

# Electrification through hydro power plants - a gendered perspective

Modern Energy Services-Ethiopia (AMES-E)

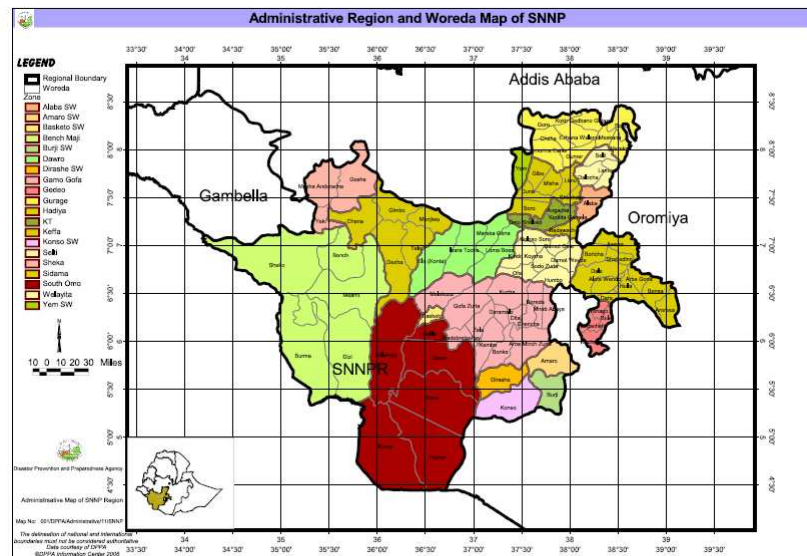


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Christine Rehkla  
e-Mail: ChristineRehkla@yahoo.de

## 1 Introduction

Access to Modern Energy Services-Ethiopia (AMES-E) works to provide alternative sources of energy, using hydro and solar power in remote rural areas of Ethiopia. Turning waterfalls into electricity AMES-E will bring energy to rural communities within the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR).



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The hydro power plants will belong to the community upon completion. Therefore the decisions around the tariffs and connection fees also lay within the communities. The four visited hydro power plants will be able to produce between 7 kw and 66 kw (GTZ information). It is planned that all the connected households can use up to 40 Watt. Since the amount of power is not very high it can be used for productive use in the daytime (e.g. grinding mills) and consumptive use at night time (e.g. light in the household). The idea is to provide energy for a wide range of households. That means the amount provided for a singular household is quite small. The energy is supposed to be shared as much as possible within the certain village. Neither the tariffs nor the connection fees per household are set yet. Since there won't be meters on a household level that means there will be a flatrate for the consumption of energy. The decision has not yet been made if there is a different tariff for consumptive and productive use.

Cooperatives in each village are planned to run the hydro power plants. Besides the fixing of the price for energy they will be also responsible for the decision who is going to get energy and who won't. If there is any surplus by the running of the power plant and selling the energy within the community the profit is supposed to be used for community development. Until now the ongoing plans were mainly discussed with the Kebele leaders who are mostly men.

Women disproportionately bear the burden of poverty in Ethiopia which is mainly a result of the gender based division of labor and lack of access and control over resources prescribed not only by tradition and culture ,but also reiterated in the law. Women are responsible for all the household chores, in addition to the support they provide in agriculture and livestock production. The state of the environment and lack

of appropriate technology increases the burden of women and decreases the opportunity for income generating activities and limits their participation in development sectors.

## 2 Findings

The case study aimed at providing further understanding of the linkages of gender equality and electrification through the AMES-E. It has been made a task of the case study to find a gender perspective for the hydro power plant projects. The results are based on a field visit in the SNNPR region in the beginning of December 2009. The base of the investigation was the regional capital Awassa. From there the team went to different rural villages to have a look at the sites of the hydro power plants and to do the interviews with local people. As the focus of this study lays upon a gender analysis of energy issues and the hydro power projects in those communities interviews were mainly done with female counterparts. The aim was to do interviews with women on a household level, female teachers in schools, female workers at the health post and members of already existing women groups. The qualitative interviews based upon a guideline that was used in a flexible manner. An interviewer translated from Amharic into German. In some areas where local women did not speak Amharic it was necessary to have another translator who spoke both the local language Sidama and Amharic. Besides the interviews a lot of information was collected by informal conversations to quite a lot of people during the field visit.

