. So, assuming that finances and everything is not a challenge. The best practices, in my opinion, would be in terms of... Giving them the necessary space, giving them the opportunities...

0:32:55.9 INTERVIEWER: Yeah.

0:32:58.2 RESPONDENT: Because most of these opportunities have become limited due to education, finance amongst others. But all things being equal, if all these issues are addressed I believe that giving them the opportunities, giving them the space, giving them that push, that encouragement would do a lot in ensuring the equity. Also that men should be made to understand that we all have, in terms of energy, male and female. And therefore when that understanding is created, it helps for men to give the women the space that they need.

0:34:11.5 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I mean, related to that understanding, how easy is it to kind of get data on gendered energy users, or gendered energy access in Ghana?

0:34:30.0 RESPONDENT: Issues of data, issues of data have been a major challenge for us, as a country. One major problem that we have in the country is the disjointed form of doing things. So for example, let me use the civil society front because most often we civil society organizations are at the grassroot engaging with the people and we do a lot of data collection. The major challenge that we have with access to data is that these data more often are not coordinated. So, the activities of civil society organisations are most often disjointed. And therefore, when one organisation does something and collects data on a particular thing it's not made available. So that if, maybe I want to do something similar, or maybe the same thing. I know that, okay, this is a data which I can use as a baseline scenario, to improve upon what has already been done. But because I don't have access to it, I go in to do the same job that NGO A has already done and the data that has been collected.

0:36:00.8 RESPONDENT: And then when NGO C also is coming to do something in relation to women and gender... Women and energy they also don't have access to data already collected. 'Cause sometimes when we engage the communities or when you go to the communities, oh they'll tell you, oh, this organization has already been here, and they asked us the same questions, they took same information from us! And then we didn't hear of them again.

0:36:27.9 RESPONDENT: So there's a lack of coordination in our efforts. So that we can put together the various data that we have. And that also becomes a challenge for our national government or state institutions, we have to work hand in hand with in them. And because we are the grassroots, they often will want to fall on us as civil society organization to provide them, feed them with the data, that they would also need to set up and harmonise with the ones that they have, so that they can also aggregate these data and make meaning out of it. So it's a very big challenge when it comes to access to data in Ghana, due to the lack of coordination and the disjointed efforts of us, as organisations in the country.

0:37:30.3 RESPONDENT: Also, there is not a portal or a medium where we can dump these data that we have collected from the various communities so that maybe we know that this is a pool of data, or this is a portal or a hub that you can have access to data when it comes to equity, when it comes to maybe gender access, when it comes to energy access, or energy poverty amongst rural women or this or that. Because there is not that hub or a pool where people can put in data where people can rely on and all that, access to data is very challenging in the country.

0:38:26.0 INTERVIEWER: Okay. Yeah, I think that's useful for us, actually to understand and also in relation to how maybe we manage the data that we are collecting as part of this project, actually. And we only have a few more questions. One is on, over the last 10 years, do you think there's been a kind of a shift in terms of what types of energy sources people are using at household level, so, for heating, lighting, cooking, cooling?

0:38:56.1 RESPONDENT: Yeah, there has been some significant improvements in energy access, for example, when you look at electricity access in Ghana, it currently stands at a little above 82% in the country, and the challenges with the island communities, small and island communities that we have, where it has become very challenging for the government to extend access to electricity to them, through the rural electrification project, and the government is now looking at standalone off-grid systems for them.

0:39:42.1 RESPONDENT: And when it comes to renewable energy adoption, and technologies in the country, also there have been a significant improvement. When we look at the national level now we have a two utility scale 40 megawatt grid connected solar systems. That is in the country. Currently, there are others that are been constructed. Before it used to be... Let me say 10 years ago it used to be 2.5%.

0:40:26.7 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Yeah, okay.

0:40:33.0 RESPONDENT: It used to be 2.5 megawatts which is very insignificant. 0.00-something. Yes but now we have 1%. Please hold-on for me.

0:40:56.2 INTERVIEWER: Sure. [laughter] Oh we've lost him, but I think we have actually more or less covered the questions. So he's put us on hold, so that's fine, we'll just wait. So we haven't lost him technically.

0:41:15.2 S3: Yeah, I think he's still online.

0:41:21.2 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I think when he comes back, maybe I just ask him if there's anything else in terms of gender and energy that we haven't covered that he wants to add... Oh yeah, okay, I got you back.

0:41:31.0 RESPONDENT: Hello, sorry for the...

0:41:34.1 INTERVIEWER: No problem.

