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ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ENERGY SECTOR IN SOUTHEAST ASIA – THAILAND COUNTRY CHAPTER

USAID/RDMA Enhancing Equality in Energy for
Southeast Asia (E4SEA) Activity

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Activity	Enhancing Equality in Energy for Southeast Asia Activity
ACE	ASEAN Centre for Energy
ACCEPT	ASEAN Climate and Clean Energy Project
ACW	ASEAN Committee on Women
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADS	Automated Directives System
AGEP	ASEAN-German Energy Programme
APAEC	ASEAN Plan of Actions for Energy Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
Asia EDGE	Asia Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy
BoD	Board of Directors
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DJSI	Dow Jones Sustainability Indices
DV	Domestic Violence
E4SEA	Enhancing Equality in Energy for Southeast Asia
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GAD	Gender and Development
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GIDAP	Gender and Inclusive Development Action Plan
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
GWNET	Global Women's Network for the Energy Transition
IDIs	In-Depth Interviews

ILO	International Labour Organization
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer, Inter-sex, and Others
MCW	Magna Carta of Women
OSYC	Out of school youth/child
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
RDMA	Regional Development Mission for Asia
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Southeast Asia
SEAMEO	Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization
SOE	State-owned Enterprises
SOGIE	Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression
SRE	Society of Renewable Energy
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SWE	Society of Women Engineers
TAAP	Transforming Agency, Access, and Power
TWEA	Thai Women Engineers Alliance
VAWC	Violence Against Women and Children
WEAFEO	Women Engineers of the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organizations
WEN	Women Engineers Network
WIEA	Women in Energy, Asia
WIME	Women in Mining and Energy
WING	Women in Geothermal
YSEALI	Young Southeast Asia Leader's Initiative

NOTE

It must be underscored that this report is based on a rather focused and limited effort to gain a deeper understanding of the overall GESI issues, challenges, and opportunities in Thailand to the extent they were relevant to the primary focus of the Assessment Report as part of the E4SEA Activity. This Thailand Country Chapter provides a foundation for the USAID Mission in Thailand and the IPs engaged in various activities to further expand the research and conduct more detailed GESI analysis to further inform the gender equity and equality issues in the energy sector in the country.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GENDER AND ENERGY CONTEXT

Women are underrepresented in the formal workforce across Southeast Asia, particularly in male-dominated industries like the energy sector. This is more than an issue of equity; it is a missed economic opportunity for countries, companies, and communities. A growing body of evidence links increased gender equality with stronger business outcomes, as well as with more innovation and higher productivity. Tapping into women's unique contributions can strengthen energy sectors, accelerate inclusive economic and social development, and add trillions of dollars to global GDP. The reasons for a lack of women's participation in the energy sector are many and varied – cultural biases, lack of policies on gender equality, lack of focus on increasing STEM education and internship opportunities for women, and recruitment and promotion practices that typically favor males as energy sector jobs are considered too hard for women.

THE E4SEA ACTIVITY

In order to better understand the gender gaps and design targeted interventions to address the gaps, the USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA) designed the Enhancing Equality in Energy for Southeast Asia (E4SEA) Activity. The Activity is designed to address the challenges faced by women in the energy sector through developing and implementing collaborative interventions with 1) tertiary educational institutions to prepare women students to enter the energy field and 2) energy companies to create more employment opportunities for women at all levels in the Southeast Asia region.

The E4SEA Activity is part of the Asia Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy (EDGE) initiative overseen by USAID/RDMA. Asia EDGE is a key component of the U.S. Government's approach to grow sustainable and secure energy markets throughout the Indo-Pacific region. The Activity aims to contribute to that effort by improving gender equality and inclusion in Southeast Asia's energy sector the overall goal to strengthen the region's energy institutions and advance women's economic empowerment.

Specifically, the E4SEA Activity is working towards three primary outcomes.

1. Increased workplace diversity in Southeast Asia
2. Improved inclusive workplace environment
3. Expanded equitable promotion opportunities

The E4SEA Activity is being implemented through a number of targeted interventions under five (5) specific objectives:

1. **Objective 1:** Identify core challenges to gender equality in the energy sector in Southeast Asia
2. **Objective 2:** Increase the number of women and girls pursuing careers in the energy sector
3. **Objective 3:** Increase the recruitment, retention, and promotion of women in the energy sector workplace

4. **Objective 4:** Increase mentorship and leadership opportunities for women in the energy sector
5. **Objective 5:** Enhance communication, collaboration, and learning

While there are a number of regional gender-related activities being implemented by many regional organizations, E4SEA is the first regional Activity that specifically focuses on GESI in the full chain of energy sector and specifically focuses on enhancing opportunities for women in the energy sector.

THE ASSESSMENT REPORT

As part of Objective 1, the Activity completed a comprehensive report entitled “Assessment of Women’s Participation in the Energy Sector in Southeast Asia”, also referred to as the “Assessment Report”. The report provides a summary overview of regional gender and social inclusion gaps, challenges, and opportunities within the energy sector regionally and across three countries – Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand. While E4SEA Activity covers seven (7) countries – Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam, the initial three countries were selected in consultation with RDMA and the bilateral missions on two main criteria: 1) the availability of bilateral energy programs and 2) the country and mission’s readiness for engagement at the time.

The Assessment Report also updates the findings from the GESI Analysis and GIDAP developed at the beginning of the Activity. Direct stakeholder engagement through In-depth Interview (IDIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and a Baseline Citizen Survey added crucial depth and detail to prior analyses, largely based on secondary data and information and extensive literature review.

GUIDING PILLARS AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The key context for the methodology deployed for preparing the Assessment Report is defined by the following guiding pillars:

1. The **USAID Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy (2020)**¹ is the overarching policy tool which outlines USAID’s vision and objectives for integrating gender equality and women’s empowerment throughout the program cycle.
2. **USAID ADS Chapter 205:** Integrating Gender Equality and Female Empowerment in USAID’s Program Cycle (revision 2021)² serves as an in-depth guide to the operationalization of the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Policy. It provides a broad framework for gender analysis, which considers the following domains: 1) Law & Policy, 2) Access to Resources, 3) Power and Decision-Making, 4) Roles and Responsibilities, and 5) Knowledge and Beliefs. This report, as well as the E4SEA GESI Analysis and GIDAP, includes in its analysis framework an additional domain not required by USAID ADS 205 which considers human dignity and gender-based violence.
3. **USAID Delivering Gender Equality Best Practices Framework for Male-Dominated Industries:** This framework (2021) identifies eight phases of the employee life cycle as well as

¹ <https://www.usaid.gov/GenderEqualityandWomensEmpowermentPolicy>

² <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/205.pdf>

four organizational enablers as key entry points to effecting long-lasting and impactful gender equality interventions within partner electricity and water utilities.³

4. **Student Life Cycle:** There is a number of conventions that are used by different researchers. The Student Life Cycle offers three broad stages and eight steps. There are typically three (3) broad stages: 1) Attract, 2) Transform and Empower, and 3) Advance. In addition, there are eight (8) steps: 1) Engagement, 2) Recruitment, 3) Application/Admission, 4) Orientation/Enrollment, 5) Studentship, 6) Graduation, 7) Career Preparation, and 8) Alumni. The student life cycle stages provide key opportunities during a student's journey for affecting impactful gender equality interventions. Typically, the stages used by most analysts are: 1) enrollment, 2) curriculum, 3) internship and higher education, and 4) career opportunities and challenges.
5. **Employee Life Cycle:** The employee life cycle includes seven (7) stages: attraction, recruitment, onboarding, retention, development offboarding and happy leavers. In addition, there are nine (9) organizational enablers in organizational change.⁴

Based on the above guiding pillars, the methodology for both the regional Assessment Report and the individual Country Chapters for Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand included the following activities:

- **Additional Desk Research and Literature Review** – The Activity conducted additional research beyond what was done during the GESI Analysis and GIDAP preparation more than a year ago
- **In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)** – Including stakeholder identification and mapping
- **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** – For several stakeholder and participant groups and sub-groups
- **Baseline Citizen Survey** – A well-designed and comprehensive baseline citizen survey on gender biases, challenges, and lessons learned

All of these activities provided considerable primary data and information to inform the Activity's GESI Analysis and GIDAP that were initially prepared based on secondary information only. In addition, the data and information for Thailand directly resulted in the development of this Thailand Country Chapter.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Assessment Report consists of five separate reports as follows:

1. **Executive Summary and Main Report:** This part of the Assessment Report provides an overall executive summary of the report and a main report summarizing key findings and recommendation at the regional level.
2. **Indonesia Country Chapter:** This is a separate stand-alone report on the gender gaps, challenges, opportunities in the energy sector in Indonesia.

³ <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/Delivering-Gender-Equality-Best-Practices-Framework.pdf>

⁴ It should be noted that the precise definitions and numbers of the terms for student life cycle and employee life cycle vary in the literature; different researchers and organizations use different conventions.

3. **Philippines Country Chapter:** This is a separate stand-alone report on the gender gaps, challenges, opportunities in the energy sector in the Philippines.
4. **Thailand Country Chapter:** This is a separate stand-alone report on the gender gaps, challenges, opportunities in the energy sector in Thailand.
5. **Methodology and Tools:** This report provides a summary of the research methodology and tools used in order to conduct the research and analysis that led to the development of the Assessment Report and the individual Country Chapters for the three countries. This report includes the following Annexes:
 - Annex 1: Targeted Stakeholders and Selection Criteria
 - Annex 2: List of Stakeholders
 - Annex 3: List of Questions for the In-depth Interviews (IDIs)
 - Annex 4: List of Questions for the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)
 - Annex 5: Survey Instrument for the Baseline Citizen Survey

It should be noted that the Country Chapters for Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand are based on a rather focused and limited effort to gain a deeper understanding of the overall GESI issues, challenges, and opportunities in the three countries to the extent they were relevant to the primary focus of the Assessment Report as part of the E4SEA Activity. These Chapter Reports provide a foundation for the bilateral missions and the IPs engaged in various activities to further expand the research and conduct more detailed GESI analysis to inform the gender equity and equality issues in the energy sector in the countries.

This report “The Thailand Chapter” provides a summary overview of gender and social inclusion gaps and challenges within the energy sector in Thailand based on 1) literature review and desk research, 2) extensive discussions and in-depth interviews (IDIs) with key stakeholders, 3) focus group discussions (FGDs) with a wide array of participants, and 4) a baseline citizen survey. This report also updates the Thailand-specific information in the Activity’s Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Analysis and Gender and Inclusive Development Action Plan (GIDAP) previously completed more than a year ago based on secondary data and information gathered and analyzed from desk research and literature review.

HIGH-LEVEL SUMMARY OF GESI FINDINGS

Table A8-1 provides a high-level summary of the GESI findings based on primary research and data collection in Thailand.

TABLE 8-1: KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS

DOMAINS	KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS
Law and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor rights and basic rights are addressed in the Constitutional Law and Labor Law. Yet specific laws and measures on GESI are insufficient. For instance, not all the legal provisions have any targets, and none of them have well-defined implementing regulations.

TABLE 8-1: KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS

DOMAINS	KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Sexual Violence Eradication Bill was developed in 2019 but has not been enacted into law. However, legal proceedings can be implemented through the current system. • While all Thai citizens have equal constitutional rights, Measure 38 of the Labour Protection Act, B.E. 2541 (1998) prohibits employers from assigning female employees with tasks that could be harmful such as underground mining and construction, climbing higher than ten (10) meters, engaging a pregnant woman on night duties, working with machines, riding in vehicles, and lifting heavy objects. • Conflicting laws and policies limit access to energy, especially for ethnic minority women. For example, the National Park Act, 2019 strictly prohibits construction of any infrastructure, including electric poles in the protected forest areas. Women suffer more than men as many of their night activities such as sewing, and weaving rely on good lighting. A few community development projects include small-scale renewable energy, but they can serve only a limited number of households. They are not allowed to install larger hydro power plants which would cut down trees for construction. • FGDs and IDIs reveal that most of the companies comply with 90 days of maternity leave required by law, and many provide beyond what is required under the law, including longer maternity leave and childcare facilities at the office. A few companies have also introduced paternity leave. • Men get a three (3) month paid leave for Buddhist ordination. The Cabinet Resolution on 4 December 2007 provides women with the same right. It states that women are entitled to paid leave for one to three months for religious practices such as meditation retreat or pilgrimage trips. This interestingly shows the distinction between equality and equity. Men and women are provided exactly the same right, but such right is significantly more beneficial for men as women are not traditionally expected to enter into monkhood. Moreover, women are more likely to be confined with family responsibilities and, thus, are not fully supported to use this right. • Most of the FGD employee participants stated that their companies did not have a specific GESI policy. • Findings from the IDIs with CEOs and HR managers of energy companies suggest that men and women have equal opportunities to be promoted to managerial positions. • Thailand lacks a gender-disaggregated database and data about citizens who identify as LGBTQI+ that could be used to inform inclusive planning in the public and private sectors.
Access to Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • According to female industry executives and regulators, one theme that consistently stood out as the reason for gender disparity in the energy sector is the lower share of women in STEM specialties in the country's universities and vocational schools. There is a constant decrease in student enrollment in higher education, partially because Thailand is among the world's most rapidly ageing societies.
Power and Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Baseline Citizen Survey reflects different attitudes across respondent groups about decision-making roles in the family. The percentage of women-headed households is increasing, pushing more women into a leading and decision-making role, which could be a plus as well as a challenge, especially those from low-income families. • Women's representation in political and public decision-making bodies at every level in Thailand is still relatively low but the private sector has a greater percentage of women in senior leadership positions than both in the Asia-Pacific region and globally⁵. • Relevance of women's leadership is supported by findings from the Baseline Citizen Survey. Most male and female respondents, over 80 percent, said that women's leadership is important for an organization because they can bring new outlooks and perspectives to the organization and business-wide communication can be enhanced because women are effective communicators. • Male and female employee FGD participants did not express any preference over male or female leaders or indicate that they perceive men or women to differ in their performance quality and effectiveness.

⁵ UN Women Asia and the Pacific. 2021. Thailand Country Page. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/thailand>

TABLE 8-1: KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS

DOMAINS	KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Thai and Asian culture, age or seniority is another intersecting factor that impacts the respect that women garner in the workplace.
Roles and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of the Baseline Citizen Survey show that general attitudes on gender roles are more varied, diverse, and less traditional in Thailand, compared to the other countries in the survey. • Thai society is relatively more open and not as controlled by religious rules like in the other two countries. It is a society in transition where traditional values and norms are gradually changing due to greater women's participation in education and economic development. • Many women with full-time work have dual roles. At home, they take care of the children and do housework. Not many families can afford having helpers. National statistics show that after the age of 29, many women do not have time for self-development or professional development activities. Thus, they are less ready to be promoted into higher positions compared to men at the same age.
Knowledge and Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the national women's development plan, there is still a lack of awareness of gender equality and equity among government agencies. Furthermore, there is a lack of inter-ministerial mechanisms to address gender empowerment in a concerted way. • Unconscious gender bias and discrimination persist in energy workplaces. For example, a female HR manager in an IDI mentioned that it is normal in her organization to hear jokes that are typical among young men but may sound offensive to women. • Findings from the IDIs with CEOs and HR managers of energy companies suggest that timing is an important factor for promotions. For example, most women at mid-level managerial positions who are married with young children may be perceived as not being ready for higher leadership positions but can pursue them later when ready. • There is a perception that women usually do not like company politics which may serve as a detriment to their advancement in the male-dominated energy industry. • Baseline Citizen Survey respondents believe that key factors for lower enrollment of female students in STEM fields are 'hardship and unsafe working environment' and 'social norms and gender stereotypes.' • FGDs and IDIs reflect that within the energy workplace, female engineers are believed to be less competent than the male in machine operation and that most machines are designed for men's use. • Female leaders in IDIs believe women with children can fully advance their career because in Thai society, there is a greater support system for childcare, including grandparents and more affordable childcare.