The following part will give an overview about the situation that was found in the three visited villages – Erirete, Gobecho and Hagara Soditcha - in regard to the energy project in connection with gender issues.

### 2.1 Erirete

The hydro power plant in this village is not completed yet. The responsible engineer told us that there were about three more weeks to accomplish the task to set up the hydro power plant. He did say that the generator was at that time in Djibouti and that they had to wait for it in order to complete the plant. In future the produced electricity is supposed to be used on a household level, in the local school and in the health post.

On a household level energy can only be used for the lightning of the huts and houses. The power of the plant will as a technical result not be sufficient for any further electrical appliances on a household level. The idea of women in the village is to use the light for additional household tasks and in some cases for the children to be able to do their homework at night. However there seems to be additional work time for the women and no leisure time or time for qualification in any way.

Women are responsible for all the household chores. They are also involved in taking care of the cows or support their men in field work. Men are mainly engaged in farming. They grow inset, teff, maze and own cows. The money they make is not

used for family issues. One woman even explained that her husband is sick and she is the only one responsible for the household income. The income for the households is mainly gained by women.

In the households kerosene is used to lighten the rooms in the evenings. Expenses for the kerosene are paid by the women of the households. The women expect to save the money with electricity and to be able to buy other things from their own income in future. However women do not know how much the electricity gained from the hydro power plant will cost in the future. Responsible for the payment of the energy – kerosene for lightning and fire wood for cooking – are the women. The amount of money that is spent for Kerosene reaches from 4,50 Birr a week over 9 Birr a week to 4,50 Birr a day. High expenses are always in those household that use kerosene also for their business, eg. a bakery.

In Erirete there are a couple of businesses run by women. They are making the alcoholic drink rake themselves and sell it in their household (opening times generally twice a week). Another woman owns a bakery together with her husband. Even though she is mainly working in the bakery (baking, selling bread and tea) her husband is deciding on the household income.



Bakery and tea shop in Erirete

Even though farming is very dominant in the village and a lot of grain is grown, until then there was no existing grinding mill. The grain is carried to the town of Bona to be grinded there. However there is an existing women's group that started a savings group in order to be able to buy a mill in the future. Around 30 women are members of that group.

One of the female teachers of the village sees the advantage of the electrification in the ability to use light and new type of media (eg. tv and dvd) in the school. However it is not known how those additional costs will be covered. Even though there is a budget of the government on equipment of the school an application to a donor NGO might be needed in the future. Until now children go to the next bigger town Bona that is six kilometers away in order to be able to watch tv. Since that sometimes happens during the school day it is also interfering with educational aims. There is the hope that there will be less school truancy if there are also media appliances in school. However there was no point made if girls or boys are more involved in that issue.



School in Erirete

The teacher also pointed out that there could be additional time used in the school to teach in the evenings. Right now there is school in two shifts: In the morning from 8 to 12 and in the afternoon from 12 to 4 pm. There could be evening classes in the night especially for women. As she said there is a need for educational classes for adults since people, especially women drop out of school before they complete the 8<sup>th</sup> grade. As she

pointed out the drop out rate lies now only by about 2%. Still there are many grown-up women in the community who had no proper schooling. There are a couple of reasons for that. Girls marry quite early and they drop out of school after marriage. While they are at school girls and boys have to work within their family. However there is also a certain division of labour as it is the case with grown-ups (see-above). Boys mostly take care of cattle or other animals and have therefore some time for doing homework while working. Girls mostly help in the households and have no possibility to do homework while doing the chores.

It is not only the amount of school-days but also the learning atmosphere and openness of the students that play a role in the level of education that someone is able to reach. The female teacher had the feeling that girls had not the same possibilities as boys in school. Girls often do not have the confidence to actively participate in school. In order to empower some of the girls that she is teaching, she started a girls only school garden project. The group is working in the existing school garden that helps the school to raise funds. Besides the agricultural techniques the empowerment of the girls is also an important issue for the project.

Another aspect in regard to education was highlighted by the female teacher who has moved two years ago to the village. In her freetime she is studying herself in order to obtain an English degree through long-distance learning. That means she is mostly studying on her own at the evenings. In the school holidays there are some days of attendance in the learning institute in a bigger town. The female teacher is looking forward to use electrical light for studying in the evenings. On a long term basis she would be very happy about other technical appliances like a computer that support her learning.

