**Energy Malawi Strand Meeting Q&A**

**Q1. Does GoM recognise the need for training and capacity building for installation and maintenance of R.E. systems?**

Very much. Inline with the same you may with to know that we have Department of Energy Studies under Mzuzu University. The Department was established through initiatives of the Dept of Energy (govt).

We also have other institutions working with govt in offering capacity building in those fields like TEVETA...Poly Technic...and for the Ministry projects that we implement we make sure there is a component of capacity building. We try as much as possible to work with Academic institutions when providing trainings.

**Q2. How would a community control power at local level? Who would be in charge?**

Usually there is a committee that oversees the day to day running of thinha and management of the energy facility

**Q3. Where solar systems with batteries are supplied to communities for example, for water pumping, how can the subsistence farming communities plan for costly eventual replacement?**

There is need to have cooperatives where social enterprises activities would generate extra funds to be used as a revolving fund for costly eventual replacements

**Q4. How social acceptable are energy projects with new technology to people in Malawi?**

Well with community involvement of project development...and adequate awareness and sensitization energy projects with new technologies have been acceptable by most communities.

For Solar the issue mostly is to do with standards and capacity of installers...some people may despise the technology if they buy fake products which are not efficient and durable.

Biogas...lately being accepted by most communities though in some communities if not adequately sensitized my reject due to cultural issues (case of cooking food from excrete feedstock). The Department has promoted biogas home systems and solar in schools in more than 10 districts....i know other members here have much more experience on this and they will add more

Acceptability of energy projects can easily be done only if there is enough awareness. Most communities in Malawi like old ways of doing things eg, very few people use solar energy, stoves, etc.

They prefer using charcoal and firewood

There is need to have few groups of people who can be used as models in new technologies

In a nutshell, the problem of paradigm shift is a big challenge for people to leave their old way and to embrace new technologies

Awareness, training, civic education etc. Because the biggest problem is the level of illiteracy in Malawi

**Q5. What might a disruptive energy project look like to you?**

**Q6. How big is the appetite for off-grid solutions in Malawi?**

Well. First you should know that our electricity access is at 10%. We have Malawi Rural Electrification Programme which extends access to rural areas through grid extension only (currently). And about 98% of generation capacity is from hydro.

Having told you that, the appetite is there and very huge...because we want to increase access to electricity from the 10% to around 50% by 2030(will confirm the target).

And currently we have frequent blackouts due to low water levels hence the Govt has intensified its power source diversification drive. RE will be part of it and off-grid systems will be included.

New policy and RE strategy promotes off-grid systems as strategies for increasing access.

Currently the grid can only accommodaye 70MW of intermittent power so it means other power systems will have to be off-grid systems till the grid capacity improves.

So as u can see...the Govt has huge interest in off-grid systems.

**Q7. How can we ensure sustainability of community solar energy products? Are there any models you could recommend?**

**Q8. Will the national power company "allow" a community to become energy independent?**

The mandate to regulate the energy sector lies with Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority...and yes it allows communities to be energy independent just like the Govt promotes. But standard compliance is encouraged so that integration should be possible in future if a need will arise.

**Q9. Are there any operational bioenergy projects/funds working to support argi-businesses in Malawi?**

**Q10. What are the sources of biomass fuel? Bought vs gathered?**

Both

**Q11. What activities demands the most heat? ie cooking, hot water etc.**

Cooking...hot water...brick burning....agricultural processing (eg tobacco)...fish processing

There are many activities that need heat such as:

burning bricks, heat during funeral gatherings at night, tin smith,

**Q12. Do you think a move integrated approach to energy needs would be better?**

Of course a more integrated approach to energy needs would be better because some people would prefer to use one type but they may lack the financial muscles to use it and they may opt for the one they can easily afford

The integrated approach will give more opportunities to give more people options or create new avenues to learn from their colleagues about those approaches they did not acquire adequate information in the initial introduction of such approaches

In a nutshell, people will have options when it comes to integrated approaches

**Q13. What is the need for building capacity of local businesses to provide maintenance/support?**

The need for building of local businesses to provide maintenance is mainly for:

1. Sustainability so that the service are still available at a local level even if the project has come to an end

2. The impact of the project is easily seen with the availability of human resource that was targetted in capacity building activity and the outcome can be easily quantified

3. Ownership of the projects and continuity

4. They can be agents of change at community leve