HUMAN DIGNITY AND GBV ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

In addition, in the area of human dignity and GBV, the E4SEA Activity research has resulted in the following findings:

- The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted many women in Thailand, especially those in the production, manufacturing, and service industries. Women were the first people who were laid off. Migrant women workers are not entitled to get compensation funds from the government. Men and women receive the same amount in every scheme, but women have more expenses to bear as the family caretakers.
- Economic pressures usually cause tensions within the family, resulting in more reported GBV cases during the pandemic. Many girls from poor families or those living in ethnic communities in

border areas have dropped out from school as they cannot afford to buy digital devices or pay for internet services for online study. Some of them are forced into early marriage which is often followed by GBV.

- Most of the FGD participants report that they never experience any gender-based discrimination in the workplace.
- Students who identify as LGBTQI+ also report incidents that violated their human rights in schools, such as bullying or verbal harassment from other students. Schools have a grievance mechanism which generally is not very effective. Under the existing laws and regulations, there are no specific LGBTQI+ friendly services, especially for those faced with violence.
- In the workplace, most female and male engineer FGD participants said that they had never heard of or experienced any GBV cases in their companies. They believed that if it happens, it can be easily reported. However, this remark does not include verbal bullying or harassment which many of them do not recognize as a form of GBV.
- According to the IDIs and FGDs, men and women have equal access to grievance mechanisms.

FINDINGS RELATED TO STUDENT LIFE CYCLE AND EMPLOYEE LIFE CYCLE

The research conducted under the E4SEA Activity also included an analysis of gender-related issues in the student life cycle and the employee life cycle. Overall, key findings from this analysis reveal the following:

In Thailand, students value guidance from parents and other role models in determining what subjects to study or career paths to pursue, even though it is worth noting that younger generations are becoming more 'liberal and radical' in the decision about their future. Most parents in the Baseline Citizen Survey (68 percent) either strongly agreed or agreed that parents should have the final word in the decisions regarding their children's choice of study and jobs. Additionally, most of the survey participants (54 percent) stated that to some extent the gender roles influence their choice of profession. These findings indicate a strong adherence to norms, whether familial or societal. As there are fewer women than men in STEM careers, female students deciding what career to pursue may face challenges in seeking guidance from female role models in STEM and may thus be less likely to pursue a STEM career. An additional significant challenge faced in the student life cycle is that schools in Thailand do not enforce the Child Protection Policy. As a result, there are numerous instances throughout Thailand of both students and teachers who are abused in schools with no clear standards or regulations for recourse against abusers.

It is increasingly competitive to work for an energy employer in Thailand. As such, many companies have become more proactive to reach out to the brightest STEM students and graduates, but the focus is still on men. Men tend to look for an attractive salary and convenient and safe working location, while women look for benefits packages and special support on work-life balance. These findings reflect their attitudes on gender roles as well. While there are increasing opportunities for women to be employed in the energy sector, women are often assigned less physically demanding work and face barriers to advancing to leadership roles. Most companies do not have explicit policies on gender equality and there is little evidence of concrete policies to address gender discrimination. Many companies report a high turnover rate for women employees; some have halted hiring women for certain jobs.

COVID-19 IMPACT

“The Equitable Education Fund (EEF) has revealed increased school dropout rates as the new semester begins and found a correlation with households economically affected by COVID-19. The cost of education became unaffordable for many families given the impact of the virus, as the EEF learned of a new group suddenly living in poverty. It said ten (10) percent of students are not returning to school and dropout rates are continuing to rise. Poorer communities in Bangkok are accumulating informal debts to pay for their children's education, and parents are struggling to pay for school transport. Schools have advised the government to find a policy solution. Many suggested increasing subsidies that have been at the same rate for ten (10) years for poor communities. Initially, the EEF found 6,568 students had dropped out, but the number is estimated to have increased to at least 10,000 which equates to about 65,000 students by the end of 2021, according to Sompong Jitradub, Director of Civil Society at EEF.”⁶

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings in this preliminary and limited assessment of the gender gaps and challenges in Thailand as part of the broader regional E4SEA Activity, this section provides a few key recommendations for further action by interested parties. USAID programs in Thailand are overseen by RDMA. Following are few of the key recommendations for potential activities/interventions in Thailand that RDMA may wish to consider for inclusion in its regional activities:

LAW AND POLICY

- The government should approach donors to potentially fund a program that will create partnerships with energy companies that already have strong commitment and good practices in promoting gender equality (e.g., those complying with international sustainability reporting framework). Through partnership arrangements, the government could assist the employers to ensure that GESI principles are systematically incorporated and practiced in the companies' employee life cycle management. This program could be modeled based on the partnerships model used under E4SEA and Engendering Industries.
- Government should expand its on-going small-scale Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs) training programs to additional male and female participants in the growing renewable energy field. Because of the enormous potential for renewable energy systems in remote and rural areas of the country, the government should consider expanding RET project operations and maintenance training for females in the rural areas. This could potentially carry out in two steps, i.e., building capacity of local technical institutes, including female students in RETs; subsequently, the trained individuals can be engaged as trainers for rural communities.
- The government should encourage the vocational schools to further refine their curriculum on appropriate RETs, if possible, with support from RE energy companies.
- Develop internship program for female students with the RE companies. Upon their graduation, the students may have more employment opportunities with the RE companies. They may also

⁶ Bangkok Post, June 25, 2021

choose to set up their own businesses to install and maintain community-based small scale RETs models in non-electrified communities.

- Institute a country-wide program on enhancing laws and policies that would encourage entry of female students in the renewable energy technology field and prepare them for employment in the RE industry.
- Address the equity issue related to men getting a three-month paid leave for Buddhist ordination and how women are more inclined to be confined with family responsibilities and are less likely to use their entitled religious leave. The government may wish to consider a similar leave provision for women for their spiritual needs and religious beliefs.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

- The government should consider tapping into the positive trends to plan interventions related to gender inclusive training. Specifically, the School Engagement Toolkit, created under E4SEA, should be adapted to engage with students, teachers, and parents.
- The government should enhance its outreach program to encourage energy employers to explicitly incorporate gender equality and gender equity issues in their corporate governance and ensure that GESI is practiced at all levels within the energy organizations.
- The government should consider designing information campaigns in partnership with the private sector to address certain beliefs that are not conducive to enhancing opportunities for women for STEM education and energy sector careers. For example, the belief in some circles that women are not as good as men in STEM should be dismissed through active engagement with the parties propagating such belief. Additionally, women in STEM could be promoted as role models in social and conventional media.
- Both the public sector and the private sector should be encouraged to harmonize their policies and programs in order to ensure that men and women have equal access to all resources. For example, men and women should have the same choices and be judged on the same principles for STEM education or for employment in the energy sector. One very desirable intervention that the government could consider would be to design targeted training programs for young men and women on the benefits of equal access to resources and replicate this program throughout the country.

POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

- Government should explore where and how more women can be promoted into decision making roles both in the public sector and in the energy industry. Targeted interventions should be developed to connect universities and vocational schools with energy employers through the design and delivery of leadership skills development programs including internships.
- To increase the number of women holding leadership positions in the public and private sectors, there is a need to develop robust mentorship programs that would encourage women to learn and adapt leadership skills and seek leadership positions.

- Thailand has made considerable progress in enabling women in leadership roles the government should build upon this success through joint public-private sector initiatives. For example, women role models should be invited as keynote speakers and coaches at various fora. Another area where the government can be very instrumental is to initiate dialogues with many of the business schools in the country to develop customized leadership and management programs to serve the growing and transitioning needs of the energy industry in the country.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Energy employers should strengthen policies and practices related to mentoring, retention, and promotion of women in the energy sector through change management coaching and participation in management programs.
- Engendering Industries and E4SEA are working with their respective partners to provide coaching for the reform of HR policies to be consistent with GESI and to assist them in participating in an accelerated course specifically designed to address GESI in corporate management.
- In many cases, women in mid-management positions, with the growing responsibility for children and home, reluctantly give up promotion opportunities to leadership positions. This results in a drain of talented resources for employers. Therefore, energy employers should consider additional on-the-job benefits to retain such competent women managers. These benefits could include flexible work hours, on-site childcare, and other benefits that could help women managers better balance between home and work life.

KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS

- Introduce and support the development of gender-disaggregated data base for the energy industry for inclusive employee life cycle planning and management.
- The government should consider working in partnership with the private sector to encourage the companies to design and develop ToT programs to train their managers and employees on addressing conscious and unconscious biases that negatively impact women in recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention.

HUMAN DIGNITY AND GBV

- The government should continue to expand its outreach to raise awareness of women's rights as related to human rights, including the international and national legal frameworks against GBV among the companies' management and employees.
- Support the strengthening of existing policies against GBV in the workplace or support the establishment of rules and regulations against GBVs.
- The government should continue to expand its coverage and outreach to address domestic violence through the use of social media toolkits and other social media platforms.

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Thailand has a long history of national support for the enhancement of equality for women. Thailand ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1985 and endorsed the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) in 1995. These international principles and instruments are integrated into national legislation and policy, including the 2017 Constitution which provides that men and women shall enjoy equal rights.

In 2015, Thailand committed to the country's SDGs. Its aspiration in advancing its SDG targets depends very much on its progress in promoting gender equality which cuts across 17 development goals with clear indicators. The government has put in place mechanisms to promote gender equality across the board. The Gender Equality Act (BE 2558) was enacted in 2015, followed by the establishment of the Committee to Promote Gender Equality (CPGE). The Five-Year National Women Development Strategy and Plan (2017-2021) sets out goals, objectives, and targets to promote gender equality and serves as steering tools for effective budget allocations across ministries.

These enabling legal, policy and implementation frameworks contributed to significant achievements in gender equality in some respects; still, there remain challenges to be addressed. Thailand still needs to have in place a systematic and comprehensive gender-disaggregated database and institutionalized gender-responsive budgeting. The National Statistics Office (NSO) had developed and implemented the methodology to prepare a gender-disaggregated database in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS) with support from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). Yet, the initiative has not yet been institutionalized.

Thailand's Gender Responsive Budgeting Action Plan has been developed by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) at the request of the Thai government. The Department of Women's Affairs and Family within the MSDHS has applied gender-responsive budgeting principles in its internal budget planning on a trial basis and will develop a Gender-Responsive Budgeting Handbook. Based on their experience in successfully implementing the practice, they will disseminate the Handbook to interested agencies. But it will take some time before gender responsive budgeting is widely practiced across many line ministries in the country.

The lack of gender-disaggregated data for planning and budgeting has implications for advancing gender equality in all GESI domains. Almost all women are reported to have equal access to education, healthcare, and internet services, except for those living in very remote areas, migrants, and ethnic women with no Thai citizenship. Communities living in National Parks are not connected to the public grid and women suffer more than men as they need good lighting and electric power to facilitate their traditional household activities. Regarding power and decision-making, Thailand has a greater percentage of women in senior leadership positions in the private sector than both in the Asia Pacific region overall and globally. However, women are still underrepresented in leadership roles in the public and political sectors.

At the grassroot level, the proportion of women in leadership roles is relatively high, perhaps because there is no superstructure to prevent them to take a lead in community affairs. Findings from the IDIs with women leaders of energy companies in Thailand suggest that to rise to the top, women must work harder than men and often beyond expectations.

Social norms and values relative to the traditional roles of women in Thailand have gradually changed over the time due to greater participation of women in socio-economic activities. Results of the Baseline Citizen Survey conducted under the E4SEA Activity suggest that while most people still believe that men should be the breadwinners and women the caretakers of the family, these roles could be interchangeable depending on the needs of the family. Due to a constant increase in the numbers of women-headed households, more and more women must take a leading role in the family. Despite positive trends in changing social norms towards gender roles, unconscious gender biases persist including in the energy sector workplace. From the field research, employees of the energy companies, both women and men seem not to have full understanding of what gender equality could be in practice, and some of them tend to unconsciously accept gender-biased comments among colleagues as normal, as it complies with what they have seen while growing up.

GBV incidents in Thailand have been on a rise, especially during the COVID-19 outbreaks. The majority of these GBV victims are women. A stronger reinforcement of the legal framework, especially the Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence Act (2007), should be advocated. Furthermore, research shows there is a need for a more proactive education/training approach to raising awareness within the society about women's human rights and their right to meaningfully participate in all sectors in the Thai economy.

METHODOLOGY

OVERVIEW

The methodology deployed for the development of this report included a combination of 1) initial desk research and literature review during the preparation of the GESI Analysis and GIDAP; 2) additional desk research (secondary data collection and literature review); 3) stakeholder identification and mapping; and 4) field research in the SEA countries (primary data and information collection through IDIs, FGDs, and the Baseline Citizen Survey). The outputs of desk research were 1) the GESI Analysis and 2) the GIDAP that were completed and submitted at the beginning of the E4SE Activity including initial findings for Thailand. This report represents the output of the field work that updates and validates the E4SEA Activity's GESI Analysis and GIDAP based on primary in-country data collection and analysis in Thailand.

INITIAL DESK RESEARCH AND LITERATURE REVIEW DURING GESI ANALYSIS AND GIDAP FOR THE E4SEA ACTIVITY

At the start of the Activity, initial desk research included a literature review and data collection from over 200 available sources on gender and energy activities. Specifically, research papers and reports of projects funded by various donors were reviewed to identify gender challenges and gaps. The analysis and findings of the extensive review were documented in the GESI Analysis and GIDAP submitted at the start of the Activity. Based on the identified gaps, standardized semi-structured interview questions and guidelines for IDIs and FGDs, as well as research protocol documents and survey instruments were developed and tested for research and analysis in this report.

Later during the first year of the Activity, additional desk research and a literature review was conducted to update the GESI Analysis and GIDAP. Additional research included an extensive review of government laws, policies, regulations, and practices related to gender inclusion, research conducted by various donors and private entities on the status of gender in the three (3) countries, and discussions with various USAID Missions and implementing partners. The body of knowledge related to gender analyses is expanding very rapidly worldwide which mandated updating the previously conducted desk research.

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION AND MAPPING

Identification and mapping of target stakeholders was a key component of the methodology deployed for this report. Stakeholders were selected from among many public and private sector organizations based on a set of clearly defined criteria to maximize both the quality of information and the quality of data needed to inform the GESI Analysis and GIDAP.

FIELD RESEARCH/PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION

Field research (primary data collection) included three distinct activities: 1) IDIs with selected stakeholders, 2) FGDs with various groups, and 3) a Baseline Citizen Survey in the Thailand and other SEA countries. Key elements of the methodology deployed for conducting these activities are discussed below.