During the field visit the health post in Eirete was not occupied. People were saying that it is not used on a regular basis. Opening times mainly correlate to ongoing vaccination programmes or special workshops eg in regard to HIV/Aids or family planning. There wasn't any interview with a person who is responsible for the health

point in Erirete. The next health centre is in Bona. As in Erirete no one who is in charge was seen or talked to during the field work.

The questions in regard to a women's group were answered in different manners. While the responsible social worker said there was no existing women group and said therefore the same as one of the interviewed female teachers at the school others had an opposite opinion. As we found out the existing group of women is linked to the church of the village. They meet regularly and have a savings group in order to help in issues in regard to a wedding of someone or if someone needs support because of a bad health condition. The aims of the group seem to have a caritative manner. However since some women had never heard about such a group the influence within the community might not be that big.

Women in the village are not involved in any of the planning in regard to the electrification of the village. They do not know who is responsible for the organisation of the issues surrounding the electrification (like the tariffs). Some of them had the idea that the Kebele leader is involved in decision making, but still they had no more information about the actual development of the energy issue. It was unclear at what point the electricity can actually be used.

In regard to the GTZ all involved people are men. There is not a single woman involved in that programme that is carried out in the village. However the wife of the Kebele leader is informed about the plans regarding the hydro power plant. The Kebele leader is seen as contact person. It was not known by the women that there is a social worker employed by the GTZ who is supposed to initiate the process of starting a cooperative. Others were stating that they had no idea about who will be controlling the payments of the people who use the electricity. They supposed that the village will nominate people who will be in charge. The idea of the cooperative was unknown to the women. One woman favoured the idea that women who are meeting in a group in the church regularly should be involved in the process.

## 2.2 Gobecho

There are two different hydro power plants in Gobecho. Gobecho I is supposed to primarily deliver energy for the school, the local health post and the agricultural office in the community. Gobecho II is to deliver the households in the area. Both of the sites are not completed yet. As in Erirete the channels and both of the power houses are built. In order to complete the site the engines are still needed. The site of Gobecho I is standing still since May 2009. People in the village are irritated since they do not know what is going to happen in the future.

Some of the women knew that the energy would be coming in the future. But they didn't know when and at what conditions for the single household. Some of the ladies also didn't know who to ask in order to get more information about the issue.

As in Erirete the division of labour between men and women is quite strict. Women work in the households and sell the self-grown grain at the market in another town. Women from Gobecho will travel to the market in Bona in order to sell their locally grown products. The market is always held on Mondays. The typical work of men is on the fields. They also grow inset, maize and teff. Some of the households also own cows or goats. The right of disposal of the household income is also split between men and women. Mostly both of them have an income and use it for certain things. Women are responsible for the daily issues around the household and the children. Men usually buy the clothes for the whole family and other than that spend the money mostly for themselves.



Woman walking to the market in Bona

However there are also businesses run by women as another source of income. Three different small shops are located in Gobecho. One of it is run by a woman who plans to extend her business as soon as energy is available. One of her ideas are to use an electrical coffee machine in future. Another way to generate income is the production and sale of liquor. The lack of money is a big issue for the women. They see the need for own income-generating activities in order to be independent from their husbands.

The need for a possibility to have the self-grown grain grinded within the village was expressed by many women. Even though there is an existing grinding mill in Gobecho, prices seem to be too high<sup>1</sup>. Women rather carry their grain to Buna (that takes about 2 hours for one way) than paying the set price in Gobecho. The cause for the high price that has steadily be increasing over the past months lies within the existing high price for diesel. This means that the price per kilogramm should be lower once the hydro power plant is picking up its work. For the women that will mean less travelling to Bona since they will be able to grind their grain in their home village.

As a source of energy there is mostly kerosene used for light in the evenings and fire wood for cooking. If there is not enough money for kerosene some families only use the light of the fire in the hut. All the interviews women in Gobecho said that they could be the one in the household who is always paying for the energy sources.

With the energy from the hydro power plant women hope for their children to have better conditions for their homework at home. For themselves some have the plan to go to night-school in the future.

<sup>1</sup> Some one else was stating that this grinding mill owned by a family is broken. This is supposed to be the reason why women travel to Bona for the grinding of their grain.



