

GEDSI Learning and Leadership Hub: Energy

Key learnings from the meeting held on 10th June 2025.

Entry Points for building GEDSI into energy sector projects

Emma Grant, UK PACT GEDSI Advisor

Integrating GEDSI into just energy transition programmes is essential for ensuring that the benefits of sustainable energy are equitably distributed. Our new guidance [‘Entry Points: Energy and Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion’](#) aims to support UK PACT staff and implementing partners to better appreciate the relationship between GEDSI and the energy sector, and the various ‘pathways’ that can help to strengthen both the approach and results. The principal pathways linking GEDSI and energy are:



1. Reducing energy poverty for women and socially excluded groups,



2. Creating livelihood and leadership opportunities and improving working conditions for women and excluded groups,



3. Expanding market activities for women and excluded groups,



4. Reducing risk of harm.

For each pathway, the report gives example activities and case studies from UK PACT projects. To reduce energy poverty, example activities include: offering reduced connection fees for facilities such as maternal health clinics and women’s shelters; providing distribution solutions that reduce the burden of time-intensive tasks for women or enhance their safety; and establishing policies, procedures, and systems that prioritize excluded groups by tailoring energy solutions to meet their domestic and business needs.



The Utility-led smart electric vehicle charging project in India developed safe waiting areas and ensured that there were gender balanced teams in pilot charging stations and outreach.

Approach to GEDSI in the Just Municipal Embedded Generation of Renewable Energy in South African Municipalities (JMEG)

Emma Jones-Phillipson, UK PACT GEDSI Advisor South Africa

It is particularly important to mainstream GEDSI in the JMEG project because limited access to safe, reliable and affordable energy disproportionately affects women and girls through their gendered care roles, and low-income communities in urban areas face higher risks of exposure to air pollution and fire risk. South Africa’s Just Transition framework highlights the importance of including marginalised and excluded communities and groups, whilst clean energy access also intersects with municipalities health and socio-economic mandates in delivering services to citizens.

The approach to developing the GEDSI Action Plan for JMEG focused on deepening understanding of differentiated energy access needs, knowledge, experiences, priorities, and opportunities; co-creating a GEDSI-informed vision of “success” to inform actions and indicators; and identifying mechanisms for achieving the project’s GEDSI Ambition and impact accordingly. The GEDSI Action Plan takes a mapped approach, aligning GEDSI activities with the project workplan to avoid GEDSI becoming siloed or implemented in isolation. ICLEI Africa was further supported with targeted sign-posting to additional resources and guidance to inform implementation of the Action Plan.

Example GEDSI actions include: integrating learnings from the GEDSI baseline assessment into deliverables, including representatives from excluded groups in the project advisory group, and including GEDSI considerations in prefeasibility analyses and environmental screenings.

Reflections on GEDSI Mainstreaming in JMEG

Sadie Wiseman, Professional Officer: Climate Change, Energy & Resilience, ICLEI - Africa

Sadie shared reflections on how to drill down into delivering GEDSI impacts when GEDSI isn’t the primary focus of programming. The following GEDSI learnings have arisen through delivering JMEG, which focuses on two key areas of work – project development and capacity building:

1. Timing: including GEDSI early in project planning and development makes it more likely that, when implemented, the energy projects will deliver benefits on GEDSI.
2. Comprehensive approach: mainstreaming GEDSI across all topics for capacity building (embedded generation, infrastructure project development) is important to avoid tokenistic approaches.
3. Language and relatability: working with people who will respond differently to ‘GEDSI’ as an acronym and concept makes it crucial to use language that resonates with the audience and to provide practical, relatable examples. This has been especially key in JMEG’s work with municipal (local government) officials.

Plenary Discussion

How can we approach integrating GEDSI in regulatory frameworks or where there is opposition?

- Deney van Rooyen, South Africa-UK PACT Technical Advisor: The more practical examples we can give to teams, the better. This is where a GEDSI expert with a very good understanding of the local context and a deep understanding of the project makes a big difference in promoting buy-in and enhancing project ambitions
- Macel Aguilar, UK PACT GEDSI Advisor, Philippines: Use mentions of gender or women in national policies and commitments as ‘hooks’ to integrate GEDSI and increase ambition. It is an iterative (and persistent) approach throughout the project.

To sign up for future GEDSI Learning and Leadership Hubs, please reach out to Rebekah Martin, GEDSI Manager, rebekah.martin@sddirect.org.uk