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS (IDIS)

The principal objective of the IDIs was to gather information on gender and energy gaps and challenges as well as interventions already implemented by the stakeholders selected for the IDIs. The IDI interviewees were from four specific groups of stakeholders: 1) Private sector (energy companies), 2) Public sector (government ministries and regulators), 3) SOEs, 4) School and Tertiary institutions (high schools, universities, and vocational institutions), and 5) non-profit organizations, foundations, associations, and related networks (gender, energy, and engineering). A detailed questionnaire was developed and tested prior to conducting the IDIs.

Table A8-2 provides a list of 23 organizations that were selected for IDIs as part of the field research in the country.

TABLE A8-2: LIST OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS FOR IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

1. ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC)
2. Bureau of Gender Equality Promotion, Department of Women's Affairs and Family Development (DWAFD), the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MSDHS)
3. Women and Youth Workforce Development Section, Workforce and Entrepreneur Development Division, Department of Skill Development (DSD), Ministry of Labour (MoL)
4. Energy Policy and Planning Office (EPPO), Ministry of Energy (MoE)
5. Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA), office in Bangkok
6. Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) Tha Thom Sub Field Office, Surin Province (Thai-Cambodian border)
7. Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC)
8. Human Resources and Organizational Development, Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT)
9. Human Resource Development and Quality Division, Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT)
10. Gulf Energy Development Public Company Limited
11. Neo Clean Energy Co., LTD. & Thai ESCO (Association, Energy Services Company)
12. Banpu Public Company Limited
13. SPCG, Public Company Limited
14. The Joint Graduate School of Energy and Environment (JGSEE) King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT)
15. Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University
16. Hat Yai Technical College, Songkla Province
17. Fang Vocational Education College, Chiang Mai
18. IRPC Technological College, Rayong Province
19. School of Renewable Energy, Maejo University, Chiang Mai Province
20. Power and Climate Initiative,
21. The Rockefeller Foundation
22. Sexuality Studies Association, Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR), Mahidol University
23. Association of Private Power Producers (APPP)

A list of questions was prepared and tested in advance of conducting the IDIs with the selected stakeholders from among the list provided above.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGDS)

In addition to the IDIs, ten (10) FGDs were conducted in Thailand with a variety of pre-selected respondents. The FGD participants included 1) engineers and geologists from energy companies, 2) high school students, 3) vocational school students, and 4) university students.

Table A8-3 provides the list of stakeholders selected for Focus Group Discussions based on the methodology to ensure representation of all key groups.

TABLE A8-3: LIST OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS FOR FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

STAKEHOLDER CATEGORY	STAKEHOLDERS SELECTED FOR FGD
Energy Sector Engineers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Neo Clean Energy Company Limited 2. Gulf Energy 3. Banpu Group 4. South Pole
University Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University 2. Prince of Songkla University 3. Institute of Engineering, Suranaree University of Technology 4. Faculty of Engineering (Environmental Engineering Program), King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi
Vocational School Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hatyai Technical College 2. Fang Vocational Education College 3. Saraburi Vocational Education College 4. IRPC Technological College
High School Students	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Kamnoetvidya Science Academy (KVIS) 2. PSU Witthayanusorn Demonstration School 3. Don Bosco School

A detailed questionnaire targeted to each FGD group was prepared and tested prior to conducting the FGDs.

BASELINE CITIZEN SURVEY

The third component of the methodology to collect primary data and information on gender equality gaps and challenges was a detailed Baseline Citizen Survey in the country. The survey deployed the Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) technique and was carried out by GeoPoll, an international survey firm with prior survey experience with USAID. Different stages of this intervention included 1) a survey design, 2) a call center set up and operator/enumerator training, 3) tool testing, 4) survey implementation and 5) data entry and data transmission and delivery.

The sampling for CATI respondents included 1) male and female students aged 18 and above 2) recent university graduates, 3) parents of children aged 20 and below, 4) working professionals, and 5) other. Figure A8-1 provides the gender distribution of the respondents.

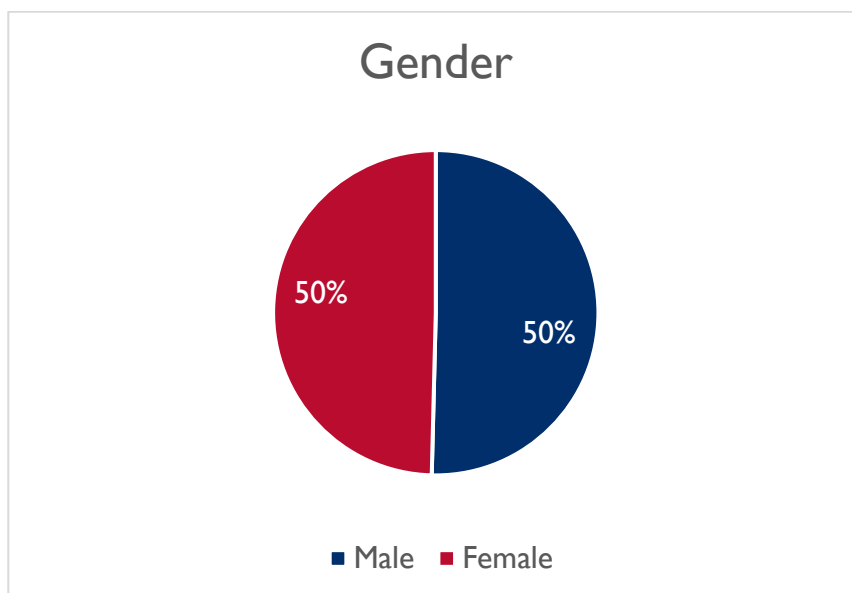


Figure A8-1: Gender composition of the FGD Respondents in Thailand

A total of 252 respondents participated in the survey. A detailed survey instrument (questionnaire) was prepared and tested prior to conducting the survey. The survey permitted follow-up questions. The insights gained from the survey were triangulated with the research findings from the IDIs and FGDs.

Figure A8-2 provides breakdown of the various target groups.

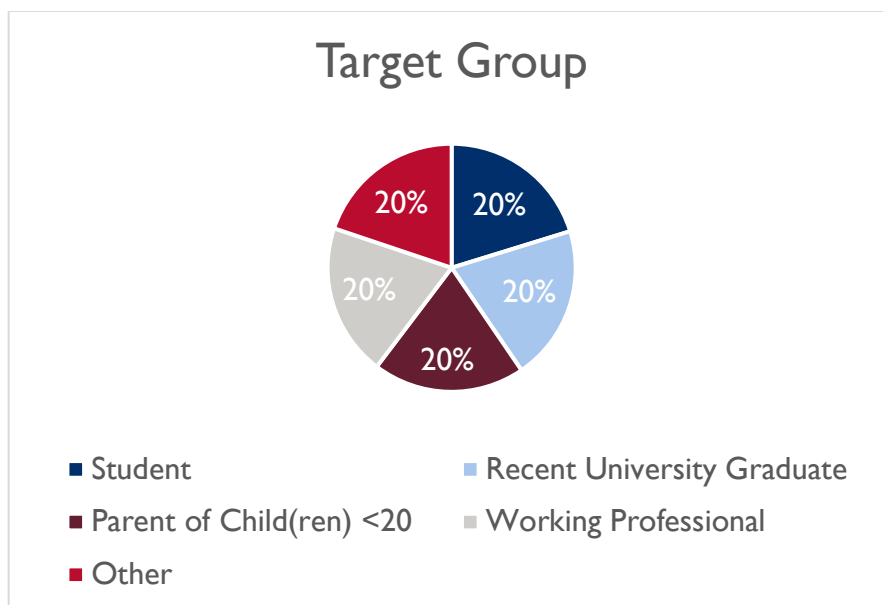


Figure A8-2: Composition of the Target Groups for FGDs in Thailand

COVID-19-RELATED CHALLENGES

The COVID-19 pandemic created challenges for primary data collection as travel restrictions did not permit face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions with key stakeholders. Therefore, virtual IDIs and FGDs were conducted via online applications such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet. Although this posed some coordination challenges, the quality of interviews and surveys was not compromised. In some cases, repeat interviews were conducted to clarify and/or confirm the veracity of information gathered during initial interviews. Appropriate rehearsals and trials were conducted in advance to maximize the value of the interviews.

DETAILED GESI FINDINGS

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Key highlights of the findings include the following:

- I. **Overall, Role of Men and Women:** When asked about the role of women and men at home and workplace, a majority of the respondents stated that men's primary role is that of breadwinners whereas the women's primary role is that of caretakers.

Figure A8-3 shows the degree of belief from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' as expressed by various target groups.

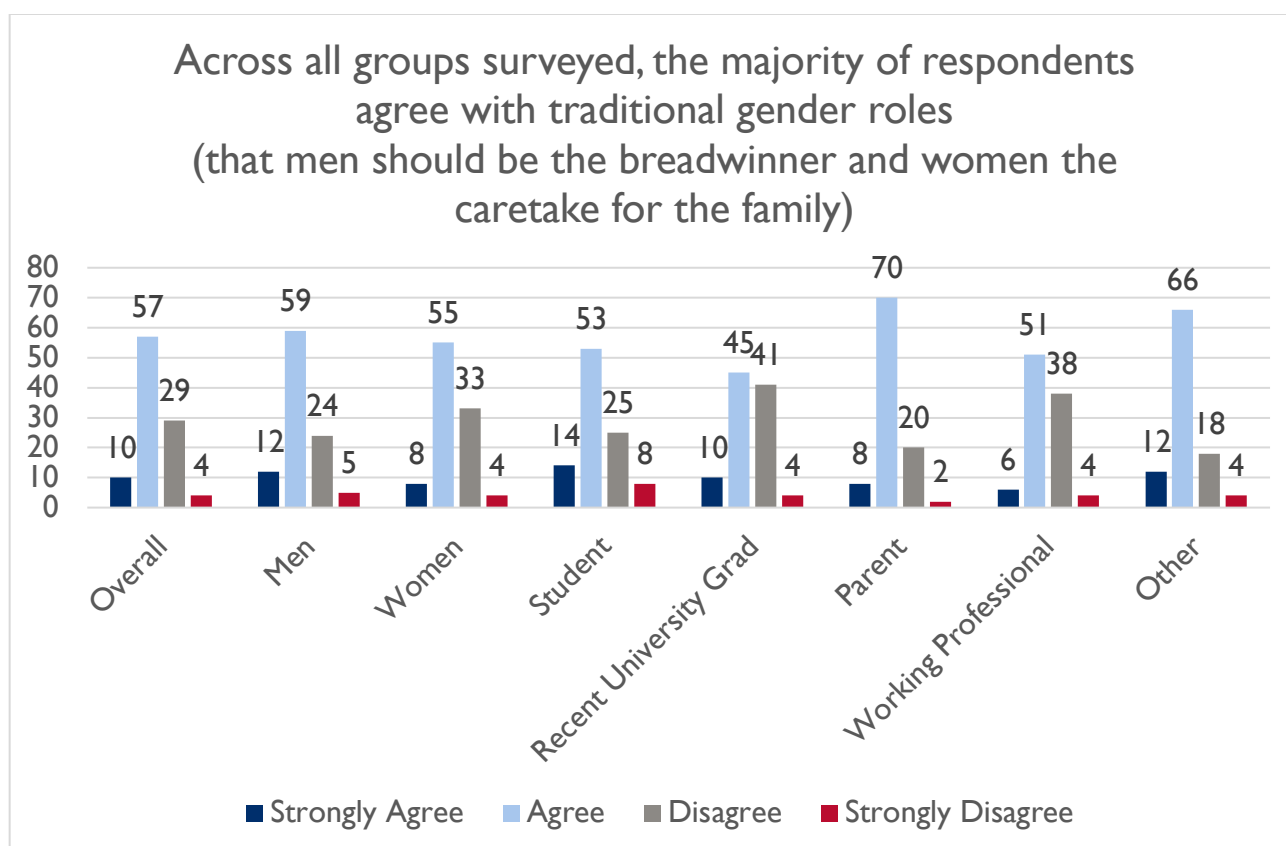


Figure A8-3: Attitude of Different Target Groups on Male Breadwinners and Female Caretakers in Thailand

The following are some of the key findings that also correspond with the findings during the IDIs and FGDs:

- When followed up with the question for the reason for this attitude, 63 percent of the participants said that these are traditional roles we should conform to, and another 41 percent said it is because men can earn more than women. Another 15 percent said that the reason was that men have higher education than women and another 15 percent said that it was socially unacceptable for women to earn more than men.

- This general distribution of responses was reflected in all five (5) target groups. Only 32 percent of overall males said that it was because men can earn more than women. However, 51 percent of all women respondents agreed with this response.

2. Attitude on Women with Full-Time Jobs as Primary Family Caretaker:

Figure A8-4 illustrates the responses received from various target groups on their attitude on women who hold full-time jobs and have the responsibility as the primary family caretakers.

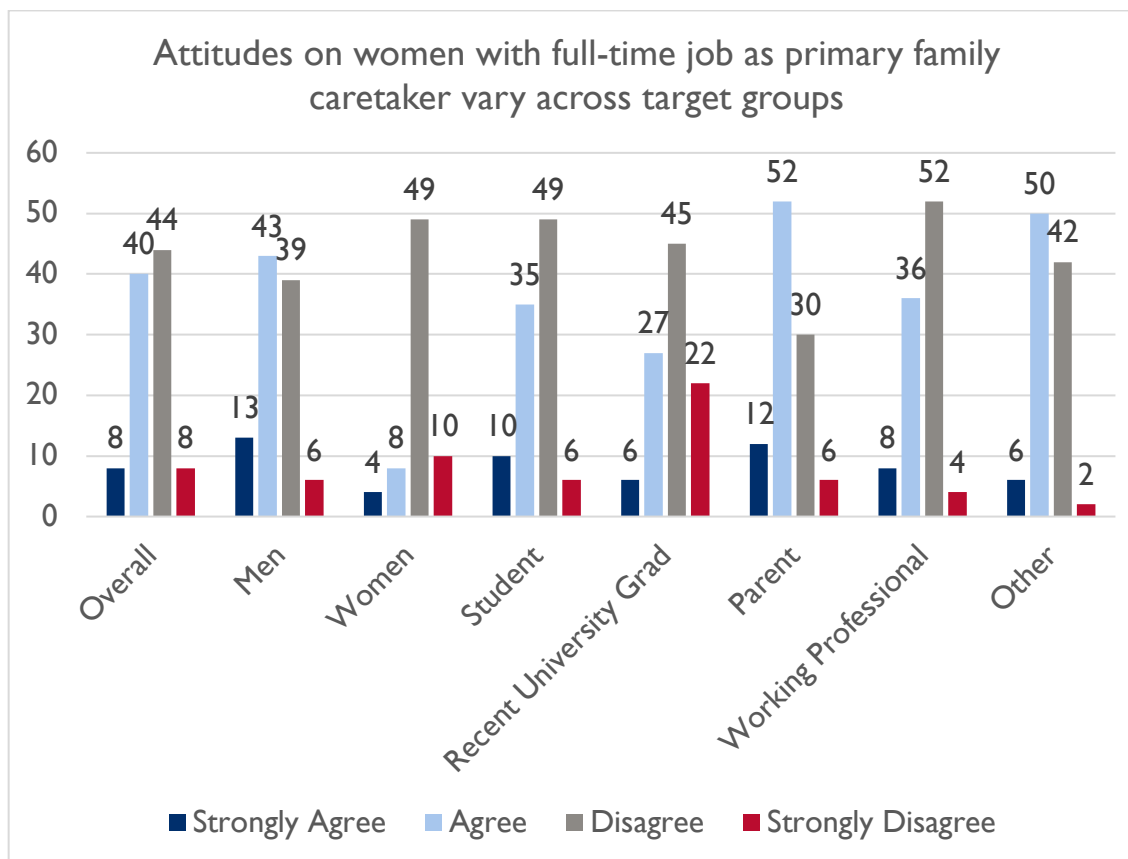


Figure A8-4: Responses by Various target Groups Regarding the Attitude on Women with Full-Time Jobs and Primary Family Care Responsibility in Thailand

The following are some of the key findings that also correspond with the findings during the IDIs and FGDs:

- Of the respondents who agreed that women with full-time jobs can also be the primary caretaker in the family, the most common response was that women can take better care of children by nature (48 percent). Forty-eight percent of the respondents also felt that women have a caring/nurturing mind. Of the parents who responded, 66 percent agreed that women can take better care of children and the family by nature. Among the “others” category of respondents, 54 percent of the respondents said that they believed that women

are trained to be mothers and wives and are most suited to be the primary caretaker of the family even when they have full-time jobs.