The school in Gobecho is working in two shifts – in the morning and in the afternoon. In general men have a higher educational standard. The reason for that lays within the early marrying age for girls. Since they leave school once they are married. Another reason is the fact that there are not that many femal teachers. Hence girls do not have model they can follow. Many children from surrounding villages do come to the school from grade 5 onwards, because there are only up to four grades in the smaller villages. However girls from the smaller villages often do not travel the long way to the school and back. Another reason why boys reach a higher educational standard in the end.

There is an existing night-school for men and women who work during the day and still want to have some further schooling and also for orphans who do paid domestic work in households during the day and therefore have no possibility to go to the regular lessons. In addition to that there is a class for women also during the day. The three teachers of the interview agreed upon the fact that they suppose that teachers in general would do the additional work in the evenings that will be needed with an extension of the night-classes.

Teachers and students will be able to use different types of media once the school is connected to the electricity lines of the hydro power plant. A radio does already exist at school. Funds for the purchase of one or more tvs or dvd recorders need to be raised first. However the profit from the school garden (they plant mostly maize) does until now only cover the cost of equipments for daily use like blackboards, chalk etc.

The principal of the school is involved in the planning for the hydro power plant. He was chosen by the meeting of the inhabitants of the Kebele. Therefore he is pretty well informed about what will be going on in the Kebele as far as plans have been made.

The health post in Gobecho is staffed with two women. Both have underwent a ten-months training before they started their job. They have incoming patients but also



Health Post in Gobecho

work on an outreach basis. Electricity will be used for the laboratory, the sterilisation of instruments, the refrigerator and the lights in the evenings for treatment and awareness raising workshops. They try to visit all the new borns and their mothers at home. Electric lights would be very helpful in the households, because most of those visits are in the late afternoon or early evening. Since there are only two people working there, the

interviewee saw the need for additional personal in the future. She would be willing to work in the evenings in order to do some educational campaigns in the context of health issues. But then there would be the need for someone else to do the shift in the morning.

There used to be a women's group, but the women are not meeting any more on a regular basis now. It seems like women of higher education (eg. a school teacher) were not included or accepted in this group. Other women said that there would be an existing group but they couldn't tell us what sort of topics were discussed within the group or at what times the group would meet. However the social worker of GTZ arranged that a group of women were coming together at the second day of the visit. More and more women joined into the discussions. The group insisted on the importance of the grinding mill for the women of the village. Other than that they had no clear ideas about what to do on a productive level once they got energy. Within the discussion they came up with ideas of having a small place to sell tea or coffee once they got electricity for the machines. There was a lot of talk around having a business but no clear ideas how to go about it.

The cooperatives in Gobecho have not started yet. Even though there are two different sites in Gobecho there will only be one cooperative running those two sites. Women seem not to be included in the whole process of planning. "It's always only men who got the information". One woman was stating that she knows that her husband is discussing issues around the hydro power plant with other men of the village. However the couple itself would never exchange ideas on those issues. Others were saying that they got information about the process from the social worker who is employed by the GTZ. However they did not participate actively in the process even though some of the women were also part of the Kebele committee. Within the committee they were never asked if they want to be involved in the planning stage of the cooperative. They see the reason for that within the general view of men that women are in the second row and not capable of that kind of work.

### 2.3 Hagara Soditcha

Hagara Soditcha is located in a very remote area. On the first view people tend to be poorer than in the other two villages that were visited. The sources of income in Hagara Soditcha are generally the same as in Erirete or Gobecho. But because of the remoteness it is more difficult to actually sell the agricultural products. The division of labour between men and women was also found to be similar to what was seen in the other villages. There is also the same system in the right of disposal of the household income. Women mainly take care for the household and the children, men pay once in a while for clothes of the family and use the money mainly for themselves. The difference to the two other villages is that the next bigger town Bona is even further away. That means longer walks for the women if they want to sell their

agricultural products on the market or get their grain grinded. No businesses or shops were seen in Hagara Soditcha<sup>2</sup>.

Women use kerosene and fire wood in the households in order to have light or a heat source for cooking. The women themselves are responsible for the payment of those energy sources. They are the primary managers of energy in the households. Within households, where there are adult men and women, the gendered division of labour generally allocates to women the responsibility for household energy provision related to their spheres of influence in the household, in particular activities centred around the kitchen. They are often supported in this work by girls and sometimes boys, who can be kept out of school thereby damaging their own future livelihood choices. Men become involved in places where large quantities and pieces of wood need to be transported over long distances.



