

Ensuring energy access for all

Why civil society's contribution is crucial



Energy is key to human development

Energy is key to human development. We need energy for daily activities including cooking, education, community centres, medical treatment, as well as to earn a living. However, more than a billion people still do not have access to affordable, reliable and clean energy. The energy we produce, is not distributed evenly; women especially do not have equal access to and control over energy services. Nor is it produced in a sustainable manner.

Sustainable Development Goal 7 aims to tackle this global issue and ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy. Progress towards this goal however, has been far too slow. If we are serious about fulfilling this commitment, we have to up our game.

The key to achieve universal energy access is diverse partnerships. We need all sectors of society – public, private and civil society – to do their part and work together. Civil society organisations (CSOs) have demonstrated how crucial they are to ensure energy access for all.

Photo front cover: Women play an important role in scaling up energy access, especially in hard to reach communities. Civil Society has been driving processes towards green and inclusive energy policies. Photo: Sven Torfinn

How civil society contributes to energy access

- **Civil society drives inclusive energy processes**
CSOs have facilitated broad coalitions, built networks, coordinated and ensured inputs from non-energy sector players as well as from people and women's groups that are often overlooked in energy debates.
- **Civil society bridges national energy goals with local action**
CSOs have played a huge role in translating national energy policies into local solutions, and the other way around, linking needs at local level to the national agenda. Herewith they have supported governments in delivering inclusive energy policies for all.
- **Civil society provides valuable energy expertise to governments**
CSOs support and work in partnerships with governments by providing valuable data and advising in policy formulation to secure last mile energy solutions, develop better standards and overcome barriers for investment and inclusive energy implementation.
- **Civil society ensures finance reaches last mile solutions**
CSOs have enabled financing models to deliver last mile energy solutions. They have done so by lobbying for increased budget for decentralised renewable energy at the national level, and by facilitating new financing mechanisms for implementation at the local level and in support of local women led energy enterprises.

The following pages will further illustrate the value of these civil society contributions.



Photo: Bunu Dhungana

Driving inclusive energy processes

The key to universal energy access is for all sectors of society – public, private and civil society – to work together. CSOs have been driving and facilitating processes around green and inclusive energy access policies on the national and regional level. The level of engagement varies greatly per country depending on the openness of the process. From participating in the design of policies by offering vital expertise, to acting as a trusted intermediary between communities, government agencies, and the private sector; CSOs provide much needed support. Without this facilitative role the increase of energy access would be slower or even in some cases stalled.

Collaboration ensures strategies are gender inclusive

CSOs in Kenya ensured that their national SEforALL Action Agenda became gender inclusive, by supporting the process of creating renewable energy action plans. A whole range of civil society organisations, including Hivos, SNV, Practical Action, ENERGIA, the Gender Commission and GIZ, were able to provide extensive insights into the gender debate. Civil society's continued presence in two technical committees during the process, as well as the organization of over 15 meetings with various stakeholders, made them indispensable partners. As a result the prioritization of modern cooking services and solutions were included in the Action Agenda, and the participation of women in energy development was enhanced because of the role they play in energy provision.



The in 2016 launched Village Loans and Savings Associations enabled this Kenyan lady to purchase a solar powered water pump to irrigate her corn produce.

Photo: Energy 4 Impact

Building a broad coalition to achieve 100% renewable energy in Sumba

In Indonesia, civil society managed to create a strong multi-stakeholder partnership to provide 100% renewable energy to the 700,000 inhabitants of the island of Sumba. Initiator Hivos gained support at all levels: local, national and international, engaging villagers, politicians, businesses and NGOs. Key stakeholders such as the Indonesian Ministry of Energy, the State energy company PLN, the elected Sumba leaders and the governor committed to achieving the project's goal. The Indonesian Ministry of Energy even assumed responsibility for achieving 100% renewable energy for Sumba and taking the Island as an example for electrification for other parts of the country. By focusing on one island CSOs have built a sustainable coalition that is influencing not only the fate of one island but also national government policies, as the government now witness practical barriers for implementation.