- Of those who did not agree with the belief that women must be the primary caretaker of the family even if they are holding full-time jobs, 68 percent of the respondents said that women and men should share responsibility in all parts of their family and work life. Forty-six percent of the respondents said that traditional gender roles should be adjusted to reflect changes in today's culture whereby men and women must share joint responsibility for all activities. The most common response from the parent group was that it was not fair for women to have primary family responsibility if they are working full time outside of the home. Sixty-one percent felt that it would not allow enough time for the women's self-development. Fifty-one percent of the parents responding to the survey felt that men can be just as good taking care of the family as women.

3. Decision-Making in the Family and Gender Roles: When asked about who should be the primary decision maker in the family, the responses were as follows:

- **Students and Recent University Graduates were asked who should be the primary decision-maker in the family**
 - Of those respondents who said that it should be both men and women, 68 percent said that men and women have different ways of looking at things and it is difficult to decide who should be the primary decision maker because it depends on the type of decision. Seventy-three percent of the respondents said that it was best to have a joint decision acceptable by both men and women.
 - Of those respondents who felt that the breadwinner should be the primary decision maker in the family, 70 percent chose the breadwinner. In addition, 70 percent of the respondents felt that the breadwinner had an important role in the family and should be the primary decision maker.
 - Sixty-five percent of the respondents said the breadwinner should be the primary decision maker in the family as the decisions must be financially viable.

4. Gender Roles and its impact on Careers: The following are the key highlights of the responses to the questions on the gender roles and their impact on careers:

- Sixty-eight percent of the parents either strongly agreed or agreed that parents should have the final word in decisions regarding their children's choice of study/jobs. Most than half (59 percent) of these respondents stated that it was because parents have more insight about prospects of different careers.
- Of the remaining 32 percent of the parents who disagreed that parents have the final word on the choice of studies/careers for their children, 69 percent said it was because children should be encouraged to make their own decisions about their futures.

- Twelve percent of the respondents from the working professionals group said that the impact of traditional gender roles on the choice of studies/careers was very high; 22 percent rated it as high; 54 percent rated it as “to some extent”; and ten (10) percent said that gender roles had very low impact on studies/career choices made by men and women.
- Of those respondents who said that the impact of traditional gender roles on study/career choices was very high, 59 percent felt that this because most people follow social norms to be accepted by others. Interestingly, 33 percent of the males chose this answer while 88 percent of females chose gave this response.
- Eight (8) percent of the respondents in the “other” category said that the gender roles had a very high impact on study/career choices: 22 percent said it was “high”; 62 percent said – “to some extent”; and eight (8) percent felt the impact was very low.

Figure A8-5 illustrates the responses from the various target groups regarding the decision-making in the family.

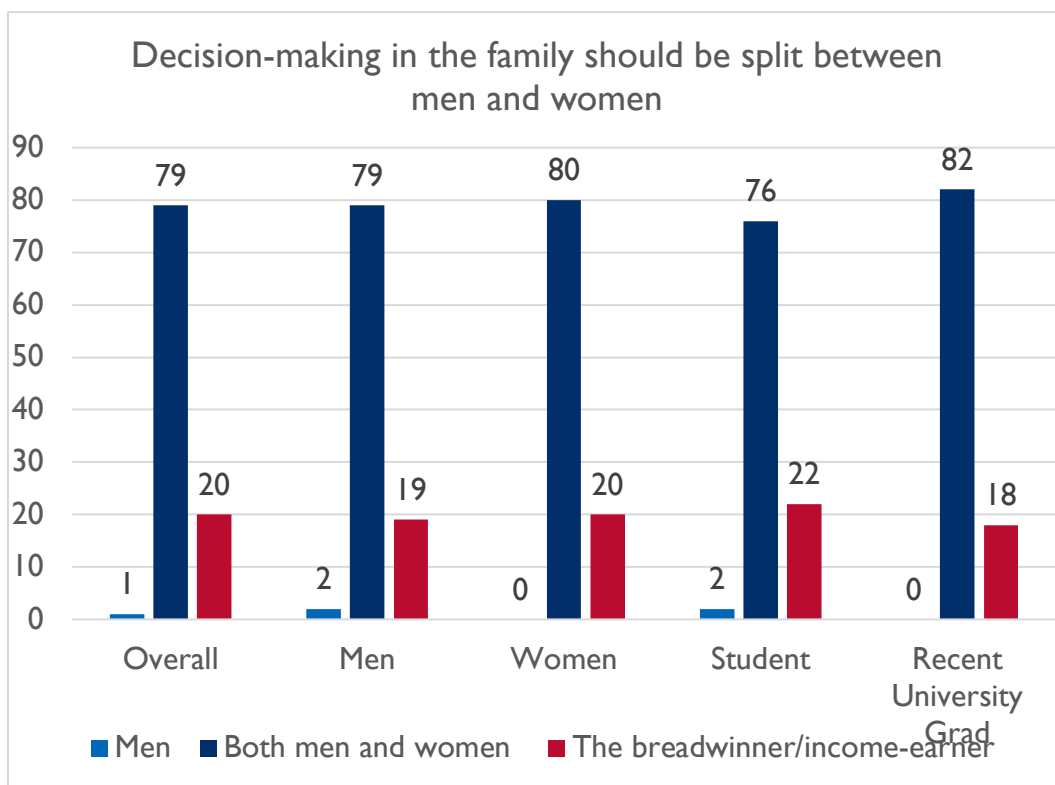


Figure A8-5: Responses by Various target Groups Regarding Decision-Making in the Family in Thailand

5. **STEM Education:** The survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the impact of gender roles on women pursuing STEM education. Specifically, they were asked whether they agreed or disagreed that women cannot be as good as men when it comes to

pursuing studies in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The following are the key highlights of the responses from the various target groups:

- When this question was posed to the parents and ‘others’ 66 percent of those who agreed with the premise of the question said it was because by nature women can do better in other subject areas such as social sciences.
- Of the respondents in the categories of parents and ‘other’, who disagreed with the premise of the question, 73 percent said that women can be as good as men in technologies and sciences if they are trained in the same way as men, and 59 percent said that, intellectually, men and women are not different.
- When Recent university graduates were asked about low enrollment of women in STEM, 35 percent said that it was because of a lack of enabling policies and provisions in the educational institutes, and 27 percent of the respondents said that it was because of parental attitudes on gender. Twenty percent of the female respondents said that they lacked female role models in STEM while only eight (8) percent of men gave the same answer.
- When parents were asked the same question, 36 percent of them said there was a lack of special incentives or provisions in universities for girls to pursue STEM education and 36 percent said that they lacked career advice and counseling.
- Twenty-six percent of the respondents said that the reason for fewer girls pursuing STEM education was that the parents were not supportive of their daughters choosing STEM.

Figure A8-6 summarizes the highlights of the reasons for relatively low percentage of women entering and pursuing STEM education.

6. Factors Influencing Employment Choices and Attitude About Women in

Leadership Roles: The survey respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the factors used by men and women for making employment choices. The following are a few key highlights based on the survey responses:

- Among working professionals, when asked what the most important factors were to make employment decisions, 66 percent said an attractive salary was the primary reason, while 48 percent said that opportunities for career growth determined their employment choices.

When asked what factors they considered when applying for a job, 76 percent of the male respondents preferred attractive salary while only 56 percent of the females considered attractive salary as the driver for their job choices. 48 percent of the female respondents also said they would look for the benefits package and special support on work/life balance, but only 40 percent of the males chose this answer.

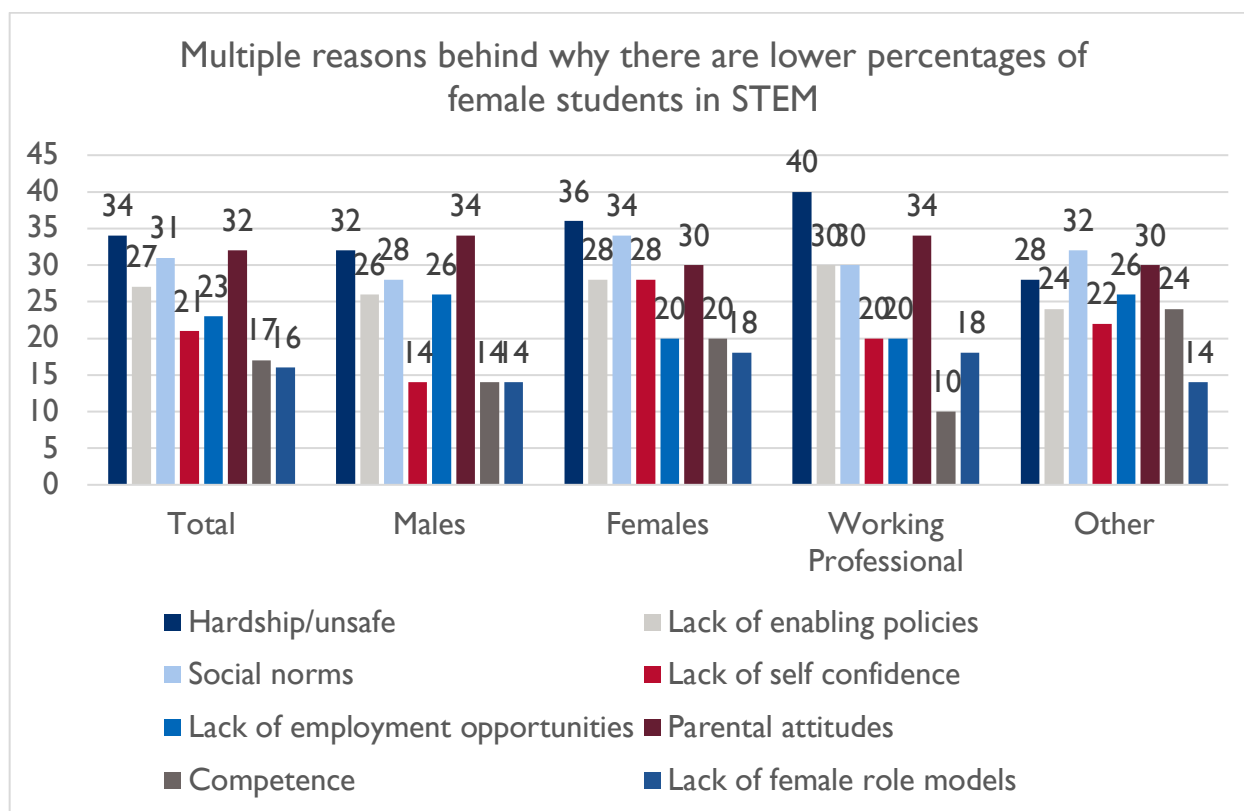


Figure A8-6: Highlights of Key Findings on the Reasons for Relatively Low Percentage of Women in STEM in Thailand

- In the “others” category, 48 percent of the respondents said that an attractive salary was an important consideration when looking for a job. Another 56 percent of the females chose this answer. However, most commonly (52 percent), the males selected “convenient and safe location” as the primary driver in their job choice decisions.
- When parents were asked what they would recommend their daughters to consider when accepting a job, 54 percent said an attractive salary; 50 percent selected a convenient and safe location; and 42 percent said a good working environment.
- Only five (5) percent of all respondents felt that women cannot perform as well as men in the STEM fields traditionally dominated by males, and 23 percent said that they can be as good as men. Fifty percent of the respondents said that women could be advanced on an equal basis to men. Of these respondents, 68 percent said that in many companies, promotion is based on performance regardless of biological sex or gender identity.
- When asked if they preferred male or female supervisors, 81 percent of respondents in the “other” category, recent university graduates, and work professionals said it did not matter whether their supervisor/manager was male or female. Of these, 74 percent said that it was because they should not be prejudiced about their manager’s gender but should consider their performance as a capable manager. Of 13 percent of the respondents who said that they preferred a male supervisor, 58 percent said that a male manager is more objective and

reasonable, and 53 percent said that a male manager is more decisive in critical situations. Of the five (5) percent who preferred a female supervisor, 75 percent said that a female manager can work more smoothly with people because of her gentle and caring nature.

- Of those respondents who felt that it was important that women be given the opportunity to be leaders, 45 percent of males and 60 percent of the females said that women leaders can bring new outlooks and perspectives to the organization. Conversely, 56 percent of the males and 46 percent of the females said that business-wide communication can be enhanced with women managers and leaders because women are effective communicators.
- Of those who did not agree with women acquiring leadership positions, 47 percent said that in some leadership roles, women face obstacles that men do not face.
- When asked about the factors leading to low levels of women in leadership, 57 percent of the respondents in the “other” category, recent university graduates, and work professionals said that it was because women are not given equal opportunity to be in leading roles and 43 percent said that persistent stereotypical attitudes on gender roles in most organizations are responsible for low levels of women in leadership positions.
- When asked about salary for men and women for similar jobs, 88 percent of recent male graduates felt that women and men with similar qualifications and experience should receive the same salary, and all other respondents in the “working professionals” and “others” groups agreed.
- When asked if they thought that engineers with the same qualifications and experience should receive the same salary regardless of gender, 88 percent of the recent male graduates said yes. Additionally, 24 percent of the parents (28 percent male and 20 percent female) said that they would allow their daughters to accept a salary that is lower than a male counterpart, although 38 percent said no, and 38 percent said that they were unsure. Seventy-nine percent of those who were unsure said that it was because there are other factors involved - for example, nature of the work, working environment, location of the workplace. etc.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Table A8-4 provides a summary of the key GESI findings in Thailand based on the research conducted under the E4SEA Activity.

