

RURAL ENERGY GUIDE

Taking action to solve local energy problems

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In loving memory of Ilne-Mari Hofmeyr

Ilne Hofmeyr, one of the authors of this book, passed away after a sudden illness. Her work is a testimony of her life's dedication to the well-being of all. We benefited greatly from her experience and professional commitment. But her contribution goes beyond this book and the work of the SEED programme. She also enriched us with her spirituality and wisdom.

Her care, vibrant sense of life and creative spirit are treasured in our memories.

What is the solution?



As a large part of people's expenses goes to travelling, if these services and products could be brought closer to the people, it might go some way in relieving the burden. This would also cut out many of the middle-men in the distribution chain, making the products cheaper. This is what the people in the Magadla area realised, and this led to the establishment of an integrated energy centre.

This section of the energy guide looks at the process the people underwent to arrive at this solution. This started with an electricity committee that was affiliated to the Ward Committee (previously called the Local Development Forum), its transformation into an energy committee, and ends with a community co-operative that runs an integrated energy centre.

The integrated approach

Integrated Energy Centres come from the realisation that the provision of energy alone is not sufficient to sustain development. Energy has to be linked with other needs such as water, sanitation, health, education, income generation, etc. And this linkage is merely a recognition that all these services, or needs, are interdependent in improving people's daily lives. This is true, from a household to district planning level. For example, firewood is needed to cook vegetables from a food-garden project, and boil water, which in turn might come from a bore-hole or dam that needs a diesel-powered generator to pump the water. Maybe the water also irrigates the plantation where the vegetables are grown in a community food-garden project, which in turn might be sold at markets, providing an income.

To come up with ways to meet these demands, people are no longer passive customers or just on the receiving end of energy supply initiatives, but have become active participants in the identification and delivery of the services they need. This empowers people, so there is a move away from the reliance on those who are perceived to have the know-how and skills.

For the integrated approach to truly work, all spheres of government, service providers and communities must be involved.

The following ways to establish energy centres are attempts to employ an integrated approach to energy and development solutions.

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Rural SEED – Sustainable Energy, Environment and Development Project

The Rural SEED project was established to bridge the gap between improved energy supply initiatives and successful, practical implementation.

The project builds capacity in communities, local authorities and service providers through training and workshops to enable them to come up with their own solution to their local developing needs, promoting sustainable energy options as the starting point.

This was done through the placement of Rural SEED Facilitators in a partner NGO, the Environmental Development Agency Trust, which has long experience in the delivery of services in rural communities. These Rural SEED facilitators were instrumental in raising energy awareness in the development committees among local authorities in the area, and in other NGOs and CBOs.

Rural SEED also set out to communicate experience and lessons learned from the local level to national and even international level, through dialogue and networking. This takes the form of parliamentary policy briefings, an international newsletter and website, and helping to establish direct links between local communities and national service-providers and government.

IECs – Integrated Energy Centres

Integrated Energy Centres – IECs for short – are at the heart of the government's Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme. The programme has a lot in common with the Rural SEED experience, and looks at providing a bucket of services centered in areas identified as poverty nodes – where the need for development is the greatest. Each local IEC is linked with the Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) of the particular municipality, which is implemented in harmony with the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme, thus integrating the provision of wider energy choices with other projects like water supply, building schools and clinics, etc. The community owns this process and dictates how to have their needs met, especially as they were part of developing the IDPs.

IECs are being piloted in various parts of the country, one of the first ones being Kgalakgadi, Northern Cape. The aim is to have about 20 IEC's established within the next two years. Petroleum companies like Total and Sasol provide products and infrastructure.

Rural Off-grid Electrification Programme

The Rural Off-grid Electrification Programme is born out of the realisation that Eskom's grid electrification programme cannot reach everybody, especially in far-off rural areas. Eskom has connected 1.8 million rural households since 1994, but between 1 and 2 million households are too far from the grid, while other communities are too small or too scattered to make it viable cost-wise.

To deal with this shortfall, the government is piloting a programme whereby it awarded concession areas to a few private companies to provide solar home systems to these households. The government also subsidises a certain amount of money to the company to help cover at least half the cost of the solar home systems, so that they can be more affordable. Otherwise the company would have had pass the cost on to the consumer. Having a concession means that a company has the exclusive right to operate in a particular area, under this subsidy scheme.

The practice of concessions also provides a stable environment for the companies to establish themselves and grow.

NUON-RAPS (or NuRa) is one such a company, which holds the concession for the areas of Maputaland and north-eastern KwaZulu-Natal. So far it has established four Energy Stores as well as a regional office servicing the towns of Jozini, Mkuze, Mbazwana and Kangwanase (Manguzi). The energy stores serve as retail and service outlets for the sale and maintenance of solar home systems, as well as supplying other fuels and appliances. At the end of November 2002 a total of 530 solar home connections had been made and 41 people were employed through the four energy stores.



NUON-RAPS energy store in Jozini, from which the company sells and services its solar home systems.

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Establishing an Energy Committee

Guidelines developed from the experience of the people in Magadla.

(This is how it was done in Magadla. But in different parts of the country, there may be other kinds of local organisational structures and processes)

What is an Energy Committee?

The energy committee is a sub-committee of the Ward Committee – or previously the old Local Development Forums (LDFs) – along with water, health, food, etc. committees. In some communities it is still called the electricity committee, but in Magadla the people realised their energy needs cannot be met by the provision of electricity alone. Calling it an energy committee instead reflects the wider scope of energy needs and options to look at.

The energy committee is a group of people in a community that anybody has a chance to be part of. The members are elected by the rest of the community, and act on their behalf in discussions and decision-making processes that involve all aspects of local energy services and needs.

"Before the energy committee, we had people serving as electricity officers in other committees. But we learned that electricity is only one form of energy. We also had coal, wood, paraffin, etc."
- Mr Langa Mafunda

What role does the energy committee have?

It organises community discussions about local energy needs through meetings and workshops. Through the same process it plans, manages and implements ways to solve the energy problems. This includes looking at all energy options available, like firewood, dung, gas, paraffin, etc. and how these serve the community's needs best. It makes interlinkages between these energy options and other needs in the community like water, food and job creation. These interlinkages are carried out through the Ward Committee and informal meetings with the other committees.

"We had workshops to determine what was the best way to address our energy needs. We decided an energy committee would be the best starting point to look at our energy needs"
- Mr Langa Mafunda

Setting up an Energy Committee

It is very important that the committee must have all the different groups within the community represented. The committee must provide feedback to the community on all the decisions it has made, and have these ratified at regular community mass meetings. It is also important to have a strong leadership.

For the committee to work effectively, its members must be well motivated and committed to carry out their tasks. The members must be accepted by the majority of the community members, be accountable to those they have been elected to represent, and be suitably skilled to manage the administration of the committee. The members must also understand what will be required of them before committing to the committee.

"It might be difficult to find people with the right capacity and motivation for the job, but you can cultivate these qualities."
- Mr Langa Mafunda

How does an Energy Committee work?

Energy Committees are not alternative leadership structures to Local Development Forums or Local Authorities.