“The future of our energy is renewable energy. We have the potential of wind, solar, water, and much more, including geothermal energy. We want to make Sumba an example for other regions in Indonesia.”

Sadirman Said, Minister from Indonesian Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources 2014 - 2016



Minister from Indonesian Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources 2014 - 2016, visits the island of Sumba.

“Civil society can play a particularly powerful role in this process as an enabler and constructive challenger, creating the political and social space for collaborations that are based on the core values of trust, service and the collective good.”

World Economic Forum (2013), *The Future Role of Civil Society*.

Building a network with the private sector

Progress around improving energy access in Nicaragua has stalled at the government level; undeterred civil society has been ensuring that the work towards the goals of SDG 7 (universal energy access for all) continues by engaging with the private sector and building a network of energy access practitioners. Numerous



Women in Nicaragua proudly shows her new solar panel.
Photo: Jose Pablo Porras

strategy discussions at the national and subnational level were held with Renovables, a renewable energy organisation that represents both business and civil society providing energy access, as well as renewable energy generators, big energy companies, and chambers of commerce. This has ensured that valuable recommendations have been presented to government agencies and the Inter-American Development Bank, which funds energy projects in the region. CSOs hope that more concrete action will be taken based on these insights this year.

Coordinating CSO inputs to ensure representation goes beyond the big cities

In Nepal, CSOs led work to ensure that all insights and needs from across the civil society, community based organisations and women’s groups were fully represented in government consultations on renewable energy access and gender issues. Firstly, they represented civil society at an off-grid national coordination committee. This resulted in the formation of a multistakeholder forum to build capacity in different districts involving important local governments. Secondly, thanks to funding from different donors including the UNDP, more discussions were organized with civil society organisations and local governments in different parts of the country. The recommendations on rural energy and gender needs from these discussions informed the energy access discussions at the government level.

Bringing voices in from outside the energy debate

To ensure inclusive energy policies in Zimbabwe, civil society has actively reached out and involved over 40 organisations and representatives from different sectors, including from the education, health and agriculture sectors, in the policy discussions around energy access. CSOs provided valuable input through their active involvement in the SEforALL platform. The engagement was coordinated by ZERO, an NGO that works with rural and urban communities. To keep energy access on the political agenda, CSOs also organised focused workshops with journalists from key media outlets explaining why energy inclusion is so important. This has led to an innovative project to create short films about the benefits of green energy with famous comedian, Admire Kuzhangaira, to disseminate key messages to people in rural areas via WhatsApp and Facebook.

Bridging national energy goals with local action

National clean energy goals need to be translated into concrete local plans to reach their full potential, which includes taking into consideration rural realities. CSOs have been fundamental in making sure this happens. By building local partnerships, providing essential information either at the national or regional levels, CSOs support governments to deliver inclusive energy solutions on the ground.

From national plans to rural implementation

A good example of how CSOs support has led to policy integration at the regional level is the case of Burkina Faso, where civil society is instrumental in ensuring that the SEforALL action plans are included in regional and local agendas. SNV recognised that despite the existence of a finalised national action plan, there were no energy plans at the community level. This is partly due to the fact that the ministry of energy doesn't have decentralized offices. To help push the government's agenda forward, SNV and partners selected four regions to work towards rural implementation: Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, Centre Nord and Hauts-Bassins.

During 2016 each region held two workshops with participation of local CSOs that work on renewable energy issues, with representatives of different regional authorities on health, economic affairs, gender and environment. In Les Cascades a coalition of regionally based CSOs has formulated concrete suggestions for energy development and is currently lobbying the mayors to include them in the final regional plans. The CSOs are advising how to adapt national goals into local needs as well as ensuring that the financial needs are addressed.



Burkina Faso, 2012. Solar panels. Photo: Roel Burgler, SNV

“The changes that civil society is undergoing strongly suggest that it should no longer be viewed as a “third sector”; rather, civil society should be the glue that binds public and private activity together in such a way as to strengthen the common good.”

World Economic Forum (2013), The Future Role of Civil Society.