TABLE 8-4: KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS

DOMAINS	KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS
Law and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor rights and fundamental rights are addressed in the Constitutional Law and Labor Law. Yet specific laws and measures on GESI are insufficient. For instance, not all the legal provisions have any targets, and none of them have well-defined implementing regulations. • The Sexual Violence Eradication Bill was developed in 2019 but has not been enacted into law. However, legal proceedings can be implemented through the current system.

TABLE 8-4: KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS

DOMAINS	KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While all Thai citizens have equal constitutional rights, Measure 38 of the Labour Protection Act, B.E. 2541 (1998) prohibits employers from assigning female employees with tasks that could be harmful such as underground mining and construction, climbing higher than 10 meters, engaging a pregnant woman on night duties, working with machines, riding in vehicles, and lifting heavy objects. Conflicting laws and policies limit access to energy, especially for ethnic minority women. For example, the National Park Act, 2019 strictly prohibits construction of any infrastructure, including electric poles in the protected forest areas. Women suffer more than men as many of their night activities such as sewing, and weaving rely on good lighting. A few community development projects include small-scale renewable energy, but they can serve only a limited number of households. They are not allowed to install larger hydro power plants which would cut down trees for construction. FGDs and IDIs reveal that most of the companies comply with 90 days of maternity leave required by law, and many provide beyond what is required under the law, including longer maternity leave and childcare facilities at the office. A few companies have also introduced paternity leave. Men get a three (3) month paid leave for Buddhist ordination. The Cabinet Resolution on 4 December 2007 provides women with the same right. It states that women are entitled to paid leave for one to three months for religious practices such as meditation retreat or pilgrimage trips. This interestingly shows the distinction between equality and equity. Men and women are provided exactly the same right, but such right is significantly more beneficial for men as women are not traditionally expected to enter into monkhood. For government employees, this right is entitled only for one time in their working life. The FGD and IDI participants, however, are not fully aware of this resolution in support of women's right to follow their religious beliefs. Most of the FGD employee participants stated that their companies did not have a specific GESI policy. Findings from the IDIs with CEOs and HR managers of energy companies suggest that men and women have equal opportunities to be promoted to managerial positions. Thailand lacks a gender-disaggregated database and data about citizens who identify as LGBTQI+ that could be used to inform inclusive planning in the public and private sectors.
Access to Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to female industry executives and regulators, one theme that consistently stood out as the reason for gender disparity in the energy sector is the lower share of women in STEM specialties in the country's universities and vocational schools. There is a constant decrease in student enrollment in higher education, partially because Thailand is among the world's most rapidly ageing societies.
Power and Decision-Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Baseline Citizen Survey reflects different attitudes across respondent groups about decision-making roles in the family. The percentage of women-headed households is increasing, pushing more women into a leading and decision-making role, which could be a plus as well as a challenge, especially those from low-income families. Women's representation in political and public decision-making bodies at every level in Thailand is still relatively low but the private sector has a greater percentage of women in senior leadership positions than both in the Asia-Pacific region and globally⁷. Relevance of women's leadership is supported by findings from the Baseline Citizen Survey. Most male and female respondents, over 80 percent, said that women's leadership is important for an organization because they can bring new outlooks and perspectives to the organization and business-wide communication can be enhanced because women are effective communicators. Male and female employee FGD participants did not express any preference over male or female leaders or indicate that they perceive men or women to differ in their performance quality and effectiveness.

⁷ UN Women Asia and the Pacific. 2021. Thailand Country Page. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/thailand>

TABLE 8-4: KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS

DOMAINS	KEY COUNTRY-LEVEL FINDINGS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Thai and Asian culture, age or seniority is another intersecting factor that impacts the respect that women garner in the workplace.
Roles and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of the Baseline Citizen Survey show that general attitudes on gender roles are more varied, diverse, and less traditional in Thailand, compared to the other SEA countries in the survey. • Thai society is relatively more open and not as controlled by religious rules like in the other two countries. It is a society in transition where traditional values and norms are gradually changing due to greater women's participation in education and economic development. • Many women with full-time work have dual roles. At home, they take care of the children and do housework. Not many families can afford having helpers. National statistics show that after the age of 29, many women do not have time for self-development or professional development activities. Thus, they are less ready to be promoted into higher positions compared to men at the same age.
Knowledge and Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite the national women's development plan, there is still a lack of awareness of gender equality and equity among government agencies. Furthermore, there is a lack of inter-ministerial mechanisms to address gender empowerment in a concerted way. • Unconscious gender bias and discrimination persist in energy workplaces. For example, a female HR manager in an IDI mentioned that it is normal in her organization to hear jokes that are typical among young men but may sound offensive to women. • Findings from the IDIs with CEOs and HR managers of energy companies suggest that timing is an important factor for promotions. For example, most women at mid-level managerial positions who are married with young children may be perceived as not being ready for higher leadership positions but can pursue them later when ready. • There is a perception that women usually do not like company politics which may serve as a detriment to their advancement in the male-dominated energy industry. • Baseline Citizen Survey respondents believe that key factors for lower enrollment of female students in STEM fields are 'hardship and unsafe working environment' and 'social norms and gender stereotypes.' • FGDs and IDIs reflect that within the energy workplace, female engineers are believed to be less competent than the male in machine operation and that most machines are designed for men's use. • Female leaders in IDIs believe women with children can fully advance their career because in Thai society, there is a greater support system for childcare, including grandparents and more affordable childcare.

DETAILED DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The GESI Analysis Report, prepared at the beginning of the E4SEA Activity, highlights key enabling factors and barriers to promote greater participation of women and socially excluded persons within the energy sector in Thailand. Findings from the desk review and primary data collection through the stakeholder consultations (IDIs and FGDs) and Baseline Citizen Survey reinforce some of these comments, but new findings also emerge

LAW AND POLICY

As mentioned in the overview, all Thai citizens have equal constitutional rights. Section 4 of the Constitution (2017) states that human dignity, rights, liberties, and equality of the people shall be protected. Section 27 further elaborates that all persons are equal before the law. Any discrimination

against a person because of differences in race, language, gender, age, disability, social standing, education, political affiliations, etc. shall not be permitted under the Constitution (2017).⁸

Regarding gender, Thailand has established several enabling legal frameworks and mechanisms to support gender equality. The National Committee to Promote Gender Equality is a mechanism to promote policies, regulations, and action plans to promote gender equality in all state and private sector agencies at all levels. The Committee to Identify Gender Discrimination and the Gender Equality Fund have been set up to ensure effective implementation. Long-distance learning modules to change social attitudes of gender roles and promote gender equality mindsets are launched through existing public and private channels. However, some laws and regulations obstruct equal participation of women in some industries. For example, Measure 38 of the Labour Protection Act, B.E. 2541 (1998) prohibits employers to assign women employees in tasks that could be harmful to their health or tasks that are physically dangerous for women such as working in mining or construction work that takes place underground, underwater, in caves or on the edge of craters. Under such provisions, women are not allowed to climb up poles or buildings higher than 10 meters. Employers are prohibited to engage a pregnant woman on night duties between 22:00-6:00 hrs. for certain types of activities such as working with machines, riding in vehicles, and lifting heavy objects. The Law also bans employers from firing women because of their pregnancy. To comply with the law and avoid complications in setting up safety measures to protect women workers in such circumstances, many employers in the energy sector prefer to hire male engineers and technicians instead, especially at power plants that typically operate on a twenty-four-hour basis.

Findings from the citizen survey reflect that most of the respondents believe that women could be advanced on the same basis as men in undertaking jobs traditionally associated with men (such as engineering, flying airplanes, etc.) if they are given the right opportunity. Those who believe women could be as good as men in this regard justify that capability is not determined by biological sex but by one's professional training and the quality of that training and demonstration of work outputs. However, a relatively smaller percentage (22 percent) of the respondents in the baseline survey stated that there are limitations for women to advance on the same basis as men due to their physical constraints. These attitudes need to be further tested among executives and employees of the companies that E4SEA will be working with to identify the right interventions for attitudinal changes towards creating socially and gender-inclusive workplaces.

Although it is claimed that almost 100 percent of households in Thailand are electrified, households in protected areas, such as national parks or reserved areas, are an exception. The National Park Act, B.E. 2504 (1961) and its replacement, the National Park Act 2019, strictly prohibit construction of any infrastructure, including electric poles in the protected forest areas. Many communities in these areas, most of which are ethnic minorities, are not connected to the public grid and live without electricity. Women suffer more from this situation than men as many of their night activities such as sewing, and weaving rely on good lighting. A few community development projects have introduced small-scaled RE technologies such as pico-hydro power plants or solar home systems, which do not require big construction, but they could serve only a limited number of households. They are not allowed to install larger hydro power plants, which may involve cutting down some trees for construction, or generally leave a negative footprint on the environment. This case is a clear example of conflicts between laws and

⁸ CORE International Inc. 2021. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Analysis, USAID/RDMA Enhancing Equality in Energy for Southeast Asia (EEE for SEA) Activity

policies which govern the work of different public sector entities. This case shows the conflict between conservation and community development policies and laws.

Findings from the IDIs with executives, and the FGDs with engineers (women and men) of leading energy companies in Thailand, provided insight into how laws and regulations related to employment and employee management are implemented in the workplace. On the positive side, more women engineers are recruited by the energy sector as there are more women graduates in engineering and related fields such as geology and environmental sciences. In the absence of official statistics, it is suggested by the IDIs and FGDs participants that presently women comprise around 30 percent of the employees in this sector, compared to around ten (10) percent in the past 10-15 years. Yet, most women engineers are assigned to the tasks that are less physically demanding and dangerous such as jobs in the office environment rather than in the field and at plant sites. The women typically work in supporting roles such as designing or monitoring the systems. Many other women employees are in non-STEM functions such as HR, finance, accounting, billing, procurement, health, safety, and environment.

It is worth mentioning that while the employers are concerned about placing women on the project sites, findings from the citizen survey indicate that more than half of the parent respondents said they would support their daughters to work in remote locations. They believe that their daughters who are trained to be professionals should be able to work in all types of jobs including jobs traditionally held only by men.

Measures 41 and 42 of the Labour Protection Law⁹ entitle women's rights related to their maternity function. Women are given 90 days of maternity leave, including weekends and official holidays. Pregnant women can also request to change their assignments temporarily should they not perform their originally assigned functions. A first-class doctor certification must accompany this. From the IDIs and FGDs, it is found that most of the companies comply with these measures. Many of them have done beyond what is required. In a few companies, paternity leave has also been introduced. New mothers can request to adjust their contractual working conditions to facilitate their new role, such as working from home or part-time. Some companies provide facilities for new mothers, such as childcare services and breast-feeding rooms in their facilities.

Regarding other work-related benefits, most employees in the interview said that both men and women are given the same benefits, with women being more advantaged in some respects such as maternity support. One of the mid-level female engineers mentioned, *"Benefits are very important to me. I really appreciate the company's providence fund policy. It is one of the main reasons I choose to work here."* Providence funds are typically a joint employee-employer investment for long term savings and work, much like pension or retirement plans.

The Baseline Citizen Survey findings also suggest that men and women with the same jobs should be paid equally. A very high percentage of men respondents chose this answer.

By law, men are entitled to up to a three month paid leave should they want to be ordained as a Buddhist monk. This law was drafted to facilitate men carrying traditional practices based on beliefs embedded in the Thai culture that an ordained man is a 'ripe' or fully developed person who is ready to

⁹ <https://www.labour.go.th/index.php/hm7/60-2011-06-02-03-47-12>

assume responsibility as ‘head of the family’. Presently this traditional belief is being challenged among many young men, but it is still followed by most men, mainly to pay back to their parents who will gain merits from this good deed. The duration of the ordained period is generally much shorter than three (3) months. The Cabinet Resolution on 4 December 2007 provides women with the same right. It states that women are entitled to paid leave for one to three months for religious practices such as meditation retreats or pilgrimage trips.¹⁰ For government employees, this right is entitled only for one time in their working life. The IDI and FGD participants, however, were not fully aware of this resolution in support of women’s right to follow their religious beliefs. This is a field that E4SEA could further explore and support through its interventions.

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

The government provides free education, for all, for 12 years. Despite its success in promoting girl’s rights to education, challenges remain among girls with disadvantaged status such as those living in very remote areas, along borders, or mountainous areas, most of whom belong to the indigenous groups. Gender gaps in education are also found among other least privileged populations such as people with disabilities (PWD) and stateless persons. Children with disabilities do not have equal access to educational opportunities, partially because they do not have information about the services that are available for them. Where services are available, often they are not fine-tuned to suit specific learning needs of disabled persons. For example, blind students who learn through zoom meetings during the time of COVID-19 could not see the shared screen. This, in a way, reinforces their self-perception as being disabled.¹¹

Unequal access to resources between urban and rural children and youth, especially access to digital devices and services, is also noted. The private sector is driven by their commitment to the SDGs to fill in the gaps to remove these disparities, but most of the private sector entities do not have specific programs focused on gender and youth. They are looking for partners to implement aligned SDGs, particularly on inequality and inequity.

National statistics on education¹² indicate that enrolment rates of girls and boys in primary education are not significantly different, both at almost 100 percent, whereas women enrolment in secondary and university education is higher than that of men. Yet, percentages of men in STEM fields are still higher, despite non-discriminatory recruitment rules and requirements. The Baseline Citizen Survey respondents thought that key factors for lower participation of female students in STEM fields were “hardship and unsafe working environment” and “social norms on gender stereotypes.”

The Baseline Citizen Survey also showed different opinions of respondents regarding most suitable fields of study for girls and boys. The survey indicated that the top three fields for girls are nursing, teaching, and medicine respectively, whereas the top three fields for boys are engineering, law, and computer technology. These reflect stereotypes in Thai society about gender-related capabilities and roles. Despite equal and open opportunities for both boys and girls to enter the STEM fields of education, education and career choices are still influenced by social norms.

¹⁰ <http://www.watpamafai.org/articles/42341521/การลาของสตรี%20มีระเบียบเกี่ยวกับการลาเพื่อไปปฏิบัติธรรมโดยไม่ถือเป็นวันลา.html>

¹¹ UNDP Thailand. 2021. Youth Stakeholder Consultation Report.

¹² National Statistics Office. 2021. Statistics Yearbook Thailand 2020

Findings from the IDIs and FGDs reflected that women and men employees have equal access to services and resources such as professional training, scholarships, and other facilities within the energy sector workplace. In some cases, women are more privileged regarding their security. For example, they are allowed to fly rather than travel by road if the road trip is considered unsafe or physically tough and demanding. Men employees are not granted the same privilege. However, it is worth noting that women engineers are less privileged regarding access to advanced technologies or machines. Some companies do not allow women to use complicated and physically demanding machines, citing it is for their own safety. The explanation is that restricting the use of complicated and physically demanding machines prevents losses or damage to the equipment that may occur as women engineers are believed to be less competent than men in machine operation. It is also noted that most machines are designed for men's use.

In principle, women and men have equal rights to apply for professional development programs organized by the company, such as additional training or a scholarship for overseas study. Yet, their chances to be selected are not always 'equal' to men's chances. There are both internal and external factors involved for this disparity. Many married women with children have double roles which do not allow them to have extra time for self-development. A gender disaggregated report by NSO, MSDHS, and UNDP¹³ indicated that women's reading dropped after the age of 29, so did their participation in other types of self-improvement activities. It was explained that the women's household responsibility accounted for this drop. In the absence of an updated gender-disaggregated database, this trend continues to be generally observed until today.

