



THE GENDER, POVERTY, AND ENERGY NEXUS IN ZIMBABWE: THE CASE OF
GWERU URBAN AND SHURUGWI COMMUNAL AND RESETTLEMENT AREAS

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ABSTRACT

The paper examined the link between gender, poverty and energy in Gweru urban and Shurugwi communal areas. This is in light of the country's persistent power shortages vis-a vis environmental degradation exacerbated by the decade-long socio-economic crisis of 2000-2009 resulting from the fast-track land reform programme. Questionnaires, interviews and direct observations were used as research instruments. Tools of analysis included gender needs analysis, Caroline Moser's triple roles analysis framework and gender matrix. Findings revealed that wood fuel is still the major source of energy for men and women at both household and small-scale enterprises in both rural and urban areas of Zimbabwe. Fuel wood is characterized by scarcity and alternative renewable sources of energy like wind, solar paraffin, diesel, and electricity were either not available or unaffordable. Poverty and gender had a bearing on access and control of energy. Wood collection is done by both males and females in both rural and urban areas, but women tend to collect for subsistence use in the household while men in urban areas collect for commercial purposes. Energy scarcity impact on women's time and participation of women in energy planning is still lacking. The paper suggests a gender-energy-needs assessment to avoid gender blind projects and policies that do not take into account different energy needs of males and females.

Keywords: Gender, Poverty, Energy, Gweru, Zimbabwe.