0:41:35.8 RESPONDENT: Actually I am expecting... Some people are bringing me contracts for construction work, and I am expecting that, sorry. Where were we? We were talking about?

0:41:54.4 INTERVIEWER: We were talking about... There's a shift over the last the last 10 years which is framed around renewables. And then my only other question really would have been, what's been the shift over the last 10 years in terms of the way that women access energy at household level?

0:42:13.0 RESPONDENT: Yes, as I was saying, there has been improvement in the energy mix. Both at the national level, and also at the community level, at the end-user level. You now have more of even the rural poor using various forms of renewable energy technologies such as solar lighting for selling of their food and stuff. I'm talking about food you find just in Ghana. A lot of them are shifting from the traditional to renewable energy technology such as solar lanterns, solar lamps and stuff. In terms of women accessing energy, let me say modern and affordable energy, there has been some significant improvement. We see a lot of women adopting to clean cooking technologies in the country.

0:43:23.3 RESPONDENT: If you want to consider the last 10 years, there has been a lot of production of clean cooking technologies by local companies here in Ghana. Talking about Cook Clean, Cooking ICs, Man and Man. These are local companies that produces industrial cook stoves and household cook stoves. Adoption among even at the rural communities, you find a lot of women having access to such technologies. I mentioned earlier on that we did a pilot of a cook stove implants for women in rural areas using traditional cook stoves. And these implants that we produced, have been widely adopted by women in the communities that we piloted, [0:44:42.0] \_\_\_\_ district area. And also we went to the northern and in the middle belt too, we did two communities there. Over the period, we have seen significant improvement in the women adoption. Even in our National Champion Contribution, government is supposed to distribute 2 million cook stoves across the country.

0:45:17.8 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, wow!

0:45:19.6 RESPONDENT: Yes, so all this has improved the trajectory that we had in the country on access to energy by women.

0:45:35.0 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, great. Is there anything that we haven't asked that you think you want to add?

0:45:48.7 RESPONDENT: I would say that there used to be a wide energy gap in the productive use of energy amongst men and women but in recent times, we are seeing a filling of the gaps based on the number of interventions that both government and civil society organisations are putting in place to address this gap. So, there's a lot more to be done, yes, but we are gradually making progress, in achieving energy...

0:46:44.6 RESPONDENT: I think I like, I like ending on a sort of hopeful note. I think that's nice. Amos, did you have anything that you wanted to add?

0:46:52.5 S3: Yeah. Just couple of questions. Thank you very much, Richard, I think that was a very excellent interview. I like your elaboration on the data, gender sensitive data access. I think that is a critical issue that we really need to be able to address, not just from the civil society perspective, but also coming... Like a lot data that is being produced through the [0:47:25.7] \_\_\_\_. Sometimes you realise that the data may be on energy but not [0:47:39.9] \_\_\_\_ quantities or qualities, so that's something that we probably need to address, but also speaking to the issue of...

0:47:53.7 S3: All of this data on a single platform, that would make it more... I really like that collaboration. Thank you very much. Just a couple of questions. You touched a little bit on financing, I just wanted to probe a little bit to that. So in terms of access to finance, you talked about the fact that men have... The sources of finances that is available specifically for these types of energy. Do you think it is gender sensitive in a way, or do you think it can be made gender sensitive?

0:48:49.3 S3: So, in most parts of Ghana people, the types finance that is available is either through personal financing, through a loan, through maybe third party financing, if there is a great power to maybe third-party financing, or maybe government funded. Do you this... Mentioned about other alternative sources of access, do you think it is sensitive to the various gender need?

0:49:28.2 RESPONDENT: Okay. Thank you very much for your question, Amos. It is good to speak to you. There is a huge gap in terms of access to finance between men and women. The finances used for the energy sector, I would say is not gender sensitive, as compared to that of Agriculture sector. Maybe there hasn't been much focus in that directive, and because when we look at the Agriculture sector, there had been a lot of focus on making a great finance gender sensitive.

0:50:19.7 RESPONDENT: Also, because there is a widespread understanding of the role women play in family. And with young people, because we now are seeing financing structures for youth to promote youth in Agriculture. And this is because a lot of focus has been given to [0:50:47.0] \_\_\_\_ and a lot of attention has been given to [0:50:50.8] \_\_\_\_ the problem being addressed. When we come to the energy sector, unfortunately, access to finance is not gender sensitive. It isn't gender sensitive, yes. Even when we even look at the... Going back to the use of energy, when we look at small or micro companies. Men have access to finance than the women.