On the contrary, it is interesting to hear a female leader in the IDIs mention that, today, women have more opportunities to prioritize their career over their children because, in the Thai society, grandparents are quite involved in helping to care for grandchildren. *"In Europe, women have to choose between their careers and their children"*, she said. This is supported by findings from the Citizen Survey where most of the parents in the interview agreed that they would support their daughters (that is married with a small child) in taking advantage of scholarships for professional training opportunities abroad in both support to the daughter in professional growth as well as support in the child rearing in her absence from the family.

Another female CEO in the IDIs also pointed out that, today, having children is a choice, not an obligation. In Thailand, asking a woman applicant about her plan to get married or have children is normal. The answer is not used to discriminate against women applicants, but it helps the company to have an overall scenario about their staffing in the short term and the long term. Another IDI participant also added that it is a governance issue. Employers should always ask a female applicant/employee about her maternity plan and never assume that she will have children or will not take her job seriously after having children because that reflects gender-biased attitudes on both the conscious and unconscious levels.

External factors hindering women from getting additional training or scholarships from the workplace can be regarded as a 'glass ceiling' as these factors are not explicitly communicated in the company policy, but they are unconsciously passed on in the organizational values and practices. Most of these factors are related to unconscious gender biases or lack of gender-responsive considerations. Training programs are not based on gender disaggregated data or needs. For example, if the training is run

¹³ UNDP Thailand. 2008. Gender Development: Similarities and Differences

during evening hours or the application criteria for a scholarship are not gender sensitive, it can be a detriment to female applicants.

Interventions under E4SEA could help raise awareness on the needs to integrate gender-sensitive principles to establish organizational enablers throughout the employee life cycle. The recently developed gender-responsive Internship Toolkit by the E4SEA Activity is a good example. It incorporates key gender considerations in designing, implementing, and evaluating internship programs. For example, in obtaining leadership support and guidance for women-responsive internship programs, one needs to review the extent to which the company's long-term goal and strategies reflect gender-responsive principles and the extent to which those could be reflected in the internship programs. Likewise, in planning working conditions for the interns, it is worth identifying the challenges that female interns may face while working in such conditions.

POWER AND DECISION-MAKING

Data collected and analyzed from the Baseline Citizen Survey reflects different attitudes across the respondent groups about decision-making roles in the family. Most of the younger respondents (students and recent university graduates) agreed that both men and women should make decisions together because “men and women have different ways of looking at things”, and “It is best to have a joint decision acceptable to both”. A smaller percentage of respondents said that the breadwinner should have the final decision because the decisions must be financially viable.

Regarding children's education, most of the parents agreed that parents should have the final word in decisions regarding their children's choice of study/jobs because parents have more insight about prospects of different careers. However, a smaller percentage of parents disagreed and stated that children should be encouraged to make their own decisions about their future. It is also noted that the percentages of women-headed families are on a constant rise, pushing more and more women into leading and decision-making roles, which could be a plus and a challenge to women, especially those from low-income families.

Women's representation in political and public decision-making bodies at every level in Thailand is still relatively low compared to some countries in the Region. The Report on Thai Women Status 2021¹⁴ indicates that only 18 percent of high-level civil servant positions are held by women. Yet, in the private sector, Thailand has a greater percentage of women in senior leadership positions than in both the Asia-Pacific region and globally.¹⁵ It is reported that in Thailand's mid-market companies, women hold 32 percent of senior leadership positions, which is higher than the global average of 27 percent and the Asia-Pacific average of 26 percent.

Thailand ranks on top in the Asia and Pacific region with 23 percent of its leadership in the energy sector made up of women. In addition, it also ranks above most of the global developed markets.¹⁶ Among the companies in the IDIs, one of them has women vice governors who are recognized by the public sector for their intellectual ability and who play a key role in developing the National Power Development Plan. Another company has a female CEO who comes from a non-STEM background and

¹⁴ Department of Women Affairs and Family Development. 2021. Thai Women Status 2021. <https://www.dwf.go.th/Home/Index>

¹⁵ UN Women Asia and the Pacific. 2021. Thailand Country Page. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/thailand>

¹⁶ The Bangkok Post. 2021. Energy Companies Failing to Tap Gender Diversity. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/1749709/energy-companies-failing-to-tap-gender-diversity>

started off as a receptionist in the company many years back. A chairwoman of one company has been awarded with the ASEAN's Excellent CEO Award because, among other things, the company has more women than men on its board.

IDIs with several female CEOs and managers of leading energy companies in Thailand revealed key factors contributing to this progress. Apart from the companies' compliance with international sustainability guidelines, such as the OECD Corporate Governance or UN's SGDs, the qualifications and performance of the women themselves are very important. Most of these women work hard and deliver beyond expectations to rise to the top.

One of the CEOs interviewed as part of the IDIs, mentioned, *"Today, women have plenty of opportunities to showcase their talents. It is about proving yourself when you are given the opportunity."* This is supported by another comment from a mid-level female engineer who suggested, *"If you can demonstrate your value, you can become whatever you want to be in the workplace."* Another female CEO pointed out that being a woman is a plus because of her soft side. Overall, women respect feelings and cultures better than men. They are more people oriented as leaders. She reiterated this with the statement: *"Being feminine is a strength."*

Most companies agree that women can do a better job than men on the business development side. Women generally possess a high level of soft skills. They are also detail oriented and persuasive. These skills are critical for successful negotiations, especially when trying to convince reluctant banks to invest in a project, for example. This soft power is arguably more important than the stereotypical 'male strength'. When combining these traits with technical expertise, women can be extremely skilled negotiators. Statistics also show that Thailand has the highest percentage of female CFOs among countries across the globe.¹⁷

Findings from the Baseline Citizen Survey support the relevance of women leadership. Most male and female respondents (over 80 percent) stated that women's leadership is important for the organization because they can bring new outlooks and diverse perspectives to the organization and business-wide communication can be enhanced because women are effective communicators.

Both male and female employees in the FGDs did not prefer over male or female leaders, if they are good in their positions. To them, 'a good leader should be positive, willing to give suggestions, learn from mistakes, and teach others from those mistakes. Most male engineers said they have had female supervisors/leaders who were capable and supportive. However, there was a remark by one of them, concerning emotional instability of women during their menstruation period. This can be attributed to unconscious bias which reflects stereotypical attitudes about women leaders.

It was also pointed out that professional women do get respect in male-dominated societies such as in Japan and in the energy sector of Thailand. In Thai and Asian culture, age or seniority is another important factor for women to be respected in the workplace.

In the Baseline Citizen Survey findings, a majority of male and female respondents said that it does not matter whether their supervisor/manager is male or female because *"we should not be prejudiced about*

¹⁷ UN Women Asia and the Pacific. 2021. Thailand Country Page. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/countries/thailand>

their gender but should consider their performance as a capable manager.” The minority who preferred male managers over female managers, however, said that a male manager is more objective, reasonable, and decisive in critical situations, while those who prefer female managers said a female manager can work more smoothly with people because of her gentle and caring nature.

A considerably high percentage of survey respondents also mentioned factors leading to low levels of women in leadership as *‘women are not given equal opportunity to be in leadership roles and persistent stereotypical attitudes on gender roles continue to persist in most organizations.*

According to the female industry executives and regulators¹⁸, one theme that consistently stood out as the reason for gender disparity in the energy sector is the lower share of women in STEM specialties. There is a steady reduction in the student population at higher education levels, partially because Thailand is among the world’s most quickly ageing societies. However, it has the potential to lead STEM education in the region. In 2017, Thailand became the first country in Asia-Pacific to pilot a policy toolkit under UNESCO’s global STEM and advancement. The project aimed at analyzing the impact of policies on gender disparities in STEM. This project is very much in line with objectives of the E4SEA Activity and the Activity should explore how it could collaborate with and build upon the knowledge gained by this project.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

National statistics¹⁹ show that the percentages of men in the workforce have always been higher than those of women over the past few years. Percentage of women participation in the workforce has gradually increased over the years, but during the first two quarters of 2020 which was the first outbreak of COVID-19 in Thailand, these rates had remarkably declined. The top three fields of women employment are in 1) agriculture, forestry, and fishery, 2) production and manufacturing, and 3) retail trading. Out of the total women population of working age, a very small percentage (about one point five – 1.5 percent) is reported as employees in the energy, oil, gas, and electricity industries. Statistics also show that a higher percentage of women express needs for occupational training and development.

Results of the Baseline Citizen Survey²⁰ show that general attitudes on gender roles are more varied and diverse in Thailand than the other survey countries (Indonesia and the Philippines). Most respondents still agree that men should be the breadwinner in the family and women should be the caretaker. The justifications are: *‘These are traditional roles we should conform to’*; and *‘Men can earn more money than women’*. However, the respondents were more open to ‘change’ when asked about roles in childcare and household responsibilities. Most of them, both men and women, agreed that a man could do traditional household work and be a caretaker of a child, given interchangeable gender roles.

Within the energy sector, the roles and responsibilities of the employees are determined by their corporate functions and are usually spelled out in their employment contracts. Most of the employees in the FGDs do not see any gender-based discrimination in their assigned roles and responsibilities. As they indicated, roles are assigned based on a person’s qualification, not gender. Apart from the preference for

¹⁸ The Bangkok Post. 2021. Energy Companies Failing to Tap Gender Diversity. <https://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/1749709/energy-companies-failing-to-tap-gender-diversity>

¹⁹ National Statistics Office. 2021. Statistics Yearbook Thailand 2020

²⁰ GeoPoll. 2021. Draft E4SEA CATI Report.

males to go on high-risk business missions, female engineers do not feel any differences in the treatment towards male and female employees.

Most of the FGD employee participants stated that their companies did not have a specific GESI policy, but they never felt any gender-based discrimination in the companies. Some mentioned that changes in the workplace towards gender equality should happen organically even without a clear policy. Female engineers shared a common view that setting up an inclusive working environment is primarily the management's responsibility, but everyone is accountable for making it work. One female CEO pointed out that working in a male-dominated environment, a woman should be bold, straightforward, and confident to demonstrate her talent. Women are more preferred for some roles, such as in business negotiations, because they are effective and persuasive communicators. Some companies stated that women are better than men in many roles as they are more resilient.

Findings from the IDIs with CEOs and HR managers of energy companies suggest that men and women have equal opportunities to be promoted to managerial positions if they are capable, but timing is an important factor. In many cases, women with equal capability are not promoted because it was not the right time. For example, many women at mid-level managerial positions are married with children. They carry double responsibilities and may not be very ready to accept higher leadership positions with time consuming requirements. In some companies, it is very political and there are many factors for what is called the candidate line up for promotion to management or the executive level. Some individuals described that women usually do not adjust well to environments in Thai companies that promote based on highly charged internal political environments.

Some companies facilitate their employees to have a good work-life balance and to perform their dual roles more effectively. For example, there is a childcare service in the workplace for new mothers or mothers with young kids. A paternity leave is also introduced so that men employees could share responsibility in childcaring as well as nurturing through bonding in the first weeks of a new life. However, it is noted that managing a good work-life balance is extremely important and is reported as being more difficult for women than for men.

KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEFS

Promoting gender equality is about changing attitudes of people. To be able to have women representation in politics is also about attitudes. Having more women leaders in the energy sector is also about attitudes. Therefore, there is a need to raise people's awareness about gender equality and gender diversity from the very young age so that it is internalized within each individual person. In Thailand, knowledge about gender equality is not yet widely introduced or when it is introduced, it could be misinterpreted or rejected among some groups of people. Because of its open culture and enhanced opportunities for women participation in many sectors, it is generally believed that Thailand does not have the issue of gender-inequality. This could lead to unconscious gender bias practices at homes, schools, workplaces, and in other public spheres.

Thailand is quite progressive in terms of policy and legislation to promote gender equality. This is the result of good work by MSDHS which provides leadership in enabling legal and policy mechanisms, but the problem remains as to how to make real changes, not just at the project or activity level but at the structural level. Despite the national women's development plan which complies with the national economic and social development plans, there is still a lack of awareness among government agencies

and a lack of an inter-ministerial mechanism to address gender empowerment in a concerted way. However, gender equality indicators are incorporated across the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that Thailand has committed to. This could help accelerate the understanding of how gender equality could be promoted across concerned ministries, the private sector, NGOs, and community-based organizations.

Knowledge about gender equality should go beyond men and women and include people with other gender identities such as LGBTQI+ groups who still suffer from the weak legal framework to protect their basic human rights and to enable them to fully participate in development opportunities on an equal basis. There is a work in progress on the rights of the LGBTQI+ persons in Thailand. As mentioned previously, Thailand is missing a gender-disaggregated database and a database on LGBTQI+ citizens that could be used to inform inclusive planning and policy formulation.

Unconscious gender bias and discrimination are caused by a lack of knowledge about gender equality as related to human rights. Unconscious bias in the workplace can be seen in many ways, such as through the unequal opportunities for promotion or the encouragement of a “bro-culture” in the workplace. For example, during one of the IDIs, a female HR manager mentioned that it is normal in her organization to play around jokes that are typical among young men but may sound offensive to women. Therefore, a woman working in a male-dominated environment should understand it and not take such indiscretions too seriously. Interventions to sensitize and increase knowledge among corporate management and employees about inclusivity and equality, therefore, are extremely important.

HUMAN DIGNITY INCLUDING GBV

Human dignity may be defined as the ability for every individual to be respected, be honored, and be a valued member of the society, able to pursue their goals and experience well-being, including through the prevention of gender-based violence.²¹ In compliance with international bindings on human rights, Thailand has established the National Human Rights Commission of Thailand under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand B.E. 2540 (1997) as a result of the public’s driving force and demand for an independent mechanism to promote and protect rights and liberties of people.²² It has mandates to protect and promote human rights; provide recommendations to the government, the parliament and concerned organizations on human right-related matters; and assess human rights situations and report to the government and the parliament.

NHRC statistics from October 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 show the complaints received. The top three (3) among these are complaints on the right to justice (30 percent of the total), followed by the right to life and personal liberties, and unfair practices respectively. Complaints on women’s rights and gender equality comprise only 2.7 percent of the total.²³

Statistics from the Department of Women Affairs and Family Development (DWFD) show a different scenario. Its report on Thai women’s status ²⁴ indicates that, on the average, 43 cases of gender-based

²¹ CORE International Inc. 2021. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Analysis, USAID/RDMA Enhancing Equality in Energy for Southeast Asia (EEE for SEA) Activity

²² NHRC. 2021. NHRC Webpage. [https://www.nhrc.or.th/AboutUs/The-Commission/Mandates.aspxunder%20the%20Constitution%20of%20the%20Kingdom%20of%20Thailand%20B.E.%202540%20\(1997\)](https://www.nhrc.or.th/AboutUs/The-Commission/Mandates.aspxunder%20the%20Constitution%20of%20the%20Kingdom%20of%20Thailand%20B.E.%202540%20(1997))

²³ NHRC. 2021. Statistics Received in the Fiscal Year 2021. <https://www.nhrc.or.th/NHRCT-Work/Statistical-information/Statistical-information-on-complaints/yearly.aspx>

²⁴ Department of Women Affairs and Family Development. 2021. Thai Women Status 2021. <https://www.dwf.go.th/Home/Index>

violence were reported daily in 2020, and 92 percent of the victims were women and girls. Many of them were from low-income families or communities where patriarchal values and culture prevail. For example, women in the Thailand-Myanmar border areas have been impacted by armed conflicts between Myanmar armies and Karen troops for over 70 years.²⁵ Women aged 30 years and above who live in those areas were not included in the educational system and were married very young. They are often victims of gender-based violence. When faced with GBV, these women could not go into the justice system because there is no entry point for them and some of them have not yet been granted Thai citizenship. It is also obvious that when the mothers did not receive education, it also impacted their children in terms of poverty, healthcare, and quality of living. Three reasons were mentioned as root causes of this domestic violence: 1) education service which is not inclusive for women lacking Thai nationality (in the past); 2) women's leadership is not promoted; and 3) lack of official channels for women to express and speak for themselves or against their abuser.