It must keep the Local Development Forum (LDF) or Local Authority informed about new energy initiatives as well as applications for funding and await their approval. The committee also must give the LDF or Local Authority (LA) regular progress reports. To achieve good communication between the energy committee, LDF and LA, the LDF members and local councillors can become members of the Energy Committee. It is important to remember that the Local Government have overriding powers over decisions of the Energy Committee.

In working with the community the energy committee must mobilise support and commit-

ment to its activities from the entire community. Support is essential where people have to contribute financially or by other means to the project. Support helps to facilitate agreements that bind all individuals and parties and gives the committee powers to enforce these agreements. Trust and transparency in the committee will prevent suspicion, power struggles, etc. from happening

Managing an Energy Committee

It is important to involve women in the committee, because women contribute significantly to household income and agricultural production. They play an important role in meeting household energy needs and therefore should be fully involved in the planning, development and implementation of energy supply initiatives.

Project and financial management

Efficient project and financial management is a major responsibility considering the sometimes limited experience of committee members. Yet, with effective training and support, committees can gain sufficient confidence to become self-reliant and manage projects successfully. The discipline and transparency with which committees undertake their responsibilities will determine whether the project will succeed or not.



Mvenyane Energy committee, in the district of Maluti, next to Mount Fletcher

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The structure of an Energy Committee

The Chairperson

The Chairperson is responsible for the organisation and chairing of Energy Committee meetings. He/she is also the **energy officer** of the Ward Committee that deals with energy issues in general. He/she can represent and speak on behalf of the energy committee on the Ward Committee, *after consultation with at least one other committee member and the Ward Committee chairperson.*

The General Secretary

The General Secretary co-ordinates the energy committee's activities with the chairperson. He/she is also responsible for the administrative tasks of the energy committee, like taking minutes at meetings, sending out letters, reminders and other correspondence, etc.

The Gender and Women's Organiser

The Gender and Women's Organiser is a female and facilitates educational events about the role of women in rural energy development initiatives. She collects and disseminates information and resources about the role of women on energy planning and helps with the empowerment of women by encouraging participation by women, analyses what prevents real participation, and proposes ways to overcome this.

The Projects and Energy Officer

The Projects and Energy Officer distributes literature about energy and raises awareness on renewable energy and efficient fuel use. He/she is the one that establishes links with the Project Steering Committees of local projects, like baking, fence-making, poultry, etc. in villages and committees. He/she helps to formulate positions of the Ward Committee on energy questions raised by various villages and communities, and provides energy related resources to the Local Development Forum

There are more portfolios, filled by the rest of the committee (which are representatives from all the villages). The number and range of these depends on the particular needs of the community that must be met.

"You will find that people gain knowledge easily, as well as be able to perform what they were taught to. For example, if we have to get to the project dealing with health or education, we should have someone who has a vivid mind about what to do, where to go and how to do it... It will be up to the community to identify a person that will be able to do this. Capability is important."
- Ms M. Mafunda

"First, whenever someone is elected, he or she has got to be diligent. Secondly, this person must be reliable. Accountability is the next requirement."
- Ms M. Mafunda

Where do you begin with establishing an Energy Committee?

A step-by-step guide on how to raise interest and hold elections

Find out if there is support for an Energy Committee

The community has to learn about what their energy needs are and how to solve these problems (*see the section on SEED workshops*). This involves a lot of work, and it is best that a group, or committee, does this. In some areas, there might be an **Electricity Committee** that is affiliated, and feeds into, local development forums or ward committees, and the Electricity Committee would be the perfect place to start with. A renaming to energy committee is recommended, as electricity is only one answer to the many energy questions of the village or community.

Find out how popular the committee is and if people are happy with its members and the work they do. Electing new members might be a possibility if the committee is not working effectively. It is important that the energy committee should work, and fit in well, with other community development and political structures as well as authorities.

Arrange for an election of an Energy Committee

In other areas where there are no committees at all, one will have to be formed. You can start by discussing the idea of an energy committee with people. Tell them about its role, work, etc. and focus on how it might help with solving their problems in a democratic way. You might have to speak to most people repeatedly over a long period of time. It might even take place in the form of many meetings where it will have to be explained to a large group, or many groups of people.

The energy committee should be made up of representatives from all the villages in the area. So if there are 12 villages, for instance, there should be 12 people. These people must be forwarded by their own people in these villages. Once the idea of an energy committee gets accepted, organise for a meeting where members of the energy committee will be elected. Advertise the meeting as widely as possible, by posters, and telling people directly.

At the meeting, elect somebody to chair the proceedings. The main point on the agenda will be the elections. Explain to people the different positions or responsibilities, their roles and the basic requirements of an individual to fill each of them. This might allow people to start thinking who might be best qualified for certain positions.

Election procedures

Remember that the Chairperson is not allowed to vote. Start the process of elections by requesting people to stand for each position, or portfolio. People can avail themselves, or nominate somebody else. Those who stand for elections are called nominees. A nominee

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must have at least one other person indicating support for him or her. This is called seconding and that person is a seconder. If this is done, the nominees are then called candidates.

In the case of more than one candidate for each portfolio, ask them to leave the meeting for a while. At least one of the people who nominated and seconded the candidates must give reasons, or motivations, for nominating them. While the candidates are outside, proceed with the voting. People can vote by a show of hands, or by secret ballot, as is done in national and local elections. The candidate with the most hands shown or ballots will get the position. If there is a tie between two or more candidates for one position, the chairperson must be called in to vote for one of the candidates. This way there will be a majority vote for one. It is important that the majority of the meeting should be happy with the elected officials.

Discuss what positions and responsibilities are needed in the energy committee. These can include positions like the chairperson, the projects and energy officer, etc. Elect people for these positions in the energy committee. After the elections, workshops might have to be held to enable portfolio holders to understand their responsibilities better, and ultimately have a better grasp of the role of the committee.

Forming a co-operative

Guidelines developed from the experience of the people in Magadla

"We

have community development at heart, not dividends. Many people wished to join the co-operative, but when we explained what the co-operative is about, they were disappointed that there were no shares that they could buy."

- Mr Langa Mafunda

"People

had different ideas of co-operatives. Some thought it was like a company where they could buy shares and share the profits."

- Mr Boyce Plaatjies

"...our

members also need to know that they are going to benefit from the structure as our co-operative does not have shares. If they buy membership they will get their benefit from the development needs."

- Mr Fundile Mafunda

What is a co-operative?

A co-operative is an association of persons that came together out of their own free will, to meet their common economic and social needs through a jointly owned, and democratic, undertaking. A co-operative acts independently and is usually only accountable to its membership.



Energy Centre where co-op is based

The role of co-operatives

Co-operatives (sometimes also just called a co-op for short) have an ability to buy products in bulk, and to have these large quantities delivered, so they are able to sell goods at reasonable prices.

This is something smaller dealers cannot do. When a co-op does this, it is called a "buying co-operative." Such a co-operative often has its roots in rural agriculture and is located in remote areas, where commercial wholesalers, for example, cannot survive. Buying co-operatives can be viable where the supply of goods is bad due to remoteness and poor roads.

Co-operatives can also help their members to sell their products, and help them produce these products more effectively. When a co-op does this, it is called a "producer co-operative."

Some co-operatives have been successful in obtaining fuels like gas and paraffin in large quantities, and supplying these to co-op members at a lower price.