0:51:30.2 RESPONDENT: Yes. And one of the reasons actually for that is the lack of attention been given to the financing schemes in the Energy sector. So just as we did for the Agriculture sector, similar can also be reciprocated in the energy sector, so that there can be equity and equality in access to finance, in the energy space.

0:52:06.4 S3: Okay. Thank you very much. That was the only question that I had.

0:52:12.6 INTERVIEWER: I think that was a very good additional question, you know. I think it's also actually something that's coming out of some of the other interviews we have, and I think from our project point of view, you know, when you write a sort of a research, it is always like, "Oh, we will have a policy briefing", but for me, what is becoming more more clear, this is not about changing policy, it's about, if anything, the implementation of policy by making finance available to the people who need it, in order to change the way they consume energy. Anyway, sorry, that was my little bit at the end. This was really, really...

[overlapping conversation]

0:52:49.6 RESPONDENT: There is a major challenge that we have as a country, I don't think Ghana has a policy problem because we have very good policies, when you look at [0:53:06.5] \_\_\_\_ policy, the bio energy policy and when you look at all these policies. When you look at sustainable energy for all action plan for the country. It has a component on gender, but we don't actually see it happening or being implemented, majority due to the fact that the district assemblies that are mandated to oversee the development of the districts where these communities are in do not integrate these things into their medium term plans.

0:53:48.8 RESPONDENT: And in most cases, do not have an idea, because sometime last year, under the umbrella of XXXX, which is XXXX, we undertook a project of mainstreaming renewable energy in the medium term development plans of five assemblies in the greater Accra. We realised that even the district planner and the staff did not understand what renewable energy is all about, and the renewable energy potentials within the various districts which they can harness.

0:54:33.9 INTERVIEWER: Wow...

0:54:34.2 RESPONDENT: So yes... So in this lack of understand of the technocrats or the people who develop these medium term plans for the district to which communities are supposed to benefit, then we can not have these national policies trickle down to the grassroots level. So it is very, very important that... So that is why for us as an organisation we are focusing on having these policies or programmes, mainstreamed at the local level, then the local authorities can take it up from there in ensuring that the implementation is done for communities to benefit.

0:55:22.7 INTERVIEWER: Yeah, I think, I guess... Should I say we've kind of finished the interview in terms of questions, but I think, maybe if we have a few minutes, we did this in the last interview as well, we can have a bit of a more general discussion, and I think... For me, what's really interesting is...

0:55:41.4 INTERVIEWER: So, I used to work on community-owned renewable energy on a European project, mainly in Scotland, but with other European partners. And actually one, there was one large cooperative involved from Belgium, and one of the things they said was about the local authority not having enough capacity, not having enough experience, just not having enough finance, not having enough anything really.

0:56:06.1 INTERVIEWER: And so, but as a cooperative, they managed to raise enough money basically, [chuckle] that they employed somebody for the council, so somebody who sits in the local government, that is paid for by the cooperative, that therefore can be an advocate for community energy, and I do wonder, if there's room for something similar in what you're describing, so that's the kind of the NGO sector and potentially even the private sector where they are actually making advances. Were they almost like, sort of say, "Right, you can't do it but we can ensure that there's somebody in your body that actually knows and understands what renewable energy is, and how you can implement this in your area with the view to being more gender sensitive as well."

0:56:57.7 RESPONDENT: This is very important. I think that this is something that shouldn't be done, for example, and when we started implementing the SDGs, over the years, GIZ supported the civil society platform on SDGs in Ghana to actually have sub-district platforms where this platforms is made up of staff of the assemblies, and other civil society organizations within the district, so that they can ensure that the district activities are in line with the SDGs.

0:57:48.2 RESPONDENT: And I think that these are something that would not require much finance, but a lot of support. Assuming our national government can really support in such sectors, most of the things that I have realised, from my engagement with the national government, or state organisation at national level, is that there is a little involvement of the local authorities at stakeholder meetings and decision-making, policy formulation and planning discussion processes, so everything is done at the national level at the expense of the involvement of the local authorities. And therefore they are left out and their capacities are not enhanced, they're not built, and they also lack the skills and technical know-how to do this.

0:58:50.5 RESPONDENT: Because when they are carried along in the formulation, decision-making processes, they're able to understand the processes much better and their capacities are enhanced at that level. So that when they go back to their local assemblies, they're able to integrate what we have learnt at the policy planning and decision-making processes in the implementation of these policies, that are done at that level, at that national level. So most often, government has done well to bring civil society to the table, but have done very little to bring the local authorities also to the table.