The COVID-19 outbreaks have negatively impacted many women in Thailand, especially those in the production, manufacturing, and service workforces. Women were the first segment of the society who were laid off. Migrant women workers are not entitled to get compensation funds from the government as they do not have a Thai ID. Therefore, they lacked a safety net to protect them through this exceptionally hard time. Also, compensation schemes by the government have not considered different gender-responsive needs. Men and women receive the same amount in every scheme, but women have more expenses to bear as the family caretaker.

Economic pressures usually cause tension within the family, resulting in more reported GBV cases during the COVID-19 period. Many girls from poor families or those living in ethnic communities in border line areas have dropped out of school as they cannot afford to buy digital devices or pay for internet services to study online. Some of them are forced into marriage which is often followed by GBV.

On the positive side, it is reported that the government's Social Assistance Centre increased urgent assistance phone lines from 15 to 60 during the COVID-19 crisis to respond to the needs of women and girls from increasing rates of domestic violence. Also, Joint initiatives between state agencies, private sector partners, and CSOs have been implemented to end domestic violence in vulnerable areas such as the deep south and some municipalities in big cities.²⁶

Students with LGBTQI+ identity also reported incidences which violated their human rights in schools, such as bullying or verbal harassment from other students. Schools have a grievance mechanism which generally is not very effective.²⁷ Under the existing laws and regulations, there are no specific LGBTQI+-friendly services, especially for those faced with violence.

In the workplace, most female and male engineers in the FGDs stated that they had never heard of or experienced any GBV cases in their companies. They believed if it happens, it can be easily reported. However, this remark did not include verbal bullying or harassment which many men and women did not recognize. Again, this is an issue about unconscious gender insensitivity.

²⁵ UNDP Thailand. 2021. Gender Stakeholders Consultation Report

²⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Thailand. 2021. Thailand's Voluntary Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development

²⁷ UNDP Thailand. 2021. LGBTI Stakeholders Consultation Report

These employees mentioned grievance mechanisms which take different forms including open reporting to superintendent unit/committee and anonymous reports/complaints. In some companies, staff can directly meet the executives to get their issues resolved. Men and women employees have equal access to these mechanisms. One female engineer pointed out that her company encourages staff to openly express themselves, without being judged. There is a program called ‘Wow Idea’ which allows employees to submit innovative ideas about their workplace. Another company has the ‘Opening Minds’ program where staff openly discuss with their direct bosses how they could grow further in the career and how the company could support them.

It is interesting to find out that companies with high DJSI (Dow Jones Sustainability Indices) ranking or companies which are committed to the SDGs systematically incorporate gender equality and inclusive workplace in their annual reports. As an entry point, it is easier for the E4SEA Activity to engage with these companies to enhance their potential as champions in gender equality advancement and to accelerate their sustainability targets related to gender.

GENDER ISSUES IN THE STUDENT LIFE CYCLE

This section provides a brief overview of GESI issues in the educational sector in Thailand, including the educational systems, the current situation, and gender challenges in educational and career opportunities in STEM areas.

The Thai education system consists of 12-year basic education. Students start their basic education at the age of six (6). The Thai formal education includes early years education, basic education, vocational and technical education, and higher education (MOE 2008).²⁸ Basic education in Thailand is divided into six years of primary schooling, followed by three years of secondary schooling, and three years of high school. There are eight core subjects in the National Curriculum: 1) Thai language; 2) mathematics; 3) science; 4) social studies; 5) religion and culture; 6) health and physical education; 7) arts, careers, and technology; and 8) foreign languages (MOE 2008).

Vocational and technical education is conducted at three levels: 1) upper secondary (leading to the Lower Certificate of Vocational Education), 2) post-secondary (leading to a Diploma or Vocational Associate Degree), and 3) university level (leading to a degree) (MOE 2008). Vocational education helps to meet the demand of the labor markets and promote self-employment in accordance with social and economic development of the country, and research, innovation, and technology development for a competitive market (Bureau of International Cooperation 2008).

Higher education is predominantly provided at the universities and colleges. The higher education entrance examination is taken at the end of high school.

FGDs conducted with students in high schools, vocational colleges, and universities in Thailand were structured to include four student life cycle stages as follows:

I. Enrollment

²⁸ Towards a Learning Society in Thailand. An Introduction to Education in Thailand. <https://bic.moe.go.th/images/stories/book/ed-eng-series/intro-ed08.pdf> MOE 2008.

2. Curriculum
3. Internship and Higher Education
4. Career Opportunity and Challenges

During the FGDs, the students indicated their own experience in the education system regarding gender equality. Based on the FGDs, the following are the key insights from the data and information gathered in four student life cycle stages.

Enrollment: Students from high schools, vocational colleges, and universities shared that receiving guidance in both education and career is very important. They expressed that it would be useful if students could receive the guidance as early as possible (i.e., in the primary school) since it will help them to form ideas on future education and career paths. Only some students received guidance from their family members, teachers, and senior alumni. Some of the students also expressed that having role models, especially in the areas of their interests, would encourage them to find out more about studies or career opportunities. The Baseline Citizen Survey indicated that 83 percent of participants agreed to have more females enrolled in STEM-related studies.

Curriculum: Some of the students expressed that they decided to study in their selected programs because they had a strong interest in the curriculum and the future opportunities. However, some of the students chose their selected programs because their parents or teachers recommended or wanted them to study in that area. Most of the students indicated that the curriculum they selected met their expectations, but some students felt that some parts of their curriculum needed to be adjusted for the new generation. Students were also asked about their overall experience beyond classes and to discuss harassment in schools or institutions. Surprisingly, schools in Thailand do not reinforce the Child Protection Policy. As a result, there are numerous instances throughout Thailand of both students and teachers who are abused in schools. Yet, there are no clear standards or regulations for penalty to abusers.

The Baseline Citizen Survey indicated that 88 percent of parents reported that they would support a daughter's decision to study engineering if she were academically qualified and has a strong interest in STEM. The survey results on gender role and its impact on career indicated that 68 percent of parents either strongly agreed or agreed that parents should have the final word in the decisions regarding their children's choice of study and jobs. Most students (59 percent) responded that it is because parents have more insight about prospects of different careers.

1. Internship and Higher Education

Most of the students reflected that internships offer a great opportunity for them to get to 1) know the organizations and workplace culture better, 2) expand their networks, and 3) provide them an opportunity to work in the organization. Students requested assistance to connect them with organizations, especially in STEM or energy sectors. Some students have interned in energy companies and were able to share their internship experience both with respect to the work and the organizations' policy to promote gender equality. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many students indicated that they have not had an opportunity to intern yet.

Most of the survey participants (54 percent) stated that to some extent the gender roles influence their choice of profession. The majority (62 percent) also stated that to some extent social norms and traditional gender roles influenced their decision when choosing their educational field and profession.

2. Career Opportunity and Challenges

The students indicated that they had not received enough guidance for choosing their studies, schools, and professions. Some of the participants did not know what educational choices to make and what professions will be available when they graduate. While many of the participants have interest in STEM areas and the energy sector, they felt the need to be able to learn more from senior students and alumni. The opportunity available for energy sector jobs to graduates of vocational colleges is limited as various employers prefer to hire engineers who have at least a bachelor's degree. The internship organizations guiding the students did not provide clear job descriptions and did not implement the policy to encourage gender equality.

A large percentage (68 percent) of survey respondents stated that in many companies, promotion is based on performance regardless of biological sex or gender identity. They felt that it was a positive sign that companies in Thailand value gender equality. Among the recent male graduates surveyed, 88 percent felt that women and men with similar qualifications and experience should receive the same salary and 100 percent of working professionals and “others” agreed with this view.

GENDER ISSUES IN THE EMPLOYEE LIFE CYCLE

1. Attraction and Talent Outreach:

- Due to the increasingly competitive environment in the energy sector, many companies have become more proactive to reach out to the brightest STEM students and graduates, but the focus is still on men. In general, companies do not see the need to provide special incentives to attract the brightest women as they think that women always put the energy sector as their top priority. The Baseline Citizen Survey findings indicate that men and women have different reasons when applying for a job. Men tend to look for attractive salaries and convenient and safe working locations, while women look for a benefits package and special support with work-life balance. These findings reflect their attitudes on gender roles as well.

2. Recruitment and Hiring:

- There are more opportunities for female engineers to be employed in the energy sector and more female candidates are selected for technical jobs. Selection is based on their academic performance and experience. Female graduates with less attractive GPA or those from disadvantaged background are less likely to be recruited because of competition from more qualified candidates.
- The Labour Protection Act prohibits employers to assign women to tasks that could be physically dangerous or harmful to their health, including women climbing higher than ten (10) meters, pregnant women working on night duties or with heavy machines or riding

vehicles on bumping roads. Many companies prefer to hire men than women to avoid complications in complying with the Law.

- Women are recruited or assigned to less physically demanding work. Most of them typically work in offices not at the project sites and plants. When women are assigned to work onsite or to travel, most companies have special arrangements for their security and safety. This applies to women employees at all levels, including those in executive positions.
- During job interviews, some employers ask women applicants on their plan to get married and have children. Although this information does not directly influence employment decisions, it reflects employer's concerns on the issue. Some of them are concerned about women taking maternity leave and becoming less productive after they have children. But most women leaders in the IDIs did not think that this was a big issue, as having children today is a choice not a must and many families have grandparents to help take care of the children. With the advancement of digital technologies, new mothers can often negotiate to work from home during periods of special needs.
- Most companies prefer hiring women than men in business development positions. HR managers and CEOs in the IDIs agreed that women typically do better than men in business development. Women have a high level of soft skills which make them effective and persuasive negotiators.

3. Onboarding and Training:

- Formal orientation/training includes introduction to the organization's core value and code of conduct which are generally inclusive and non-discriminative. Informal socialization sessions during the training, however, can unconsciously pass on stereotypical attitudes and behaviors in the male-dominated workplace to new staff.

4. Performance Management, Compensation and Benefits:

- Job descriptions for men and women employees for the same position are not different, but when it comes to business trips, most companies tend to assign men on business trips to high-risk sites or countries. Performance management is tied to their Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) regardless of where they are located. However, operational work at power plant sites is more important in most companies.
- All companies comply with the Thai law on maternity leave and in some companies, paternity leave is introduced. Women employees are entitled to a 90 day maternity leave. Men and women are entitled to the same rights to apply for paid leave in connection with religious practices, such as ordination, meditation retreats, or pilgrimage trips. However, not many women are aware of this newly granted right for them. Men and women are entitled to the same employee benefits, but women tend to enjoy privileges in connection to their maternity function. For example, a woman who delivers a baby is provided with a special fund as part of the company's welfare scheme.

5. Talent and Leadership Development:

- In principle, women and men have equal opportunities to be promoted to leadership roles based on performance. However, there are several factors that are considered as constraints for women to advance to leadership positions. Timing and political considerations, sometimes, inhibit women to rise to leadership positions.
- Female leaders usually work beyond expectation to rise to high leadership roles. Two of the women CEOs in the IDIs come from non-STEM backgrounds but they worked hard and strive to learn. One of them had a bachelor's in accounting but she was an activist since her student time and always had a hunger for knowledge. The other lady stated that she was given lots of opportunities from her boss, the company owner, to learn by doing. Most senior women executives mentioned that as a leader, it is important to touch the heart of the employees and ensure that their voices are heard.
- Most CEOs agree that women are less suitable for physically demanding work or work that involves safety risks. But when it comes to intellect, women are not inferior to men. They could be better than men in many ways. Male engineers have no discomfort with having female supervisors but some of them confessed that they feel more comfortable working with male supervisors.
- Most employers do not have a policy against promoting women into leadership roles, but they do not have specific leadership development programs for women employees. Some of them have a mentoring or coaching program but it is not designed and implemented with a specific purpose to increase leadership skills for women.
- All employers emphasize the importance of continual learning as the key to employee development. Some companies finance research work and collaborate with educational institutes to train their employees in R&D and other technical and operational functions.

6. Retention and Employment Engagement

- Several measures are adopted by energy employers to retain their employees. However, there is no specific gender-responsive retention consideration. Given women's dual responsibilities at the workplace and in the family, employers may need to consider designing retention policies that are specific to women. So far, there is no practice of gender-sensitive retention and there are almost no policies and systems in place in the Thai energy industry.
- Among the companies in the stakeholder consultations, there is no lay-off policy in a crisis but there are some adjustments to workload and relocation for site-based staff.
- There is a high turn-over rate among female engineers in offshore work in the energy sector. This involves internal factors such as family pressure and responsibility and external factors such as improper working conditions, poor support from supervisors, and less attractive benefits for female employees. Eventually, some companies avoid hiring women in offshore work.

7. Succession Planning and Promotion:

- Many of the companies in the IDIs have sustainability reporting that includes succession planning. According to the IDIs, most of these companies generally prioritize qualifications rather than gender. Still, it seems that there are not always an equal number of male and female candidates for high-level positions. Some companies interviewed implement so-called “Open the Mind” program as an entry point for the employees to discuss their potential career growth plans with their bosses. Some companies encourage junior employees to start taking small leading roles such as chairing meetings, taking bottom line responsibility for tasks and delivery of results, and assuming temporary supervisory responsibilities. This presents a gender equitable practice that encourages young male and female employees to feel empowered and included in high-level employee engagement within the company.

8. Organizational Enablers

- **Policy and Grievance Management:** Most companies do not have explicit policies on gender equality (except for those with high DJSI ranking). Also, there is little evidence of concrete policies to address gender discrimination. Recruitment, employment, and promotion are, in general, based on professional qualification and performance. Most companies have grievance mechanisms where gender-based discrimination can be addressed along with any other grievances.
- **Company Performance and Reporting:** Companies with high DJSI ranking or those listed in stock markets follow international guidelines, such as OECD, SDGs in their reporting to maintain their sustainability scores. They are also more conscious of their brand and image. Accordingly, gender equality is a key priority in the governance structure and policies in such companies. OECD, which promotes Corporate Governance (CG), emphasizes women on the BoD of companies. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) address global issues in 17 development areas. SDG five (5) on gender aims to achieve gender equality and to empower women and girls.
- **Corporate Communication and Branding:** In most cases, corporate core values are reflected in their branding. Most brandings of the IDI companies have no specific reference to gender equality although some of them position themselves as a promoter of ‘diversity’ and ‘inclusiveness’ in their workplace to reduce social and gender gaps. These values are communicated externally to promote the company’s image and internally to gain acceptance and appreciation among the staff. Internal communication is interactive and open.
- **Corporate Culture and Leadership:** In most of the energy companies, teamwork is important and there is a strong sense of camaraderie. Corporate culture and value are communicated through regular and extra activities of the company. Several of these companies have women on their boards and executive bodies. Some of them are granted international awards as champions in gender equality promotion. However, most of these women leaders do not express explicit ideas on how their companies could systematically ensure more women in high level management roles. One female CEO has her webpage to inspire other women to pursue the frontline.

