



**CONFERENCE ON: INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY ENERGY RESILIENCE IN
BANGLADESH**

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**SESSION 7:
WOMEN IN POWER SECTOR**

Francesco Tornieri

Principal Social Development Specialist (GAD)

South Asia Department



1. Measuring women's employment in power sector (South Asia)

GENDER EQUALITY IN OIL & GAS. The **oil industry** – historically- constrained by traditional gender roles and social norms in the local community or nationally, lack of technical and professional skills, occupational segregation by gender, and gender-insensitive work environments and working conditions.

- Women represent 1/5 of employees, start on equal footing but rarely reach the top of the organization [with 22% overall women's representation; 25% at middle-management and 17% at senior-leadership [Source: "Promoting Women: A strategic approach to Gender Equality in Oil & Gas, 2017, World Petroleum Council].
- Private sector-driven efforts in developing gender-related indicators and/or collecting sex-disaggregated information and data covering 200 energy sector utilities are ongoing [Source: Ernst & Young Index of Women in Power and Utilities, 2015-]

GENDER EQUALITY IN RENEWABLE ENERGY. The **renewable energy industry** –in the era of energy transition, distributed renewable generation, new digital technologies and changing consumer calls for increased investments and has the potential of millions employment opportunities for both men and women [*Renewable Energy: A Gender Perspective*, 2019: International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)], a ground-breaking survey of employees, companies and institutions. It identifies that:

- About 32% women are employed in the RE sector, compared to 22% in the energy sector. Still, within renewables, women's participation in STEM jobs is lower than administrative jobs.
- estimates that the number of jobs in RE could increase from 10.3 million in 2017 to nearly 29 million in 2050.

Historically, the challenge is to compile quantitative data, analyze learnings of successful initiatives within the sector and gain insight from female executives and trailblazers promoting women in the oil and gas industry.



ADB (SARD) fit within the We-POWER initiative

- **Setting corporate gender-related targets.** Strategy 2030 –and related Gender Equity Operational Plan- set a range of gender-related targets relevant for the energy sector, which include:
 - Women and girls' participation in nontraditional education and training increased [e.g. STEMs]
 - Women's access to job skills improved [e.g. power (energy) sector]
 - Women's entrepreneurship supported [e.g. energy-based livelihoods]
 - Women's access to infrastructure and services improved
 - Women's leadership capacity improved [e.g. decentralized energy systems]
 - Women's use of time-saving or gender-responsive infrastructure and technology increased
- **Going beyond the energy-based livelihoods.** While –as demonstrated in the graph below- ADB has made distinctive progress in mainstreaming gender equality concerns across all energy sub-sectors in South Asia,
 - women have mainly benefited *indirectly* from ADB-financed projects through self-employment opportunities offered in traditionally female-dominated areas.
 - women (in some cases) have taken on new roles in the community, which has induced changes in gender norms and occupational segregation by gender.
 - Women (increasingly) benefitted from employment opportunities in electricity infrastructure by gender-sensitive training and skills development and ensuring women's safe working conditions.



(2) Rationale for We-POWER

- ***Women in Power Sector Professional Network in South Asia*** (We-POWER) is envisaged as self-sustaining professional network backed by strategic partners that can provide technical and financial support [strategic areas (5): education, ***recruitment, development***, retention, and ***policy and analysis***], in South Asia.
- We-POWER aims to address the root-cause of women's unequal representation in the sector through cross-fertilization of promising practices in:
 - (a) Women's STEM education (*talent pool*) and their *participation in the energy sector*;
 - (b) Ongoing efforts led by power sector SOEs/private sector companies to develop HR Policies to recruit women (college and experienced hire recruitment), professional development [entry level; mid-career level (sponsorship; mentorship for career guidance) and senior-leadership level; work-life balance policies).
 - (c) Areas requiring policy dialogue or legal/regulatory reform aimed at removing legal barriers to women's employment in the energy sector and addressing skills gaps through training and STEM education for girls.
 - (d) Capacity building support, networking, and mentorship for women engineers for career advancement, research to reform policies and practices, exposure to technology, recruiting opportunities, and access to information and conferences.



(3) Other professional networks for women in engineering

- **IEEE Women in Engineering** is one of the largest international professional organizations dedicated to promoting women engineers and scientists and inspiring girls around the world to follow their academic interests to a career in engineering
- **ENERGIA Network** (*International Network on Gender and Sustainable Energy*) works with 38 partners in 18 countries in Asia, Africa and Europe, including CSOs, social enterprises, universities and research institutions
- **Other networks.** *Engineering for Change* (E4C)* with strong women's representation and *Engineers without Borders International* (EWB-I)**, including relevant country-specific chapters [e.g. Engineers without Borders Australia, www.ewb.org.au]

* E4C's mission is to improve the lives of underserved communities by better preparing the global development workforce, optimizing the solutions development cycle, and ensuring public health and safety. www.engineeringforchange.org

** Engineers Without Borders – International (EWB-I) is an international association of national EWB/ISF groups whose mission is to facilitate collaboration, exchange of information, and assistance among its member associations that have applied to become part of the association. EWB-I helps the member groups develop their capacity to assist developing communities in their respective countries. Similar US-based organizations include: *Engineering World Health*, U.S.-based non-profit organization that engages the skills and passions of students and professionals from around the globe to improve healthcare delivery in low-income countries [<http://www.ewh.org/>].