County needs linked back to national agenda

In Kenya, civil society’s role has been the reverse, as it has provided the essential link between the reality of energy needs on the county level and fed that back into the national goals. This ensures that local needs and national aspirations are blended into workable plans and solutions. While the government tended to focus on electrification throughout this process, CSOs were instrumental in ensuring attention was also paid to other energy access needs, such as clean cooking and pumping water and local women led energy businesses.

The government sought out CSOs’ experiences in order to facilitate more effective implementation in Kenya’s rural areas. Without this crucial link it would be difficult to move towards implementation in the counties, especially with the energy national bill that is soon coming into law. CSOs are busy filling in the technical and capacity gaps, providing energy advice where these skills are lacking. CSOs have been and still are key in smoothing the pathway from the transition from the bill to creating essential county plans to implement and achieve Kenya’s energy access goals.

Helping governments with implementation of energy plans

At times, real life experiences of people who need to implement energy programmes are not reflected at the national level. Civil society in Tanzania has pushed the government to ensure implementation plans reflect the reality on the ground. The National Gender and Sustainable Energy Network (NGSEN) worked closely with the department of energy in the Ministry of Energy and Minerals in preparing the SEforALL implementation programme, on the importance of addressing female



Rhoda Mshomi lives in Moshi, Tanzania and cooks on biogas in her new kitchen. Cooking on biogas is cleaner, healthier and safer. Photo: Sven Torfinn.

drudgery related to cooking, gathering fuelwood and fetching water. This included working directly with the government's energy consultants. NGSEN helped the government consultants understand the importance of bringing clean energy to households still using biomass for cooking and lacking access to clean and safe water. NGSEN was also given the opportunity to review the draft implementation documents to ensure realistic options were included. Their recommendation for the use of safer cooking alternatives is now included in the documents.

Empowering local energy entrepreneurs

Also in Tanzania civil society has taken a more practical approach as the government lacks resources to invest in large energy infrastructure in rural areas. As such off-grid rural solutions are essential. CSOs are helping to provide alternative frameworks to turn this around, such as Solar Sister's market driven approach to deliver solar lighting and clean cooking solutions to households in rural Tanzania. Solar Sister entrepreneurs are local women from last-mile communities who invest in a stock of various solar and cooking products, that they then sell for a profit to their peers. The goal is to build a framework that not only addresses the lack of clean and safe energy solutions available in rural communities, but also empowers women with an economic opportunity.



In Nepal, Niru Shrestha (left) switched from constructing built-on-site mud chimney stoves to supplying portable biomass cookstoves. In just over a year, she has sold over 6,000 units and has 105 retailers in her supply chain. CSOs lobby and advocate for women like Niru to be represented and taken into account in energy policies and projects. Photo: Bunu Dhungana



Off-grid rural solutions are essential in scaling up energy access. These solutions include improved cookstoves, solar lighting, bio digesters and micro hydroelectric plants. Photo: Joanna Pinneo | Ripple Effect Images | Solar Sister

Providing valuable energy expertise to governments

Civil society is increasingly recognized as a valid partner for providing the essential knowledge, research and expertise needed to shape energy policy and strategy. CSOs have a proven track record for providing valuable data and advising governments in policy formulation to secure last mile energy solutions, develop better standards and overcome barriers for investment and implementation. They have also been pushing governments to base their policies on this data to speed up progress.

Feeding in specific data

Recently CSOs were central in providing technical data on wind statistics that was used to shape the wind feed-in tariff proposal in Indonesia. Civil society was able to do this thanks to a project launched by Hivos in 2011 to develop a showcase for an island powered by 100% renewable energy. During the process Hivos and its partners carried out extensive feasibility studies on renewable energy potential including the wind potential of the island Sumba, located in Eastern Indonesia.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) funded extra research into the feasibility of introducing a wind feed-in tariff for all of Indonesia, on request of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources in 2014-2015. Sumba was included as part of the assessment as reference for Eastern Indonesia. Together with civil society, the ADB introduced the idea to the government and the state electricity company by providing a proposal for a national renewable energy feed-in tariff. The discussions around its implementation of the proposal are still ongoing.

