



NPSP REA GENDER WORKSHOP

Event Communiqué – March 2019

Amplifying Gender in the Energy Sector

The Rural Electrification Agency (REA) is committed to driving for gender inclusion in the Nigerian energy sector. Gender mainstreaming is a core objective of the Agency. In implementing this objective, the REA in collaboration with the USAID - Nigeria Power Sector Program (NPSP), organized the first sector gender workshop themed “*Amplifying Gender in the Energy Sector*” on February 9th, 2019.

The aim of the workshop was to discuss barriers and challenges faced by women developers, investors, and leaders in the energy sector; their capacity development needs and the role of gender in the Nigerian energy sector.

Objectives of the workshop include:

- Introducing women in the Nigeria private and public sector to the work of REA and NPSP
- Gaining an understanding of the gender challenges, barriers, and capacity development needs
- Conduct a baseline survey that will establish the key performance indicators for the NPSP Gender Workshops.
- Informing the design of NPSP’s activities
- Guiding the implementation of REA’s programmes and initiatives
- Encouraging increased participation by women in the power sector

Hosting a Milestone Gender Workshop in the Energy Sector

The workshop took place at the NPSP Chemonics office in Abuja, Nigeria and was attended by over 70 women from across the entire energy value chain and Nigeria. Some organizations represented included:

- Ministry of Power, Works and Housing
- Rural Electrification Agency
- Niger Delta Power Holding Company
- World Bank
- All On (Shell Foundation)
- Power for All
- Solar Nigeria Program
- Solar Sisters
- Oolu Solar
- Sosai Renewable Energy
- Nextier Power
- Azuri Technologies
- Greenville LNG
- GIZ

The workshop was anchored by Awele Okigbo - Chief Executive, Credo Advisory.

The NPSP Chief of Party, Mary Worzala, gave a brief welcome address communicating the aim and objectives of the workshop. In her opening remarks, she expressed the importance of female participation in the sector and reiterated NPSP's commitment to create opportunities for women in the sector.

The Managing Director of the REA, Damilola Ogunbiyi, represented by Anita Otubu, Head of Special Projects, REA (shown below) gave a presentation on the impact of the REA over the past 20 months, highlighting the Agency's achievements, projects, initiatives and steps taken to drive for increased female participation and stakeholder-ship in the energy sector. In addition, the presentation also highlighted opportunities for female participation.

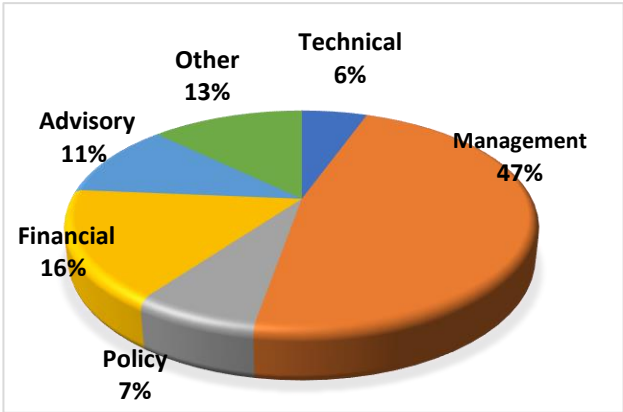
Miracle Ogunbowale (NPSP Events and Training Coordinator) presented USAID/NPSP's Gender and Social Inclusion Action Plan (Year I). In her presentation, she explained that the plan aims to ensure proper implementation of gender and social inclusion interventions, policies and activities within NPSP and other stakeholders in the power sector.



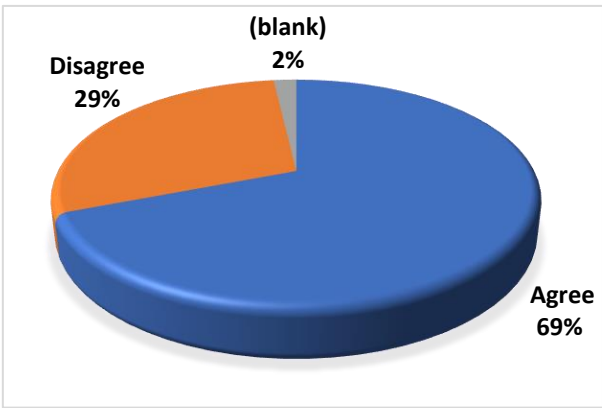
Setting the Gender Baseline – Workshop Survey

An electronic survey was conducted with the participants to get the women’s view on gender in the energy sector and establish a baseline of the current status of gender in the sector. Fifty-five women participated in the workshop survey, and the results are below:

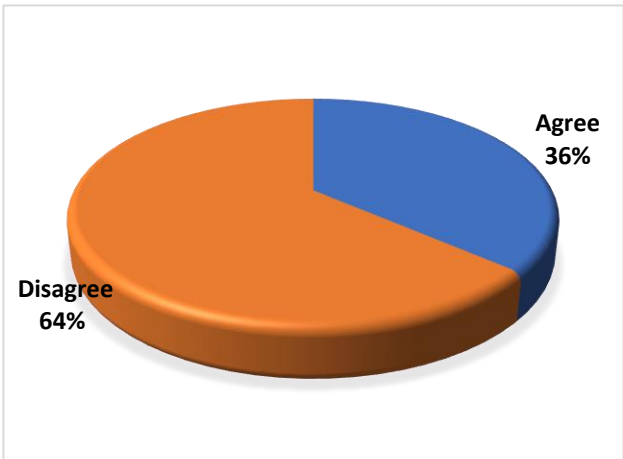
Area of Competence



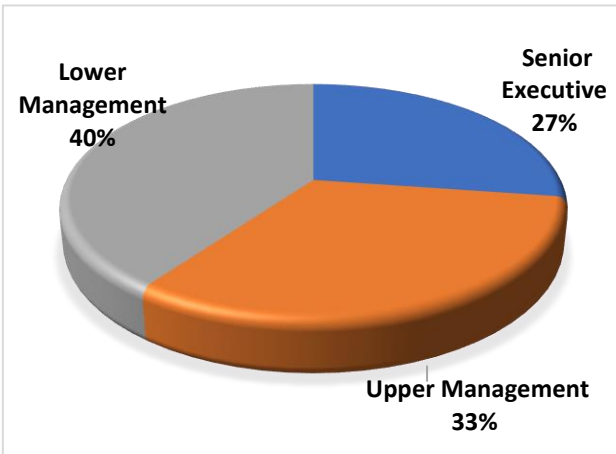
Gender Discrimination



Access to Capacity Building & Development Opportunities



Designation





Brainstorming in Working Groups

The participants were split into three working groups, focusing on discussions across three key areas identified by the REA as primary factors that impact gender mainstreaming in the energy sector.

The “*Gender Barriers and Challenges in the Energy Sector*” session was facilitated by Heather Onoh, the founder and CEO of Smarter Grid International Limited and board member of Sapele Power Plc. Session issues and proposed solutions include:

Issues

- Gender stereotypes
- Work-life balance
- Absence of female camaraderie
- Lack of enabling environment
- Lack of self-confidence
- Absence of mentors
- Lack of access to finance

Solutions

- Awareness building
- Scholarships and training
- Mentorship
- Sexual harassment advocacy
- Engagement platforms



Heather Onoh, Founder/CEO of Smarter Grid International Limited at the question and answer session.

The “*Role of Gender in the Energy Sector*” working group facilitated by Valerie Agbaraba, Head of Renewable at the Niger Delta Power Holding Company, had the following feedback:

Issues

- *Lack of female engineers*
- *Discouraging depiction of women in learning institutions*
- *Limited participation along value chain*
- *Inadequate gear for female engineers*
- *Lack of access to finance*
- *Insufficient capacity building*

Solutions

- *Increased female recruitment*
- *School programmes on power sector*
- *Female engineering students programmes*
- *Capacity building*



Ujunwa Ojemeni, a Senior Investment Associate at All On (a Shell Foundation initiative) moderated the “*Capacity Development Needs and Gaps*” session which identified the following issues and proposed solutions:

Issues

- *Skills and knowledge gaps*
- *Lack of gender balance in recruitment*
- *Cultural stereotypes*
- *Lack of communication skills*
- *Lack of confidence in women*

Solutions

- *Certified technical training*
- *Leadership and skills training*
- *Enabling environment for women*
- *Gender policies*
- *HR gender training*



Next Steps

The REA and the NPSP have committed to implement some of the workshop recommendations which include:

- Development of a database of female power sector professionals.
- Development of a mailing list for information dissemination.
- Organizing of networking events, workshops and seminars.
- Organizing professional development trainings.
- Developing a professional women's mentorship programme.

About REA

The Rural Electrification Agency (REA) is the implementing agency of the Federal Government of Nigeria, under the Ministry of Power, Works and Housing, tasked with electrification of underserved and unserved communities across Nigeria. Gender inclusion is a core objective of the REA to promote and drive female participation in electrification initiatives which include an off-grid electrification strategy to complement the national grid supply by developing a decentralized approach to power generation, distribution and metering that are economically viable, demand – driven, market-oriented and private sector focused.

For further inquiries or questions, please email – rosemary.idem@rea.gov.ng (REA) or lumeokeke@powerafrica-npsp.org (NPSP)