Horses carrying wood

Even though some of the women hope to have the possibility to visit night-school once the hydro power plant is running, they know that their daily work load will not change. "If we got electric light or not, the work stays the same for us!". That means that the women do not expect the new technology to reduce their daily work load.

One of the main problems right now is that there is no grinding mill in Hagara Soditcha. Women have to walk very far distances if they want to grind their grain in a mill. The roads to the village are in a bad condition. Transport is even more difficult than in Erirete or Gobecho.

The school in Hagara Soditcha is for students from grade one to seven. Since there is not enough space in the school buildings the classes are held in two shifts. Younger students in the morning and the older ones in the afternoon. Altogether there are 16 teachers for nearly 1000 students. However there is no single female teacher at the school in Hagara Soditcha. Female teachers from other places are not sent to the village by the administration since it is so difficult to reach. There are no girls or women from the village that study to be a teacher because none of them actually finishes school. Until now there are no existing night-classes. The vice-principal has already thought about the implementation of night-classes for adults once there is electricity at school. They also want to invest in new media and

<sup>2</sup> Due to the very bad road conditions and heavy rain on the first day of visit the investigation couldn't be continued on a second day as planned before. Therefore the gathered information on Hagara Soditcha is less dense than on the other two villages.

computers since the children are cut off from the world in that remote area. In the interview with the vice-principal and one teacher it appeared that these are ideas about what to do in the future, but no detailed plans or strategies for it.

There is an existing women's group with around 80 women who are part of it. Seven of them are organized in a special women's committee. One year ago they started to save money in order to buy a grinding mill. Every woman is contributing two Birr per month. Two years ago people from the administration of the Woreda promised them that they would get micro credits to be able to buy that mill. Their saving circle was supposed to be a contribution for that. Now they are very disappointed since nothing else happened. The promises by the Woreda administration were not kept. The women do not want to contribute any more. Financial problems are pressing some of the women hope to solve them with the grinding mill.

None of the women who were interviewed were ever asked if they want to participate in the planning of the project. Hence some of the woman helped to do some of the work at the site. There seems to be a lot of rumors about how the delivery of the energy will work in the future, but there was no set-up meeting to explain what is going on right now and what is planned in the future. It is not clear who will be able to use the energy in the end. The limits of the delivery were not explained thoroughly by the project leaders. From the women's view men know much more about the project since they are part of an already existing committee. Men will not give the information to their wives since traditionally couples in their homes do not take or exchange ideas about public issues like that. This segregation is also strengthened by the strong division of labour between men and women.

The social worker is supposed to take a leading role in the setting up of the cooperative that runs the power plant. He does know about the government policies to include women in organizations that are to set up and he also pointed out that a certain percentage of women are supposed to be included in the cooperative once it is starting<sup>3</sup>. However it seems like he has little knowledge about how such a process can be steered by him.

The health post was not occupied. No information could be gathered about that. A set up meeting with the health worker there did not come off since she went to the town just on the day of our arrival.

### 3 Recommendations and conclusion

The focus on women must be set upon two different levels. On one side we got the process and planning around the hydro power plants. Within this process it is necessary to include women actively and to support their participation. Otherwise the voices of the women won't be heard. On the other side there is the hope that the new technology will better the lives of girls and women on a long run. These

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<sup>3</sup> He told us that two women and seven men should be on the committee altogether.

improvements are connected to issues of health, reproductive and productive work, additional income and so forth. However changes won't just happen. There needs to be careful planning and support by the GTZ. Otherwise the remark of one of the interviewed women "If we got kerosene or electrical light, the work stays the same for us women" will come true and not much will have changed for the women in the end.

There are certain possibilities for improving the position of women through energy. Energy can contribute to enabling women to improve their earnings in two ways: either by helping free up women's time or by powering their enterprises.

### 3.1 Consumptive use

Electrical lights at home improve working conditions at home but do not necessarily reduce time dedicated to chores. Because, and this is decisive in itself, women often use new productivity to invest in child and family care. Reliable energy services reduces time spent on survival activities thereby can possibly increase opportunities for women to: be involved in other enterprises; spend time on education; or, simply rest and thereby improve maternal health. It also depends on other ongoing community development activities if women will actually be able to profit from those opportunities. Most of the time, women are the ones using the electricity at the household level. It is therefore essential to train women in small repair and maintenance activities.