Formulating global norms

Besides providing very specific data and knowledge to help create focused solutions, civil society has proven its ability to provide weighty research, to help frame the whole energy access debate. Practical Action, for instance, launched The Poor People's Energy Outlook series (PPEO) in 2010. The report series shines a light on energy access from the perspective of the poor, as well as counterbalancing other international energy publications such as the International Energy Agency's Energy Outlook reports.

The PPEO series has also been useful for CSOs working at a national level to use the information as a way of influencing national policy. The PPEO created what is now accepted as the global definition of 'Total Energy Access'. Civil society in Kenya used this definition at the beginning of the country's engagement with the SEforALL process. It has been embraced as the model needed to reach the country's 2030 energy goals.

Proving the viability of private investment

Civil society brings practical experience to inform government policy, for example Hivos' work around policy incentives for the creation of mini-grid and off-grid solutions in rural areas of Indonesia. Previously there was no systematic vision nor guidelines around the preparation of communities' energy projects, including the securing of investment for smaller energy projects.



This micro hydro power plant in the Mhakuhou river on the Indonesian island Sumba provides electricity to nearby villages. Photo: Josh Estey

Civil society identified the gaps on the ground, including how smaller projects could be funded and run via private investments, and started to create pressure for the government to look into this. This led to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources to publish the rural electrification regulation in December 2016, aimed at mini-grids and end of mile energy solutions. This regulation opens the doors to businesses to invest in and create bespoke renewable business models in the rural areas they are situated in.

Creating standards for sector confidence

CSOs provide specialist knowledge around the technical requirements of clean energy solutions. For instance in Kenya there are no standards for many renewable energy products and fuels. This has led to low standard products and subsequently a lack of consumer confidence in them, which in turn has affected growth of the renewable energy sector.

To address this, in 2014 civil society with experience in the ABPP Biogas Programme began to work with the Kenyan Board of Standards (KeBS) to develop biogas standards, providing financial and technical support. The standards, which covered biogas production, conditioning, and utilization from a safety, environmental, performance and functional perspectives, were adopted in a validation workshop at the end of 2015 and subsequently gazetted into law. The standards acted as a policy instrument to streamline and regulate the biogas sector in Kenya, and thus facilitated the effective dissemination of biogas technology in the country. In this way civil society helps, via technical knowledge and expertise, to develop nationwide standards.



Sumba island (Indonesia) has two diesel powered electricity grids. In 2010, around 70% of the population was not connected to this grid. The Sumba Iconic Island initiative contributed to increased electrification to around 40%. Photo: Josh Estey

Ensuring finance reaches last mile solutions

It takes money to ensure universal energy access. CSOs have been pressing for the increase in finance flows to off-grid energy solutions with success. Civil society has also secured investments and pioneered alternative funding mechanisms to empower women and rural communities to create their own energy solutions.

Lobbying to safeguard rural energy finance

Large scale investments need to be safeguarded for renewable energy in rural areas. CSOs in Nicaragua played a key role in ensuring funding allocation for energy access. Under the SEforALL process the government of Nicaragua presented its Investment Plan for the Scaling Up Renewable Energy Program (SREP) by accessing funding from the Climate Investment Fund (CIF), with support from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), in 2015.

Nicaraguan civil society supported the original version of the Investment Plan that allocated almost equal funding for its two components: geothermal energy development and rural energy access through decentralized systems and clean cooking solutions. However in 2016 when the Nicaraguan government presented its project proposal, it requested to change the funding allocation shifting US\$4.5 million from rural energy access to geothermal.

A member of the national Gender and Energy Advocacy Network (RIGE), that is also a CIF observer, was able to lobby against this and report the concerns of Nicaraguan civil society to representatives on the SREP Sub-Committee. The SREP sub-committee took up the concerns in its decision making process. From the subsequent discussion, the IDB and the Nicaraguan



In Nepal, thanks to CSO intervention, these women have been able to expand and improve their chutney producing business, thus increasing their income, using electric equipment. Photo: Bunu Dhungana

“The world will always need independent organizations and individuals to act as watchdogs, ethical guardians and advocates of the marginalized or under-represented. Civil society in all its forms has an important role in holding all stakeholders, including itself, to the highest levels of accountability.”