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Co-op members in front of Energy Centre

"The energy committee realised that we needed a project that covers the whole of Magadla. That is where the idea of a co-operative started."
- Mr Fundile Mafunda

A co-operative is based on the following principles

- Values, which are:
 - Mutual responsibility
 - Equality
 - Honesty
 - Non-exploitation
 - Equity
 - Solidarity
 - Social responsibility
 - Openness
- Voluntary and open membership
- Democratic member control
- Member economic participation
- Autonomy and independence
- Education, information and training
- Co-operation among co-operatives
- Concern for community

In addition, a co-operative:

- Has mutual benefits
- Has a sense of belonging & responsibility for the community
- Has a sense of social and environmental responsibility
- Focuses on its members' social and economic needs



"People who are not members of the co-operative also benefit as they get paraffin cheaper and there are no transport charges... They use their wheelbarrows or carry the tanks home."
- Mr Fundile Mafunda

Where to start with establishing a co-operative

First, the Energy Committee calls a meeting that involves as many people as possible from all the villages. The main objective of the meeting is to find out whether there is enough interest to form a co-operative. Ask everybody who may be interested and discuss the co-operative.

If there are enough people that are interested, discuss the following: Exactly what the co-operative should do; how the equipment, stock, etc. are going to be acquired to get the co-operative started; how you are going to get the money needed, and how much each person should pay to start the co-operative; the place where the co-operative will be situated.

All the above issues will be helpful in formulating the business plan that will have to be developed later. More meetings may be necessary to discuss all matters and to make sure that there are enough people interested.

You must draw up an application form for membership, and make copies of it.

Choose a steering committee

When everybody understands, and agrees what the co-operative will do and how it will function, it is time to elect a steering committee. This might be at a different or special meeting (to find out how to hold an election, read the step-by-step guide on establishing an Energy Committee).

Choose a chairperson and a secretary and ask several other people to assist in fulfilling the tasks of the steering committee.

The steering committee will call all other subsequent meetings that may be necessary, and will take responsibility for the project. It will make sure that the co-operative works well, and that the formation meeting (see below) is held.

Register with the Office of the Registrar of Co-operatives

To register the co-operative, you must draw up a statute, also called the constitution. Trained officials at the Registrar's office can help you with this and answer all your questions. You will not have to pay for this. *(See the contact list on how to get hold of the Registrar's office)*

"The aims of the co-operative are: to diminish poverty; to lead the community to a better life; to bring people to live together and learn to know each other very well and reduce criminal activities in the area. We are together, therefore our slogan: nothing about us, without us."
- Ms Mafunda

"A co-operative is the right place to start doing all the development work you would normally have to wait for government to do."
- Mr Fundile Mafunda

"We have almost 45 members but our membership is going to be controlled. We are going to send letters to members who do not pay their fees and who do not participate actively."
- Mr Fundile Mafunda

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The statute

The statute, or constitution, is the set of rules that sets out the rights and responsibilities of the members (what they should do) as well as what the co-operative is going to do.

The following information will help you to draw up the statute:

- three possible names for the co-operative
- the place or town where the co-operative will be situated
- what the co-operative is going to do and how it is going to reach that goal
- the plan of action that has been drawn up by the steering committee to get the co-operative started
- the number of directors, or management committee members, required to manage the co-operative

The business plan

The steering committee must now draw up a document called the business plan. This describes the aims of the co-operative and the kind of business it plans to do. Keep in mind that the co-operative is really a type of business, and should therefore be able to last long and well with the income it generates.

In a nutshell, the business plan must state how the co-operative will meet its goals with what it has available (read the business plan section to see what it covers). The information given must convince people who plan to join the co-operative that it is an economically worthwhile organisation.

The business plan is important for raising funds, or obtaining loans, in order to carry out the business, and it helps the co-op management to organise the business in a way that can work successfully.



Hold a formation meeting

The steering committee should choose a chairperson and a secretary for the formation meeting, or the chairperson and secretary of the steering committee can act in those capacities in this meeting. The chairperson should state why the meeting is being held and must read out the statute.

The steering committee should be answering all the questions about the co-operative during the meeting.

The chairperson should invite all the people present to join the co-operative. Those interested should be given application forms for members to complete. The applicants (i.e. those who have completed the application forms) should now choose the board of directors (or management committee) of the co-operative. The co-operative is now formed but not registered yet. It should be registered with the Registrar of Co-operatives.

First meeting of the Board of Directors

After the formation meeting has been held, a meeting of the members who were chosen as directors should be held to select a chairperson and a vice-chairperson. This meeting should also appoint a person who will be responsible for submitting the application for registration of the co-operative to the Registrar.

How to register the co-operative

After the formation meeting has been held (not later than 60 days) you have to apply to the Register of Co-operatives to register the co-operative.

Together with the application for registration the following should be supplied:

- A sworn statement made by the chairperson of the meeting that everything as required has been done.
- A copy of the statute read at the formation meeting setting out the aims of the co-operative and what business it plans to do, as well as evidence that the co-operative will be able to perform its task. This document must be signed by the chairperson of the formation meeting.
- Two copies of the statute that have been signed on the last page by at least eleven persons (who have applied to be members of the co-operative) must be made available.
- A list with the full names and addresses of persons who have applied for membership, the amount paid by each person, as well as the dates on which each application was made. The chairperson and secretary of the co-operative must sign this document.
- Uncancelled revenue stamps to the value of R156 for new, developing co-operatives (it is R624 for established co-operatives) to cover registration fees. These fees are adjusted annually.
- The street address where the co-operative is situated as well as the postal address of the co-operative.

"The co-operative is a school of democracy. It teaches people to work together in an equal and honest way."
- Mr Fundile Mafunda



Co-op members at work in the office

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Registration process

It takes about 2 to 4 weeks for the registration process to be completed, if there are no problems. As soon as the co-operative is registered, the secretary of the co-operative will receive a certificate that the co-operative is incorporated as well as a copy of the statute of the co-operative. The co-operative must let the Registrar's office know that they received the certificate of incorporation as well as the registered statute. After that, the co-operative can now start operating.

The business plan

The Caba-Mdeni Co-operative underwent specific training to help them draw up the business plan.

A business plan is useful to show other people, outside the Co-operative, what activities the Co-operative is planning and to show whether these activities will be viable. It can be used as a part of applications for funding (e.g. loans or grants) for some of the Co-operative activities.

A business plan is also useful for the co-operative itself:

- It sets out clearly the aims, plans and targets.
- It makes calculations of the expected expenses and income flows.
- It provides a basis for monitoring the Co-operatives progress in terms of these plans.

The business plan should cover the following:

Vision and mission statement

- Describe the strategy and business philosophy of the co-operative. This would already be covered by the Statute (see “*Forming a Co-operative*”).
- Outline how combined efforts reach a specific goal.

The external environment

- The physical location, and the social, economic and perhaps political circumstances of the area the co-operative will operate in.

