

Green economy: what's in it for women?

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Gender and environmental change: identifying the challenges
and defining the future action research agenda

International Institute for Environment and Development, London, 17-19 March
2014

The green economy

- Is the concept of a 'green economy' not a distraction?
- Isn't it just the economic pillar of Sustainable Development?

How is “gender” perceived in a development context?

- Two broad ways of seeing “gender”
- As an analytical tool which offers insights into situations around two groups of people who would identify themselves as “women” and “men”.
Here “gender” is seen as “who does/experiences what and why”; where “why” is explained at the level of assets
- As a concept which focuses on the relational position of women and men.
Again “gender” is seen as “who does/experiences what and why” but *here “why” is explained in terms of power relations and an additional dimension of “experiences” in terms of body politics.*

How is "gender" accepted in development practice?

- More easily accepted as an analytical tool – policy makers and donors are comfortable with improving assets based around existing roles and responsibilities
- Changing power relations? Firstly this strays too close for comfort to the personal. Secondly why stop at power relations for individuals? What about other sorts of power relations?

How is “gender” seen in the energy sector?

- The energy sector has been slow to adopt gender analysis
“Not our business to change culture”
- The energy sector has not attracted the interest of social science – particularly those working in gender – unlike other “technical sectors” eg water and ICT

Gender perceptions in responses to climate change

- We expect men to be proactive – but in disasters men's roles & responsibilities can expose them to dangers lead to widowhood – common route for women into poverty
- More women are victims of flooding than men – this requires responses that deal with culture sensitivities; creates a new category of households – single man-headed households about which we have little understanding.

Green Economy and gender Policy Implications

- Sex disaggregated data throughout project cycle; gender sensitive criteria & indicators
No data - no visibility; no visibility – no interest; no interest – no action; no action – no accountability
- Women's participation & inclusion in policy making – needs development of women's capacity to participate and men's capacity to create spaces for women's contribution

Green energy economy from a gender perspective?

- What is the “gender “ goal (ie how does it affect women) of the intervention?
- Is it welfare?
reduce women’s drudgery and improve their health
- Is it productive efficiency?
produce more and better products, and earn more money
- Is it empowering?
Open up new roles and opportunities outside traditional ones, in economic, social, and political sphere; taking charge of their own lives and bodies – is this possible in the green energy economy??? Does it matter???
- Is it project efficiency?
Taking a gender approach is to increase rate of success in reaching broader project aims
- Mixed motives of actors – particularly in relation to ‘empowerment’ with lack of transparency in meaning leads to misunderstandings and frustrations.

Can the green (energy) economy be transformatory?

- Women's lives are likely to be transformed negatively from direct impacts
- Dramatic changes in the environment often bring dramatic social changes
- *I am now happy to help my wife with household activities, such as ironing, now we have electricity!*
(Respondent in EnPoGen survey Sri Lanka)

Women's inclusion in the green economy

- Why assume they want it?
- Women's time saving promoted so they can engage in productive activities
- Evidence shows they use it for other things (housework, time with their kids, and (shock, horror!) rest)
- Inclusion is not necessarily wanted by the excluded – at least on terms frequently offered.