0:59:40.7 INTERVIEWER: Yeah. Interesting, but yeah. It's really, it's really, really useful to understand that, yeah. The other thing I was thinking of, which in the UK, Scotland is a little bit... It's a bit funny. It's part of the UK, but energy law is part of the UK, but planning law, Scotland looks after its own planning law. So lots of energy-related decisions are made through planning law, because Scotland, in many ways, is more progressive than the conservative UK government. And so the Scottish Government set a renewable energy target, as well as a community-owned renewable energy target, or community and locally owned energy target.

1:00:31.4 INTERVIEWER: And then in order to support to achieve the target, there's a consortium of different actors that basically manage a pot of money to give to communities to develop projects. But they also, through this same body, communities are able to access advisors which are locally based, so in every region of Scotland, 'cause it's actually quite a dispersed and islands and so on. People are, if you want to, if you have an idea for a project, you can contact your local person to help you with figuring out finance, figuring out the legal context, the things that normally a kind of a community-led organisation might not know if it's the first time they're undertaking a project. As well as then accessing the finance to progress a project. So I think that has actually worked really well. It's not perfect, but the sort of not having a policy but no support mechanism available to actually implement the policy, I think that's really difficult. [chuckle] Yeah.

1:01:43.0 RESPONDENT: Yeah. Like for example, the Department of Renewable Energy of the Ministry of Energy undertook an off-grid project in some rural communities, island communities in the ADA area. ADA is a district in the Greater Accra region. Now it was the department within the ministry that did the project and did not involve the local authorities in the off-grid project that they were implementing. So at the end of day, when we visited the local assembly, they do not have an understanding of how communities can benefit from off-grid system and how the assemblies can take it upon themself to harness the various potentials and support communities that are not connected to the grid with access to electricity.

1:02:53.6 RESPONDENT: So this top down approach system is also creating the gaps that we have. With what I told you about in the work that we did in ensuring that the local authorities mainstream renewable energy and in development agenda. And I personally worked on the XXXX. And when I met with the XXXX and we were discussing about renewable energy and potentials within the municipal area and stuff. He just said GIV and the UNDP did some biogas in one school like that, so that is why we lose. And as to how they as assembly can take advantage of the waste system to produce electricity. He didn't have a clue, and there was nothing of that nature in mind to do.

1:04:17.2 RESPONDENT: So we had a workshop with the xxxx, xxxx and xxxx, and they were all at a loss. The medium term, their current medium term development plan, which ends this year, did not actually have anything on renewable energy and you have urban poor communities within the municipal area that have energy needs. So this alone tells you that the assembly has no plan in improving access to energy for the municipal area.

1:05:01.6 INTERVIEWER: So. Yeah. Go ahead.

1:05:04.3 RESPONDENT: Yes. The second phase of our engagement is within the... This year they're developing a new medium term development plan for the next four years. And we are working hand-in-hand with them to... For them to identify the various potentials within municipal area. And then how they can create partnerships with the private sector to harness this potential, to improve energy access within the municipal area. So this is an initiative that we are doing with the XXXX this year as part of their preparation of the next medium term development plan.

1:05:54.7 INTERVIEWER: Okay. Yeah. Okay. I don't know. I actually, I have to slowly get ready for another meeting, [chuckle] so, but this was really, really great, and as we've said to other participants as well... So originally, as part of the project, we had plans to have two regional workshops, so one in Asia and one in West Africa. And due to COVID, I do not think that they will happen, but I'm hoping that therefore instead there will be an opportunity for some online event, and if that does happen, then we'll make sure to invite you and just for now, big, big thank you for the time and energy in sharing your insights and experiences. It's been really great, thank you.

1:06:38.5 S3: Yeah. Thank you very much.

1:06:44.0 RESPONDENT: Nice to meet you. Thank you all.

1:06:45.3 S3: Perfect. I'll get in touch with you later just to see if you know some other people that we can get in touch with, maybe from the district level. If you have some contacts that we could speak to directly on, that would be very helpful, but I'll get in touch with you.

1:07:06.5 RESPONDENT: Definitely. I'll be delighted to help out with that. And thank you for the opportunity once again.

1:07:13.8 INTERVIEWER: Great.

1:07:14.2 S3: Thank you very much.

1:07:15.7 INTERVIEWER: Thank you very much.

1:07:18.8 RESPONDENT: Bye bye.

1:07:20.1 INTERVIEWER: Bye bye. Bye.

1:07:22.0 S3: Thank you. Bye bye.

1:07:24.8 INTERVIEWER: Bye.

1:07:25.4 RESPONDENT: Bye. [chuckle]

1:07:26.1 INTERVIEWER: Wow, [chuckle] I'll stop recording.