Overview

- Give a brief description of the co-operative in terms of:
 - History
 - Organisational type and structure
 - Legal standing
 - Objectives
 - Location of business and market

Products and/or services provided

- Describe what services and products the co-operative will be providing (see “*How to Establish Energy Centres*”)

Costing

- State how much it costs to buy the products (or deliver services) and at what price they will be made available. To determine the sale price, do the following:
 - Calculate the break-even point, i.e. the minimum that will have to be charged to be able to cover the cost you bought the product for.
 - Calculate extra costs like transporting the goods, overheads

(electricity, water, rent, wages, etc.). How much will have to be charged to cover for these expenses as well?

To work this out, you will also need to estimate what quantities of the products or services will be sold (over time).

The money you have left after all this will be the profit or surplus.

Marketing plan and target market

- What will be the benefit to the person who will use these services and products?
- How many benefits are there?
- Describe the market:
 - Who are the people the business is targeting?
 - How big is the market?
 - Can it be made bigger?
 - And do they have the ability to pay?
- Are there any other businesses that provide the same services and products that the co-operative will have to compete with? Will there be any, or more, in the future?
- How will the products and services be marketed to the people they are intended for?

Management plan

- Outline the organisational structure.
- Does the project have any sponsors or funders? Give their backgrounds.
- Describe the management experience and expertise of the people who will run the business.

Operating plan

- How will the products or services be provided to the people?
- Describe how the business will be run on a daily basis.

Financial plan

- How much money is available to buy the assets needed to manage the business?
- Where is this money coming from?
- How much will it cost to provide the services or products?
- Provide a breakdown of how much it costs to buy the materials and products, how much more you will have to charge to cover the operating costs, and how much your profit will be after that.
- Provide a 5 year forecast for the following:
 - Income statement (outlining the performance of the business over a period of time).

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- Cash flow statement (shows deposits and withdrawals and helps with preparing the balance sheet).
- Balance sheet (an analysis of what the business owns and what it owes).

Risks

- Are there any risks involved, and how can these risks be reduced?

Supporting documents

- Please provide any supporting materials and attachments that can help to understand the business plan better, like the statute or constitution.

Contact details of institutions dealing with co-operatives

The Registrar of Co-operatives

Street address: Agricultural Building No 20, Beatrix Street, Arcadia, Pretoria

Postal address: Registrar of Co-operatives, Private Bag X237, Pretoria, 0001

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Establishing an Energy Centre

Guidelines developed from the experience of the people in Magadla

(This is how it was done in Magadla. But in different parts of the country, there have been other ways of establishing energy centres, as mentioned in the introduction.)

Why an Integrated Energy Centre

In its statute, or constitution, the Co-operative would have outlined the reason for the establishment of an Integrated Energy Centre. This, in all likelihood, might be to address not only the energy needs of the community, but also the development and environmental concerns that affect it. An Integrated Energy Centre is called so because of the varied, integrated activities it does to fulfil this role.

The Integrated Energy Centre – or just Energy Centre for short – is at the heart of the activities of both the Co-operative and Energy Committee, which have office and meeting space in the Energy Centre building. All of the activities described in the Business Plan will take place in the Energy Centre.

An Energy Centre is one of the best ways to handle income generation projects transparently and democratically (funds are generated from selling fuel cheaply, etc.), and feed that income back into development activities that benefit everyone.

Most fuel suppliers and other businesses prefer to deal with legal entities (an institution the law recognises as having its own legal rights, separate from those of the individuals involved in it), which in this case might be the co-operative that oversees the running of the Energy Centre.

The Energy Centre has changed the way of understanding energy issues in the community.

The energy shop

The most important activity of the Energy Centre for the short term might be to purchase bulk supplies of paraffin and gas for local distribution, at lower prices than what is paid at retail stores. These retail stores are usually also some distance away in nearby towns, meaning transport costs for both the customer and goods need to be considered. The Energy Centre therefore saves people the cost, time and energy of travelling as well.

The Co-operative enters into agreements with the suppliers of paraffin and gas to act as their local distribution outlet, and to be able to sell these at affordable rates. The suppliers are expected to install storage tanks for the paraffin and a gas cage as well as train the staff of the energy centre. Suppliers of the appliances and other

"The energy committee and co-operative are working together in a partnership. The energy committee gives information about energy to the people, while the co-operative brings the actual energy to the people. The co-operative and energy committee will operate from the same site."
- Mr Fundile Mafunda

"The co-operative will cover eight villages in Magadla. The idea is to have paraffin available to everybody in this village."
- Mr Fundile Mafunda

Taking action to solve local energy problems



hardware are also expected to train the staff for installation, maintenance, servicing, etc.

Apart from paraffin and gas, the energy shop might also sell safe and energy efficient appliances like cookers, lights, fridges, etc. It can also sell pre-paid cards for electricity, cell-phone and Telkom airtime cards.

"The community was paying R3,50 per litre for paraffin plus taxi fare of R8,00 return... and (about) R130 for (a tank of) 19kg gas, plus R15 transport fee for the tank (and) taxi fare of R8 return. At the co-op they are paying R2,70 per litre for paraffin and no taxi fare. Gas they are paying R124 for 19kgs and no transport cost and no taxi fare.
- Mr Fundile Mafundla



The Energy Centre can also offer entrepreneurial opportunities and support for the community. Space can be made available to individuals that want to sell crafts, home-made food, locally grown fruit and vegetables from food gardens, and other products that people otherwise would have had to travel to town to buy. This also means that income generating group or committee projects like fence-making, juice-making, sewing, etc. can be done at the centre. The Energy Centre may be able to provide suitable power sources, and communication facilities, to help such projects operate commercially in a lasting manner.



The information and education unit

Another part of the centre can serve as an educational and information dissemination section on energy, environment, service provider contacts, development organisations in the region, contact points for the various levels of government, economic activities, etc. This information can be in the form of booklets, brochures, pamphlets, posters, etc. that are put on display, some of which people can take away. The information centre can offer energy education packages to households, nearby schools and clinics. These, for example, can be part of paraffin safety campaigns, Eskom's Elektrowise materials, etc.

"People are also requesting the energy centre to have paraffin and gas appliances. We need electrification cards. There is a location 8km from here on the way to Mount Fletcher which will be getting electricity... and they want to buy cards here."
- Mr Fundile Mafunda



Mr Fundile Mafunda in the information section of the energy section

It can have displays and demonstrations on solar cookers, solar water heaters, PV systems, etc. To enable an effective demonstration, workshop and meeting facility, there can be video playback equipment, an overhead projector, flip-over charts, black and/or white boards, etc.

It can also have Post Box services. It must have public and organisational telephones and computers (where possible) with printers to aid productivity. Multimedia, internet and e-mail capability will further enhance the scope for communication and information dissemination, while providing useful exposure and skills development on these technologies.

The Energy Centre building

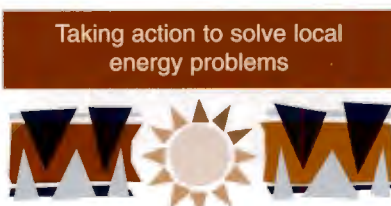
Where will the Energy Centre be located? The Energy Centre can make use of existing buildings that might have to be adapted to suit its needs. However, it may have to establish a new building, designed as one or two affordable family homes, for instance. It could be constructed along energy efficient and environmentally friendly principles, so that it will serve as a model display of thermal efficient building and design – hopefully influencing new buildings in the area, especially new rural housing projects. Information on the materials and technology used – and their cost and availability – can then be on display as well.