Besides these practical influences on the life of a woman there are other needs that can be influenced on a strategic manner. The light also allows to participate in activities in the evenings. For example the participation in evening classes or women's group meetings in the evenings. In general there will be an increased education as a result of better lightning in schools. Those kind of adult literacy programs conducted at night in those villages would enable women to read and write and to become aware of gender and energy issues.

All the schools in the three visited villages can be used for evening classes. The interviewed principals, vice-principals and teachers were very open about it. This would be especially valuable for women since girls have generally weaker results in school and they drop out of school earlier as boys. Since teachers won't be paid additionally for conducting the evening classes it might be necessary to find other ways of generating income. For example the evening classes might not only focus on literacy but also on other skills like for example sewing. In addition to the sewing skills micro-entrepreneurial skills will be needed in order to make profit out of those classes. This would be a way to have a different source of income besides the existing ways.

As it was mentioned before electricity will not only enhance the learning of students at school and women respectively men in the evening classes, there will be also the option of capacity-building for teachers at school. And students will always benefit from better qualified teachers.

There is also the possibility to open horizons through radio, tv and internet. Through radio and other information and communication technology there will be an access to the outside world. This will give not only the women a sense of inclusion in the 'modern' electrified world. The schools in all three villages already own radios with batteries. However they have no funds for tvs or dvd recorders. The purchase of the this learning-related equipment should be considered when the cooperatives discuss how to spend the surplus money they make with the hydro power plants on the community development.

There will be better health from health services that have access to improved lighthing, cold chain storage, and communication. However the health post in Erirete did not seem to function on a daily basis. Therefore it needs more than the energy itself to improve respectively open the access to the health point.

### 3.2 Productive use

Electricity is not an end itself, it should be integrated with other economic activities which enable local people, especially women, to enhance their socioeconomic status. Electricity from the hydro power plants could power small-scale industries, such as grinding mills and bakeries, if it is integrated with credit, marketing, and extension services. The purpose of this approach is to ensure that poor women increase their productivity so that they earn more income, which helps them to move out of poverty.

A grinding mill would be one possibility to use the energy not only for consumptive but also for productive use. It can be a way of income generating for women. In addition they would not have the burden anymore to carry the grain over long distances to the next grinding mill in Bona. Women in Erirete and Hagara Sodicha have already initiated a savings group for that matter. This project needs to be included in the whole planning processes around the hydro power plants. Since there will only be a certain amount of energy that can be used once the plant is working, it must be clear how much energy would be available for the mill. The women should be supported in their undertaking.

There is a need for programs focused on the development of women entrepreneurs. The capacity of female entrepreneurs needs to be build including business management and marketing skills to run energy systems for productive use. Hence the rural electrification needs to be integrated with other development activities.

### 3.3 Process Planning

The existing gender policies<sup>4</sup> on a national level in Ethiopia need to be implemented on the regional level as well. In regard to the GTZ projects that means that the local actors need to know these policies and need to know about strategies how to implement them. In the case of the visited hydro power plants in Erirete, Gobecho and

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<sup>4</sup> E.g. the Ethiopia National Action Plan of 1993  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/confer/beijing/national/ethiopia.htm> (accessed January 23 2010)

Hagara Soditcha the two social workers that are employed by the GTZ are responsible for the processes in the communities. They need to be trained and assisted in order to fulfill those expectations. It needs to be clear that gender mainstreaming is a process that needs to be controlled by the GTZ and not only given to the task of the social workers. The study found out that until now the whole project has a male-dominated structure that results in men talking to men about the energy issues in regard to the hydro power plants. As a consequence, the forums where issues are identified, and any potential solutions proposed, tend to have an inadvertent male bias.

Women need to be encouraged to participate in decision making and therefore to benefit from developmental work on the village level. In some of the communities were women who were very willing to become engaged in those processes. They also need the support from the outside in order to play a role in cooperatives. The involvement of women in the cooperatives for the hydro power plants needs to be encouraged. The social workers should focus especially on women and not wait for the women to come without being asked to participate. There are already groups of women in existence. Like the church group or the women in the school garden project in Erirete or the savings group that has started in Hagara Soditcha. Those grass root level women organizations need to be included in the planning Someone needs to take up the role in an until now male-led electrification processes to ensure to have an electrification that brings both electricity and electrical services to women.