World Economic Forum (2013), The Future Role of Civil Society.



The women on the right, who lives nearby Nakuru (Kenya), received a subsidy to invest in a biogas digester in 2012. She uses the biogas for cooking and for lightning and the left over slurry to fertilize her fields. Photo: Sven Torfinn.

government found an alternative for the requested shift. The project proposal was approved without any reallocation from the rural energy component, so initial investments in renewable energy access in rural areas were secured.

Microfinance for empowering women

In many developing countries women are discriminated against. This includes limiting their access to energy and access to financial credit. Within this context, over the past two years civil society has been trying to address this in various countries by working with financing institutions thereby increasing access to funding.

In Nepal, ENERGIA and the Centre for Rural Technology Nepal has supported women gain access to much needed credit for initiating and upscaling their energy solution businesses. The programme is running in six districts with 40 local, easily accessible micro-financing institutes. A similar project is running in Senegal, coordinated by Energy 4 Impact (E4I), in partnership with SEM Fund and financed by ENERGIA.

E4I has also helped to set up an innovative credit line programme with PAMIGA (French Financial Institute) and Caurie MF (local microfinance organisation). Caurie MF will buy and lease the solar equipment (including solar fridges, and solar pumps) to women with a 15% interest rate, which should take them between 24-30 months to repay.

CSOs have thus worked with financial institutions, to prove that these female entrepreneurs were valid investment candidates. By doing this, both funding and energy is being deployed faster in rural areas.

Community finance for energy solutions

Unfortunately in Kenya, it has proven difficult for women to access financial support from micro-finance and banking organisations to create last mile energy solutions. In 2016 civil society launched a new project to support groups of female energy entrepreneurs to create 'Village Savings and Loan Associations', based on a traditional form of Kenyan village banking. ENERGIA funded the initial loans, and along with other CSOs runs trainings to create guidelines for paying in, lending and borrowing to ensure a sustainable framework. The project also includes management training for local fund managers.

CSOs are working with the local associations, supporting them to build up capital, as well as lending. All the loans are going to female energy entrepreneurs focused on solar energy, manufacturing briquettes, and producing improved cooking stoves. Although the project is still in its initial stages, there has already been growth in the funds.

Hivos

Humanistic organisation Hivos seeks new solutions to persistent global issues. With smart projects in the right places, Hivos opposes discrimination, inequality, abuse of power and the unsustainable use of our planet's resources.

One of its main themes is energy as it is a vital driving force for development. Access to energy can alleviate poverty, improve living conditions and propel economic development. However, taking the fossil fuel route straight towards climate change will have disastrous effects, especially for developing countries. Hivos therefore stimulates sustainable development fuelled by clean, renewable energy.

*For more information, please visit www.hivos.org
www.greeninclusiveenergy.org*

ENERGIA

ENERGIA is an international network of like-minded organisations and professionals, active in 22 countries in Asia and Africa. Our vision is that women and men have equal and equitable access to and control over sustainable energy services as an essential human right to development. To achieve this, we:

- contribute to energy access for all by scaling up the delivery of energy services through women-led micro and small businesses,
- advocate for and provide technical support to mainstream gender approaches in energy policies and programmes,
- provide the evidence base for improving energy investment effectiveness through research,
- raise awareness and enhance knowledge of issues related to gender and energy through networking and knowledge products

For more information, please visit www.energia.org

SNV

SNV is a not-for-profit international development organization founded in the Netherlands in 1965, with a long-term, local presence in over 30 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin-America. Our global team of local and international advisors works with local partners to equip communities, businesses and organizations with the tools, knowledge and connections they need to increase their incomes and gain access to basic services – empowering them to break the cycle of poverty and guide their own development.

Energy, which is a key factor for sustainable development and poverty eradication, is one of SNV's main intervention areas with a particular focus on strengthening market development. SNV provides global best practice as well as innovative approaches to increase access to energy and lower emissions through sustainable use of energy sources. By the end of 2016, an estimated 7 million people improved their access to energy through SNV interventions in the renewable energy sector.

For more information about SNV Netherlands Development Organisation and its work, please visit www.snv.org