

*Netherlands Development Assistance is well known for its support for women and gender issues, particularly since the former Minister for Development Assistance, Minister Pronk, introduced the 'Women and Autonomy' policy. Has the policy changed much in recent years?*

Basically the policy has not changed, although there is more emphasis now on the mainstreaming of gender, rather than on treating women as a separate issue. Compared to the issue of the environment, which should also be mainstreamed, we have been more successful with gender, I think. Many people now really do accept gender as an integral part of the planning process, while environment is still often seen as an additional cost, complicating decision-making.

*How well do you feel that gender has been integrated into energy in development assistance?*

That's a difficult question; I don't know quite how to answer it. The point is, internationally there have been lots of changes in the energy sector recently; moves towards privatisation, re-shaping the way the delivery of energy services is conceptualised. Such techno-economic ideas are dominant and are at the forefront, so more sophisticated ideas such as the interrelationships between energy and poverty, and energy and women, are often forgotten. In our own policy, we struggle to ensure that these issues are considered. What I would like to see is more substantiation of what the gender aspects of these new tendencies in international energy policy are likely to be: we need to analyse these and get the arguments onto the table.

*Are there some projects in particular which you could mention, supported by Netherlands*

## Meeting **ENERGIA** Members



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*Interview by Margaret Skutsch*

*development assistance, which were really gender sensitive and actively helped women?*

The biogas project in Nepal (see **ENERGIA News** no 1.2, 1997, Ed.) certainly was a great success in this regard. I would also mention the Energy Training Programme that we sponsored for the SADC countries, which included special gender training for energy planners from all over East and Southern Africa. Also, the RPTES programme, the Regional Programme for the Traditional Energy Sector, currently operating in West, East, and Southern Africa, is also doing its best to really bring out

gender aspects (there is a link to the RPTES website on the Energia Website, Ed.).

*You, yourself, are clearly very well aware and supportive of the gender issues in energy. Did you ever undergo gender training yourself?*

Well, it was a long time ago! I did do a training course in the 1980s at the Royal Tropical Institute in Amsterdam. Last week there was a 2-day workshop being given here in our ministry, I signed up, but in the end I was just too busy to go.

*Is there a particular area in which you think gender training is needed, or special types of training?*

I think what is needed is for training to focus on the new questions – privatisation, for example, as I mentioned earlier. People need to be trained to analyse the new situation to see what the gender impacts of these kinds of policies are going to be. Maybe they won't have any negative gender effects – if so, we should be clear about this and say so. But one would expect such policies to have effects on poverty, and if they have effects on poverty they are likely also to have gender effects. We need to be more specific, we need to present the evidence rather than talking in generalities.

*Thank you, Paul, for taking the time to share your views with us. And thank you for your continued support of ENERGIA. ■*

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# Climate Change, LULUCF and Gender Dynamics

*Jens Mackensen*

**Those who followed the climate change negotiations in The Hague in November 2000, know that LULUCF (Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry) was one of the most contentious topics discussed, ultimately causing the suspension of the global climate talks.**

**LULUCF concerns the** role of sinks (that is, forests and other biomass) in the carbon dioxide balance. Atmospheric carbon dioxide is naturally trapped in plant material and thus increasing the number of sinks offers a way of mitigating high atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels. If, for example, forests are planted on areas which are unforested they would absorb carbon and thus counterbalance anthropogenic emissions.

Countries that have agreed to reduce their carbon emissions could thus offset part of their obligations by investing in such forestry. Reducing atmospheric carbon through the use of sinks is in many cases much cheaper than actually reducing emissions.

**One question under** discussion is whether developed countries should be allowed to establish carbon sink projects in developing countries under the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM). But how would LULUCF (sink) projects influence gender dynamics?

**For Sub-Saharan Africa** the statistics clearly show that women, far more than men, play a vital role in agricultural management. Any changes in this sector through large-scale LULUCF projects can thus be expected to affect gender dynamics. However, any proposals for LULUCF projects under CDM are likely to be restricted to forest projects, and not concern agriculture directly.

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