Some of the design principles to use are:

- The building must face north to have maximum exposure to the sun.
- The roof must have a long overhang for enough shadow in the summer, yet enough sun in the winter.
- The placement and size of the windows must be optimal to keep natural light and temperature moderate and constant.
- It must have a ceiling.
- There should be no use of asbestos and other materials harmful to the environment and the health of people.
- Install ventilation bricks to allow moist air to escape and fresh air to come in.

Management of the Energy Centre

The energy shop can have its own administrative team, managed by a trusted, qualified person from the community. The manager might be assisted by a cashier and accountant, depending on the size and needs of the shop. The profits will be used to support energy and development projects in the community. These would be decided upon by the co-operative, with input from the Energy Committee, who again are informed by the priorities of the community.



Guidelines for holding energy workshops in rural communities

Introduction

It is helpful to understand what energy is, and how energy issues link to other development needs, in order to make informed decisions about energy use and have ownership of local problem-solving initiatives. Workshops can assist with this. It can be the role of an energy committee to conduct these workshops, possibly helped by other workshop facilitators.

Energy workshops can deal with several issues related to energy. It is important to realise that solving energy problems is not a once-off process, and goes through stages that might require several workshops. These workshops will take different formats as the need to deal with different issues comes up.

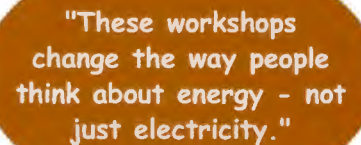
Different issues can be covered in one workshop, or be dealt with in separate workshops, possibly in the following sequence:

1. Introducing the concept of energy, and raising awareness of energy issues. This might have two approaches:
 - identify the different energy sources and the problems experienced in using them
 - identify the different tasks that need energy and any problems that come with this

(In both instances, look at who else is involved in these matters. For example, energy needed to pump water from a dam to a village might involve the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Department of Minerals and Energy, Department of Public Works, etc.).

This awareness-raising unearths, or surfaces, energy and related issues that people experience but are not aware of, or don't really think about.

2. These problems are then listed and prioritised in order of importance. For instance, having paraffin for household use made available at a cheaper price might be more important than cheaper diesel for a water-pump.
3. Introducing service providers (like the departments mentioned above, as well as Eskom, Telkom, petroleum companies, etc.) and communities to each other. The service providers are

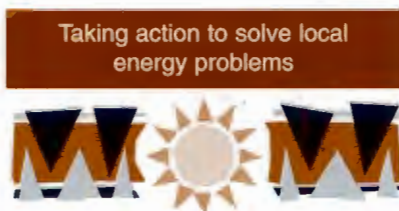
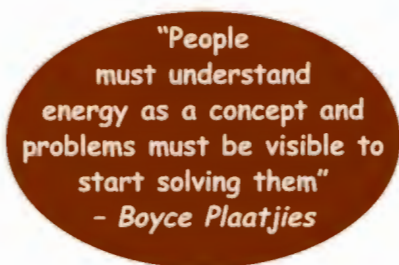


"These workshops change the way people think about energy - not just electricity."

expected to provide information on their plans for (continuing or future) delivery of services in the area, how they take account of the needs of the particular communities, how accessible they are to the local people wanting to contact them, and so on.

4. When people have insight into their energy problems, and information from service suppliers, develop an action plan on how to solve the problems.
5. Various kinds of capacity-building workshops and training sessions may be useful to help people carry out their action plans. Outside assistance can often be obtained. For example,
 - workshops and training on energy safety
 - safe use of LPGas (from the LPGas Safety Association of Southern Africa)
 - safe use of paraffin (from PASASA, the Paraffin Safety Association of Southern Africa)
 - safe and efficient use of electricity (from Eskom)
 - organisational workshops and skills training
 - how to set up a co-operative
 - skills to manage energy centre fuel supplies and sales
 - administration and business management skills

The following sections will provide some examples of different kinds of workshop topics.



Workshop aim:

To introduce the concept of energy, and raise awareness of energy issues

Understanding energy as a concept:

- What is energy?
- Different types of energy sources, and problems experienced
- Different tasks that need energy, and the problems associated with them
- Impacts of different kinds of energy use

What is energy?

Presentation

Present an introduction on what energy is. It is often easiest to introduce energy by giving examples of how it is used. Energy provides power to do things – like for cooking, lighting, transport, running machinery, TVs, radios, phones, etc.

(Chapter 2 of the Rural Energy Guide “An introduction to energy issues in rural areas of South Africa” provides examples like this, which may be useful for workshop facilitators.)

Different types of energy sources

Discussion

- To start a discussion, ask participants about all the different forms of energy that they have ever seen, experienced, or heard of.

Different forms of energy include:

- solar (solar heating and solar electric)
- wood
- dung
- wind (e.g. windmills for water pumping)
- coal (energy stored from plants)
- paraffin, gas, petrol and diesel (products of oil)
- candles (from wax - a by-product of oil)
- electricity
- batteries (short term electricity)
- animal and human energy

Most electricity is generated from coal in South Africa. It can also come from hydro-electric power stations (electricity from water power), nuclear energy, or fuels like natural gas.

(Chapter 3 of the Rural Energy Guide “An introduction to energy issues in rural areas of South Africa” provides examples like this, which may be useful for workshop facilitators.)

- Then ask the participants to name the different tasks they use energy for. Suggest to them that they think of all the people in their village and the energy that they use.

Uses for energy:

- cooking
- heating (water and the room)
- lighting (inside the home, street lighting)
- refrigeration (at home and in shops)
- water pumping
- transport
- ploughing
- media (television and radio and hi-fi)
- office equipment (fax, phones, computers)
- equipment for schools and clinics
- production machinery (sewing machines, power tools, etc.)

Group work

- Divide people into several groups, depending on the number of participants. Each group should write down:
 - the different types of energy they use daily (in the house, for agriculture, in schools, clinics, shops, etc.)
 - the different activities that need energy
 - the energy sources they need but don't have
 - why they don't have a particular energy source
- Afterwards, get everybody together and have each group read out their list. You can also add any suggestions that might have been left out during the group work.

Investigating local energy problems in workshops helps people understand the reasons behind some of their problems and the links between energy and other development issues.

Taking action to solve local
energy problems



Workshop aim: Identify problems associated with the different types of energy

Presentation

Most forms of energy have a cost attached to them. This can include financial costs, labour and transport. It can also include health and safety dangers, and sometimes damage to the environment. For instance, burning coal or wood can affect your lungs, making you cough and causing disease. It also sends pollution (carbon dioxide and smoke) into the atmosphere, which in turn contribute to global warming.

Discussion

Refer to the lists of uses and forms of energy and discuss the impact of using the different types of energy.