In the head office in Addis Abeba as well as in the regional office in Awassa and at the sites themselves (represented through the social workers) it is mostly men that are acting for the GTZ. In case there are any women it is mostly in clerical positions. That means that gender inequality is also presented within the GTZ and not only in the projects themselves. This effects the projects in the communities on two sides. On the one hand less women in the office structure can mean less attention to the issues of women during the planning and implementation stages. On the other hand this can also lead to even less women that are interested in the project on a village level. Since the worlds of men and women do not have many points of intersection in those villages, women are even more excluded from the process if there are no women who belong to the GTZ that they can contact and get information from. On a long term there should be efforts to employ a higher percentage of women in the offices. Besides the higher percentage the focus should be also on having women not only in clerical jobs but also in power positions within the organisation.

The planned cooperatives are a central point of power in regard to energy in the local communities. They do not only decide upon tariffs and members but also on the usage of the possible profit that is made with the plant. Therefore it is indispensable that women are part of those power structures on an equal level. The surplus money is supposed to be used within community development projects. In order to develop and implement projects that have a positive influence on gender equality women need to be part of those cooperatives as active members and position holders.

Otherwise the programmes that will be funded by the surplus money of the hydro power plants will not be gender-sensitive.

Since the cooperatives in the communities are not set up yet there is quite an insecurity in the community about the energy project. Even though this field work had the scope mainly at the gender aspect it can be said, that members of the community in general seem not to know what will be going in if the hydro power plant will start to work in the future. However the advantage in regard to the gender mainstreaming process is that women can still be included in the planning stage of the development of the cooperative. They can have a say in the decision-making process on the local level. The social workers need to have a strategy about how to actively include women in the process.

Especially in Erirete and Gobecho there are already women in the community that have a very good educational background. For example in Erirete the two female teachers of the local school or the two women working in the health post that had after school a ten-months-training. These women have the capability to play an important role in the planning and implementation stages of such projects. On a long run there must be women involved in the running of the project. In the future it is also necessary to involve women even in the early planning stages of such a project.

From the three different communities that were visited Hagara Soditcha seems to be the one with the biggest challenges. It seems not to be clear for the inhabitants who will have the right to access the energy later on since the households are scattered and some of them quite far away from the plant. However the social infrastructure for both sides will be connected. There needs to be sensible planning about how to involve people in the process. If some of the houses won't be able to be connected for technical reasons there needs to be another plan how to cater for those houses. This could be for example a battery charging station within the radius that can be connected via power lines to the plant. People who are in charge for the planning process need to think about scenarios for the population that as it is the state now will be excluded. Otherwise this will cause trouble ones the hydro power plant is running. The inclusion of excluded groups does not refer only to the population that lives too far away but also to women. There seems to be almost no sensitivity towards gender issues until now in the project. Even though women were participating in the project as workers in that village they were not included at all in the decision making process. Therefore there needs to be a stronger focus on the participation of women by the social workers and the technicians of the GTZ.

Another focus lays upon the training of people who will be in charge for the power plants in the future. There should be an equal share of the number of men and women trained for those jobs. The training that will be given and the skills and knowledge that is transported should be equally distributed to men and women. While this opens up the prospect for village level energy planning to have a more gender-aware approach, women's ability to influence decision-making will require the



skills to participate in such activities as well as men's willingness<sup>5</sup> to allow them the space to contribute. In other words, gender roles and relations can still prove a barrier to women's participation. Such participation in itself can be empowering for women, although it has to be kept in mind that women may need capacity building to enable them to participate in such dialogues in a meaningful way. Men also need to be sensitized to allow women the space to speak. However by supporting the already existing women's groups there can be an empowerment of women and a development of skills that are needed for successful participation of women. The development of women's communication skills to enable their effective participation in the cooperatives is necessary. Workshops should be organized for capacity-building in that regard.

As said before the focus needs not only to be on women but also on men. There needs to be sensitization and assurance that women can meaningfully participate in programs while respecting their traditionally accepted space and roles. This could be done by focus group discussions with men.

Until now women in the three visited villages – Erirete, Gobecho and Hagara Soditcha - lack both a formal voice in the community and an informal voice through participation in the various activities linked to the establishment of the hydro power plant projects. It is not only the numbers of women in influential positions in those energy-related projects that need to be established and grow in the future but it is also the men who have to become more gender sensitive and willing to change the status quo.

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<sup>5</sup> As quoted above women in the interviews mentioned that men think that women are only in the second row.