Types of energy and examples of their impact:

- Wood: takes time and energy to collect / produces smoke / sometimes scarce / can be re-grown
- Dung: messy to collect / can be very smoky / dangerous for health
- Paraffin: danger of fires and paraffin poisoning / fumes
- Gas: clean and convenient, but people fear leaks and explosions
- Coal: dirty to use / produces smoke that is harmful
- Candles: burn with an open flame and can cause fires / burns
- Electricity from coal: convenient to use, but burning coal causes pollution
- Batteries: expensive energy / disposal after use can cause pollution
- Solar: clean and available, but solar energy equipment can be expensive
- Wind: clean, but not always reliable

(Chapter 4 of the Rural Energy Guide "An introduction to energy issues in rural areas of South Africa" provides a list of rural energy problems which are commonly reported in community workshops. This may be useful preparatory reading for workshop facilitators.)

Debate

Ask the participants to talk about the kinds of energy we should use or should not use, and why. Focus on the problems and opportunities that apply to their community.

Case study: Workshops to introduce communities to service providers

An important part of finding solutions to local problems is to learn about the supply options for the services and products that the community needs.

Here is a brief example. The Rural SEED Project helped communities in Bochum and Ngwaabe (Limpopo province) to get access to supply-side information, and to use this information to improve their local energy situation. Energy service providers attended community workshops and informed people about their energy supply initiatives.

Introducing suppliers to communities

When SEED first approached energy suppliers, there was no direct contact between them and the local communities. Service providers such as Shell and Eskom were not aware of local initiatives and the potential for working with community organisations to improve supplies and help solve local energy problems. These service providers are now interested in working with local community structures. Government energy staff also came to community workshops and discussed ways that assistance can be provided.

Input from service providers and government:

The service providers gave input on what their plans were for the area:

- Eskom: their electrification plans and small business development support
- Shell: plans to support rural energy centres
- The LPGas Safety Association: ways of promoting safety in the use of gas
- Rural Area Power Solutions (RAPS): ways of setting up one-stop rural energy stores
- The Department of Minerals and Energy (DME): the government's Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy

These communities could now take these plans into account, and use the support of the service providers in planning solutions for their energy needs.

(Chapters 5 and 6 of the Rural Energy Guide "An introduction to energy issues in rural areas of South Africa" provides more explanation on the ideas of integrated energy, energy centres and stores, and the government's Integrated Sustainable Rural Development programme.)

Workshop aims:

To build the capacity of the communities to take a leading role in their development.

To meet, discuss and plan actions with the relevant service providers.

"Energy suppliers were met with, interviewed, and invited to workshops with communities"

Taking action to solve local energy problems



Case study: Identifying and solving local energy problems

This is an example of a two-day workshop in Bochum, Limpopo Province, which focused on identifying local energy problems, and then developed some ways to solve them. The workshop participants came from eight villages in the Bochum district. The workshop was run by a combination of energy committee leaders and Rural SEED facilitators.

The workshop had four main activities:

Activity one: identify local energy use patterns and costs

Activity two: develop "problem statements" about energy needs

Activity three: prioritise the most pressing problems, and look at their causes by breaking them down into "problem chains"

Activity four: look for ways of removing the problems, and make action plans

Activity one: identify local energy use patterns and costs

This exercise helped participants improve their understanding of their own energy situation. Participants answered questions about what energy sources they used, and for which activities, as well as how much these cost them in a month.

To do this:

- participants were divided into groups
- each group had no more than four participants
- each group drew a grid
- the grid columns had the following headings:
 - energy end-use
 - energy and appliances
 - fuels cost/month
 - appliances cost

Activity results

<i>Energy end-use</i>	<i>Energy and appliances</i>		<i>Fuels cost/month</i>	<i>Appliance cost</i>
cooking	wood/dung	open-fire	free	free
	gas	2-plate stove	R120	R120
	paraffin	paraffin stove	R64	R21
lighting	candles	candles	R10	R0
entertainment	dry-cell batteries	radio	R30	R200
	petrol generator	television	R64	R1 999
sewing	oil (<i>for lubrication, not energy</i>)	machine	R7	R200
heating	wood/dung	brazier	free	free
	coal	brazier	R25	free

During the discussion that followed, participants made the following observations:

- Energy is used for many household end-uses.
- People are using many fuels for a single energy end-use.
- Energy cost varies from free, to expensive and modern energy sources.
- Energy plays a central role in education.
- Energy plays a central role in income-generating projects.
- Most people use very few energy services and have limited options.
- Money spent on energy forms a significant proportion of the household budget.
- Energy is expensive, so many people can't afford to use it the way they would like to.

Activity two: develop problem statements about energy

This exercise was to identify and discuss problems associated with current energy needs.

The participants started by making problem statements. An example of a problem statement is: "gas is too expensive."

To do this:

- the participants brainstormed energy problems and issues
- and wrote these as problem statement on cards
- which were displayed on the walls
- and then arranged into categories, like: electricity / paraffin / wood / gas / coal / candles / match-sticks / productive activities

Results

The problem statements that came up for some of the categories were:

Electricity

- There is no electricity but we have bought electrical appliances
- We don't know how to use electricity in our homes and projects
- We have to travel a long way to buy electricity cards

Paraffin

- Paraffin is cheaper but the fumes are dangerous to our health
- Paraffin is more expensive when we catch a taxi to buy it
- The paraffin stoves we are using emit dangerous smoke
- Paraffin use is dangerous to our children
- The paraffin we are using is dirty

Taking action to solve local energy problems



Activity three: Prioritise the most pressing problems, and look at the causes of these problems by breaking them down into “problem chains”

(Use a wall chart for this exercise.)

Change the problem statements into new priority statements, i.e. which problems are the most important, and possible to solve.

Place these priority statements in the middle, and put all the related problems around them, tied or linked together by a “chain”. The problem chains are made from all the problems associated with the central statement, and show how these link up with each other. The purpose of this is to understand that there can be many steps in solving a central problem, and to help people choose the steps they will take.

Results

Examples of priority statements that emerged for a few of the categories:

Electricity

- We cannot afford to use electricity

Paraffin

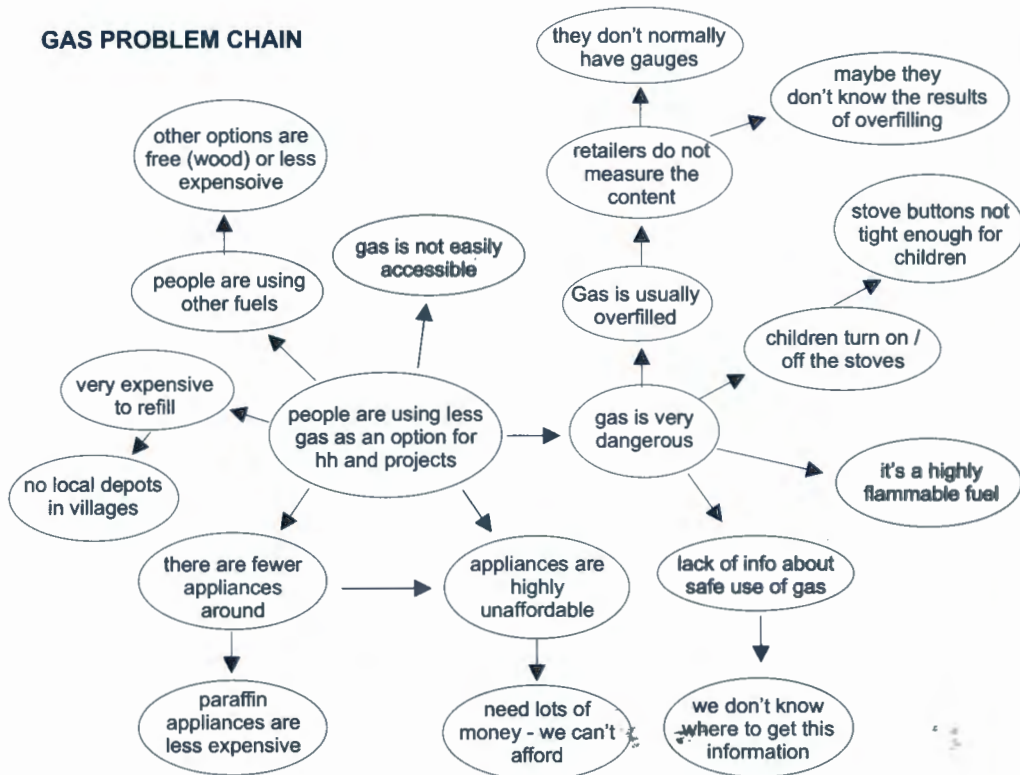
- Paraffin is no longer usable in our homes

Gas

- People are using less gas as an option for households and projects

Example: using the gas priority statement, the problems chain which was developed around it looked like this:

A picture like this helps people to think about all the steps they could take to find better solutions.



Activity four: Look for ways of removing the problems, and make action plans

To follow up on solutions, the participants used an action plan approach. This was the final part of the workshop. The objectives for the action plans were to solve the five priority solutions from the previous exercise.

They took the problem chains they had developed during the first part of the workshop, and then they suggested solutions that would “break” the problem chains at certain intervals.

Activity aim: finding solutions

Participants: steering committee

Activity:

- Divide participants into groups of two each
- Suggest solutions that would break the chain at key intervals
- Write each solution on a card

Example of results:

Some solutions for the paraffin problem chain:

- Paraffin should be kept out of reach of children
- People should be encouraged to buy stoves with SABS stamps
- Stoves must be cleaned at frequent intervals
- Paraffin should be stored in containers safe from children
- Information and training on the safe handling of paraffin is needed
- People should stop using dirty paraffin
- We should approach oil companies about bulk supplies

Observations made by participants

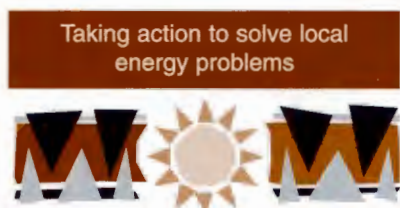
During the discussion of the results participants made the following observations and suggestions:

- A single energy problem is complex and requires multiple solutions
- Many ‘solutions’ suggested were actually actions to achieve a solution
- Not all solutions can be achievable and there is a need to prioritise them

Prioritising solutions

Because of the number and variety of solutions developed, discussions were held to consider what solutions were possible, and the solutions that could be achieved were prioritised.

The general solutions which were proposed at the SEED workshop in Bochum were as follows:



1. Technical skills training

- to enable people to do simple technical aspects of energy installations, wiring, maintenance and repairs

2. Energy end-use training

- to enable people to disseminate information about energy use, efficiency and health/safety

3. An energy co-operative to be established to drive the energy plans

- a working co-operative and a centre where energy-related activities can be undertaken

4. Bulk buying of energy resources

- to make fuels more affordable

5. Office skills training

- train people to manage and administer energy projects in a professional and sustainable manner

Example of more specific action plans

Action plan objective

- bulk buying of energy resources

Set of actions

- establish an energy co-operative
- set up a meeting with Afrox and Shell about gas and paraffin supplies
- identify and consult manufacturers of appliances
- approach Eskom about pre-paid electricity coupons

Who is responsible

- co-ordinator Ms Emission assisted by Mr Peter

When these actions will be done

- begin as soon as possible
- to be operational once the co-operative has been established
- contacts to be made before the co-operative has been established

Workshop aim: How to conserve energy and make it safe

Here are examples of issues that have come up in workshops on energy safety and energy conservation.

Energy safety

Presentation

Illustrate the dangers associated with the use of different fuels, like paraffin poisoning, fires, etc.

Discussion

What are the safety problems or hazards that people experience on a daily basis? What can be done to limit the risks?

Paraffin

- Keep out of reach of children
- Use safe paraffin bottles, not cooldrink bottles
- If ingested don't let the child vomit
- Don't use a cup that is used for drinking to fill a lamp
- If you spill on your clothes – wash these immediately
- Keep paraffin appliances on a flat surface

Fire

- Never throw water on a fire of burning oil
- If your clothes catch alight – roll on the ground

LPGas

- Before using your gas appliances for the first time, read the manufacturer's instructions
- When lighting your appliance, always light the match first before turning on the gas
- If your cylinder has been involved in a fire, don't attempt to use it, have it checked by your dealer first
- Never store your LPGas bottle near a direct source of heat, like a stove, heater or fire
- Always keep the LPGas bottle on a level surface so that it can not easily fall over
- When using large gas appliances (stoves, fridges, freezers, heaters, etc.) make sure the room has good ventilation by leaving a window or door open

PASASA (the Paraffin Safety Association of Southern Africa) has many useful materials to help spread paraffin safety awareness. They can be contacted at PO Box 6094, Roggebaai, 8012.

Materials on LPGas safety can be obtained from the LPGas Safety Association of Southern Africa. They can be contacted at 011-886-9702 (Johannesburg), 031-563-3535 (Durban), 021-531-5785 (Cape Town) and 051-522-4363 (Bloemfontein).

Taking action to solve local
energy problems



- Regularly check the rubber seals (washers) on the valve and appliances
- Also check the jets and connecting hoses – if they are worn, don't attempt to repair them yourself, take them to your nearest LPGas dealer for a free safety check
- Never check for leaks with an open flame
- If you smell gas, open all doors and windows to allow fresh air into the room, turn off the valve of the cylinder and move it outdoors if possible, and allow enough time for all the gas to leave the room before re-entering
- When the smell has completely gone, take the cylinder to your nearest LPGas dealer to be checked

Electricity

- Never use electricity near water
- Never stick your fingers into a socket
- Never put wires into a socket
- Do not use damaged cords
- Do not overload a socket

Eskom can provide materials on the safe and efficient use of electricity, for example ElektroWise pamphlets, posters and flipcharts. Contact your local Eskom Customer Services representative for information.

Energy conservation

Presentation

Energy can cost a lot in economic terms if not used efficiently. From the use of appliances to the way a house is built, energy – and money – can be saved.

Discussion

Discuss different ways of saving energy – for example:

Insulation

- Insulating walls and ceilings, closing windows and curtains can save on heating fuels and cooling requirements

Lights and appliances

- Switch off when not in use
- Use fluorescent lights
- Keep appliances clean and in good working order

Hot water

- Make sure taps do not drip
- A short hot shower uses a lot less hot water than a bath
- Keep the hot water thermostat low – around 50-60 degrees Celsius

Efficient cooking

- Kettles are more efficient for boiling water
- Do not boil more water than you need
- Pots should fit over the stove or hotplate well
- Use a lid on a pot wherever possible (a lot of energy gets wasted as steam escapes)
- Use a high heat until the pot has reached the right temperature, then turn down the power as low as possible to continue cooking

Refrigerators

- Never leave the door open
- Avoid ice building up in the fridge
- Let warm items cool down before placing in the fridge
- Do not operate the fridge at a colder temperature than necessary
- Allow enough space behind the fridge for the warm air to escape easily

Taking action to solve local
energy problems



Tips for holding energy workshops

Workshop format

The format outlined below is a general guide only.

The introduction

The extent of the workshop introduction depends on who the participants are, for example, whether the facilitators are already working with local people, or have come into the community from outside. If the workshop facilitator comes from outside the community, the meeting may often be chaired by a local person, who will start the introductions.

An introduction for facilitators from outside the community includes:

- what's your name
- where you come from
- who you represent
- why you are there and what you hope to contribute

In some cases, it is useful to have a discussion about the agreed rules for conducting the workshop discussions. For example, it can be important for everyone to have a chance to put forward his or her ideas. But some people may be shy, and there may be other people who often interrupt. In this case it could be useful to agree on a rule that everyone has a chance to speak, and that people should not interrupt while someone else is speaking. The participants should propose their own rules, but an experienced facilitator can also make suggestions which would help the workshop discussions to work well.

Discuss the possible results of the workshop, and what people expect to get out of the workshop. These expectations can be written down, on cards or on a flip-chart. Keep them visible on display on a wall or board.

This helps the facilitators and chairperson to take account of people's expectations and understand what people want to achieve. And at the end of the workshop they can check whether the expectations were met.

Try to ensure that unrealistic expectations are not developed, but at the same time encourage people to become involved. If it is needed, a workshop facilitator may introduce some "ice-breaker" activities to make everybody feel relaxed and comfortable.

Example of an "ice-breaker"

- Go round the people and let each give their name, but not their common name
- Every tenth person must then name the ten people before him/her
- They don't remember much and everybody laughs

This helps everybody to relax.

The main workshop activities

The activities of the main part of the workshop are usually planned beforehand, in the form of an agenda, and are geared to achieve the workshop aims.

However, the structure of the workshop should be somewhat flexible. This allows people to make some changes as they go along. For example, it may turn out that some parts of the workshop discussions need more time, while others do not need so much. Or new issues can come up, which may require extra discussions that were not planned beforehand.

The workshop activities you choose will depend on:

- the workshop aim and expectations
- who will be attending
- how many people there will be

Common types of workshop activities include:

- presentations of information
- discussing issues
- brain-storming issues (imaginative ideas)
- evaluating information and analysing problems
- providing and sharing information among workshop participants
- prioritising problems and solutions
- making decisions
- drawing up action plans
- deciding who should be responsible for carrying out tasks ahead

If you are working with a large group (say more than 12 people), you can divide into small groups for particular activities.

Small group discussions

- make sure there is a clear understanding about the aims of the discussions
- write down these aims so that people can check on them during the discussions
- elect a discussion leader or facilitator for each group
- write down the main points from the discussion on a flip chart

Get back together sessions

- someone from each small group must give a summary of what they have discussed and/or decided in the group (this person is called a “rapporteur” or reporter)
- ask other members of the group whether they agree with the report back or have anything to add
- after each group has reported back the chair-person or facilitator can ask the full meeting to make any further comments

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Ending a workshop

Once the main part of the workshop is completed, before going home the following should be done:

- evaluate the workshop results together with participants – consider whether the aims have been achieved and the participants' expectations have been met
- consider if there are further steps to be taken
- decide what to do next, for instance planning for any follow-up session, etc.

Organising a workshop

Once you have decided to have a workshop and have planned the aim/s and the activities, the workshop has to be organised.

Things to think about when organising a workshop include:

- the people who will take part and how many – the participants
- deciding when the workshop will take place – the date and time
- deciding how long the workshop will last – hours / days
- finding a place to meet – a venue
- organising food if the workshop goes on over a meal time
- organising transport – if people are coming to the workshop from far away
- other things you may need, for example flip-charts, paper and pens, a white board, etc.
- how much the workshop will cost

"If the workshop is being held where the people live, then there is no rush. But if it is being held in town, then you must think about the time it will take for people to travel back to villages after the workshop."

Deciding how long the workshop will take

How long the workshop will take will depend on:

- the aim of the workshop
- how many people will be there
- how many activities there will be and how long each of these may take
- how much time the workshop participants can spend

"Often other village members who are not part of the workshop will help by cooking the food. This also makes them feel part of the process."

Most of the workshops were arranged to last no more than one day. When longer workshops have been required (for example, training on establishing and running co-operatives) these have lasted several days, but a smaller number of people were able to participate.

Where to hold the workshop – the venue

Choosing where to hold a workshop depends on who will be attending and how many people will be attending.

Some workshops have been held in local churches, church halls or schools. These can provide shelter and facilities for larger groups of people.

At other times, workshops have been conducted in places used by local authorities and traditional authorities. These places can be indoors or outdoors, depending on the weather.

First SEED example

Workshop aim: introduce the energy concept

Participants: members of local structures, 60 to 120 people

When: 1999

How long: one day

Where: at village tribal buildings or village schools

Food to organise: no cooking – take sandwiches, juice, fruit

Transport to organise: none – held at the village

Materials: Soul City energy booklet and pamphlets about the SEED programme

Cost: food – R8 per person = about R800

Transport: none

Second SEED example

Workshop aim: energy safety

Participants: Sizuyile Theatre Group - 9 people

When: 15 August 2000

How long: one day

Where: at the EDA offices in Matatiele

Food to organise: bought by the plate from hawkers

Transport to organise: pay for taxi from Maluti

Materials: video from ElektroWise, gas and paraffin safety pamphlets

Cost: food – R8 per person = R72

Transport: Maluti to Matatiele R7 = R63

Whether you will need to organise food depends on how long the workshop will take, and if it will go over a meal time. When workshops are held in villages, usually the people attending the workshop cook their own food. Organisers provide the food to be cooked or the money to buy food. When workshops are held in town, and there are not too many people, food can be bought by the plate from street vendors.

Transport

Whether you have to organise transport depends on who will be coming and how far away they live.

If the workshop is held in town, then SEED has usually paid for transport to get people from the villages to the workshop. If the workshop is in the village then people find their own way to the venue.

Costs

It might be as little as bus fares or tea and biscuits for the group – but a workshop is likely to cost something.

The SEED workshops have relied on some donor funding from Denmark to pay for the support of SEED facilitators, and contributions to local workshop costs.

There is also the support of other local structures e.g. EDA in Matatiele and Polokwane.

Private companies have paid their own costs to contribute to workshops, and also public companies like Eskom, and the Government.

This shows a willingness to help rural communities.

A lot of time and effort is being offered by people in the community. This is usually offered “for free”. But it is valuable time and effort, and is the biggest investment for progress.

In both Eastern Cape and Limpopo, the energy committees and co-operatives engage in local fund-raising initiatives as well as developing funding proposals to raise money to support their work.

Hopefully, the government will provide support for local organisations who are able to workshop their problems and plan solutions, because this is what the Government wants to achieve – better delivery of services, better quality of life for the poor, stronger participation in the country’s democracy.

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