GENDER CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THAILAND

Table A8-5 summarizes gender challenges and opportunities in Thailand grouped under each the GESI domains as per ADS-205. The opportunities provide a basis for recommendations for future activities that are summarized at the end of the Executive Summary.

Different analysts and researchers use different conventions with respect to GESI domains. While ADS-205 lists five (5) GESI domains and does not include GBV as a domain, more recently, it is a generally accepted best practice to include GESI as the sixth domain in GESI analysis. However, in conformance with ADS-205 framework and because of the high significance of GBV in the region and in Thailand, the GBV challenge and opportunities are discussed separately outside of the five (5) GESI domains.

TABLE A8-5: COUNTRY-SPECIFIC GENDER CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THAILAND

DOMAINS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
Law and Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thai citizens have equal constitutional rights but Measure 38 of the Labour Protection Act, B.E. 2541 (1998) prohibits employers to assign female employees with tasks that could be harmful e.g., underground mining and construction, climbing higher than ten (10) meters, engaging a pregnant woman on night duties between 22:00-6:00 hrs. for working with machines, riding in vehicles, lifting heavy objects. Thailand has committed to the Sustainable Development Goals. Its aspiration in advancing its SDG targets depends very much on its progress in promoting gender equality which cuts across the 17 development goals with clear indicators. SDG5 (Gender Equality) aims to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls whereas other SDGs have gender equality included as their indicators. For example, reducing, at least by half, the proportion of men, women and children living under poverty line (SDG 1); ensuring equal access for women and men to vocational education and higher education (SDG 4); universal access to affordable renewable technologies and services (SDG 7); and protecting labor rights and promoting safe and secure working environment for women and migrant workers (SDG 8). All government organizations/institutes are obliged to set and achieve targets for their relevant SDGs, with gender equality as a cross-cutting indicator. Many big companies in the private sector are also committed to sustainability reporting based on selected SDGs. A few companies in the IDIs report against the OECD framework where gender equality is one focus area. Conflicting laws and policies limit access to energy, especially for ethnic minority women. National Park Act, 2019 strictly prohibits construction of any infrastructure, including 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The government should approach donors to potentially fund a program that will create partnerships with energy companies that already have strong commitment and good practices in promoting gender equality (e.g., those complying with international sustainability reporting framework). Through partnership arrangements, the government could assist the employers to ensure that GESI principles are systematically incorporated and practiced in the companies' employee life cycle management. This program could be modeled based on the partnerships model used under E4SEA and Engendering Industries. Government should expand its on-going small-scale Renewable Energy Technologies (RETs) training programs to additional male and female participants in the growing renewable energy field. Because of the enormous potential for renewable energy systems in remote and rural areas of the country, the government should consider expanding RET project operations and maintenance training for females in the rural areas. This could potentially carry out in two steps, i.e., building capacity of local technical institutes, including female students in RETs; subsequently, the trained individuals can be engaged as trainers for rural communities. The government should encourage the vocational schools to further refine their curriculum on appropriate RETs, if possible, with support from RE energy companies. Develop internship program for female students with the RE companies. Upon their graduation, the students may have more employment opportunities with the RE companies. They may also choose to set up their own businesses to install and maintain

TABLE A8-5: COUNTRY-SPECIFIC GENDER CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THAILAND

DOMAINS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
	<p>electric poles in the protected forest areas. Women suffer more than men as many of their night activities such as sewing, and weaving rely on good lighting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDIs and FGDs reveal that most of the companies comply with the 90 days of maternity leave required by law, and many provide benefits beyond what is required, including more time and childcare facilities at the workplace. In a few companies, paternity leave has also been introduced. • Men get a three (3)-month paid leave for Buddhist ordination. The Cabinet Resolution on 4 December 2007 provides women with the same right to follow their religious beliefs which is constituted. 	<p>community-based small scale RETs models in non-electrified communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institute a country-wide program on enhancing laws and policies that would encourage entry of female students in the renewable energy technology field and prepare them for employment in the RE industry. • Address the equity issue related to men getting a three-month paid leave for Buddhist ordination and how women are more inclined to be confined with family responsibilities and are less likely to use their entitled religious leave.
Access to Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government provides free K-12 education for all with nine (9) years as compulsory education. In higher education, women have greater enrollment rate than men, but engineering, manufacturing, and construction studies are still dominated by men. • Baseline Citizen Survey respondents think that key factors for lower enrollment of female students in STEM fields are 'hardship and unsafe working environment', and 'social norms on gender stereotypes.' • Recruitment of students is based on academic scores, not on gender. From the Baseline Citizen Survey and FGDs, it is indicated that women could be as good men in studying STEM subjects and doing jobs that are traditionally associated with men. • The Baseline Citizen Survey shows that social norms on gender stereotypes are gradually changing among the younger generations and many of them agree that social norms are important, but a person should also consider his/her individual preferences before choosing a profession. • IDIs and FGDs reflect that within the energy workplaces, female engineers are believed to be less competent than men in machine operation and most machines are designed for men's use. • Both internal and external factors affect women's equal right to apply for professional development, including household responsibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government should consider tapping into the positive trends to plan interventions related to gender inclusive training. Specifically, the School Engagement Toolkit, created under E4SEA should be adapted to engage with students, teachers, and parents. • The government should enhance its outreach program to encourage energy employers to explicitly incorporate gender equality and gender equity issues in their corporate governance and ensure that GESI is practiced at all levels within the energy organizations. • The government should consider designing information campaigns in partnership with the private sector to address certain beliefs that are not conducive to enhancing opportunities for women for STEM education and energy sector careers. For example, the belief in some circles that women are not as good as men in STEM should be dismissed through active engagement with the parties propagating such belief. Additionally, women in STEM could be promoted as role models in social and conventional media. • Both the public sector and the private sector should be encouraged to harmonize their policies and programs in order to ensure that men and women have equal access to all resources. For example, men and women should have the same choices and be judged on the same principles for STEM education or for employment in the energy sector. One very desirable intervention that the government could consider would be to design targeted training programs for young men and women on the benefits of equal access to resources and replicate this program throughout the country.
Power and Decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's representation in political and public decision-making bodies at every level in Thailand is still relatively low 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government should explore where and how more women can be promoted into decision making roles both in the public sector and in the energy industry. Targeted interventions

TABLE A8-5: COUNTRY-SPECIFIC GENDER CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THAILAND

DOMAINS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
	<p>compared to the Philippines and Indonesia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of women-headed families is on a constant rise, pushing more and more women into a leading and decision-making role, which could be a plus as well as a challenge to women, especially those from low-income families. • Another theme that consistently stood out as the reason for gender disparity in the energy sector is the lower share of women in STEM specialties. There is a constant shrinking of student population at higher education level, partially because Thailand is among the world's most quickly ageing societies. • Most employers welcome women in leadership roles, but they do not have specific leadership development programs for female employees. • In private sector, Thailand has a greater percentage of women in senior leadership positions than both the Asia-Pacific region and the global average. It also has the greatest percentage of female leaders in the energy sector, some of whom are from non-STEM backgrounds. • According to the IDIs, most companies prefer women to men in business development position. Women generally possess a high level of soft skills, which are critical for successful negotiations, especially with investors. • Both male and female employees in the FGDs do not have preference over male or female leaders, if they are good. • Findings from the Baseline Citizen Survey reinforce that women's leadership is important for the organization because they can bring new outlook and diverse perspective to the organization and business-wide communication can be enhanced because women are effective communicators. 	<p>should be developed to connect universities and vocational schools with energy employers through the design and delivery of leadership skills development programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to increase the number of women holding leadership positions in the public and private sectors, there is a need to develop robust mentorship programs that would encourage women to learn and adapt leadership skills and seek leadership positions. • While Thailand has made considerable progress in enabling women in leadership roles the government should build upon this success through joint public-private sector initiatives. For example, women role models should be invited as keynote speakers and coaches at various fora. Another area where the government can be very instrumental is to initiate dialogues with many of the business schools in the country to develop customized leadership and management programs to serve the growing and transitioning needs of the energy industry in the country.
Roles and Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Findings from the IDIs with CEOs and HR managers of energy companies suggest that men and women have equal opportunities to be promoted to managerial positions if they are capable, but timing is an important factor. For example, most women at mid-level managerial positions are married with children and may not be ready to accept higher leadership positions, which can be quite political in the candidate line up. • Most of the employee participants in the FGDs stated that their companies did not have explicit GESI policy, but they do not feel that there is discrimination between male and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The energy employers should strengthen policies and practices related to mentoring, retention, and promotion of women in the energy sector through change management coaching and participation in management programs. • Engendering Industries and E4SEA are working with their respective partners in providing coaching for the reform of HR policies to be consistent with GESI and assisting them to participate in an accelerated course specifically designed to address GESI in corporate management.

TABLE A8-5: COUNTRY-SPECIFIC GENDER CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN THAILAND

DOMAINS	CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS
	<p>female employees. Job descriptions for men and women in the same position are not different and performance assessment is based on the same KPIs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some companies support their employees to have a good work-life balance so that they have more time for self-development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In many cases, women in mid-management positions, with the growing responsibility for children and home, reluctantly give up promotion opportunities to leadership positions. This results in a drain of competent resources for employers. Therefore, energy employers should consider additional on-the-job benefits to retain such competent women managers. These benefits could include flexible work hours, on-site childcare, and other benefits that could help women managers achieve a better balance between home and work life.
Knowledge and Beliefs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Despite the national women's development plan which complies with the national economic and social development plans, there is still a lack of awareness among government agencies and lack of inter-ministerial mechanism to address gender empowerment in a concerted way. Thailand is missing a gender disaggregated data base and a data base on LGBTQI+ citizens that could be used to inform inclusive planning. Unconscious gender bias and discrimination persist in energy workplaces. For example, a female HR manager in an IDI mentioned that it is normal in her organization to hear jokes that are typical among young men but may sound offensive to women. Thailand has a strong commitment to achieving its SDGs targets by 2030. Gender equality indicators are incorporated across the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that Thailand has committed to. This would help accelerate understanding how gender equality could be promoted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce and support the development of gender disaggregated data base for the energy industry for inclusive employee life cycle planning and management. The government should consider working in partnership with the private sector to encourage the companies to design and develop ToT programs to train their managers and employees on addressing conscious and unconscious bias that negatively impact women in recruitment, hiring, promotion, and retention.

HUMAN DIGNITY AND GBV CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

CHALLENGES

The following is a summary of the human dignity and GBV challenges in Thailand:

- The COVID-19 outbreaks have negatively impacted many women in Thailand, especially those in the production, manufacturing, and service workforce. Women were the first people who were laid off. Migrant women workers are not entitled to get compensation funds from the government. Men and women receive the same amount in every scheme, but women have more expenses to bear as the family caretakers.
- Economic pressures usually cause tensions within the family, resulting in more reported DV and GBV cases during the pandemic.

- Students with LGBTQI+ identity also report incidences that violate their human rights in schools, such as bullying or verbal harassment from other students. Schools have a grievance mechanism that, generally, is not very effective.
- In the workplace, most female and male engineers in the FGDs said that they have never heard of or experienced any GBV cases in their companies. They believe that if it happens, it can be easily reported. However, this remark does not include verbal bullying or harassment, which many of them do not recognize.
- According to the IDIs and FGDs, men and women have equal access to grievance mechanisms. However, they do not appear to be effective in practice.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are some of the recommendations offered to address the human dignity and GBV challenge in Thailand:

- The government should continue to expand its outreach to raise awareness of women's rights as related to human rights, including the international and national legal frameworks against GBV among the companies' management and employees.
- Targeted programs should be developed to support the strengthening of existing policies against GBV in the workplace or support the establishment of rules and regulations against GBVs.
- The government should continue to expand its coverage and outreach to address domestic violence through the use of social media toolkits and other social media platforms.

CONCLUSIONS

Thailand's constitution provides that men and women shall enjoy equal rights, and this has been translated into organic laws, public policies, and implementation mechanisms. Over the decades, the country has successfully closed gender gaps in the areas of education, health, and economic participation. Still, there is not much progress in women's representation in political bodies. Thailand's aspiration in advancing the 2030 SDG targets depends very much on its progress in promoting gender equality which cuts across the country's 17 development goals. Despite an enabling legal and implementation framework, Thailand still needs to have a comprehensive gender-disaggregated database and gender-responsive budgeting mechanism in place, both of which have been initiated but have not yet been institutionalized. The lack of these two enabling mechanisms to support inclusive development planning is a key factor that hinders the advancement of gender equality in several sectors of the Thai economy.

Although the country has made notable progress in education enrollment and completion rates among women, there remain discrepancies among disadvantaged groups such as ethnic women, women in the deep southern provinces, and women with disabilities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of school dropouts among female students in remote communities or low-income families have increased because they cannot afford the costs associated with online learning. Statistics also show that both women and men are active users of mobile telephones and computers, but men use the internet more often than women. This implies that women and girls benefit less from digital learning platforms than men and boys.

The Thai government provides a universal health care scheme for all citizens. Yet, migrant women or ethnic women with no Thai citizenship are not entitled to this right.

Thailand has a higher percentage of women in senior leadership positions in the private sector, including the energy sector than both in the Asia-Pacific region overall and globally. Yet, women are still underrepresented in senior leadership roles in the public and political sectors. There are no targeted policies and mechanisms to promote women's leadership in politics and the public sector.

Social norms and values on traditional roles in the Thai society have gradually changed over time due to greater participation of women in socio-economic activities. Although most respondents of the Baseline Citizen Survey agree that men should still be the breadwinners of the family, roles can be interchangeable depending on the actual situation of a family. There have also been constant increases in numbers of women-headed families (i.e., single mothers), especially among lower income groups.

Unconscious gender biases persist in Thai society, including in the energy sector workplace. Findings from FGDs with female and male engineers show that some of these employees tend to unconsciously accept gender-biased comments among colleagues as normal and what they are used to seeing. Despite the existence of a legal framework to protect women's rights and to safeguard them from GBV, stronger reinforcement of these frameworks is needed because GBV rates rise constantly, especially during the COVID-19 time, where women and girls are the majority of the victims.

In the FGDs, students from high schools, vocational colleges, and universities shared that receiving guidance in both education and career choices is very important and the advice should be provided as early as possible. Having role models, especially in the areas of their interests, would encourage them to

find out more about studies and career opportunities. The results of the Baseline Citizen Survey reflect a common view that there should be more female students in STEM studies and that most parents would support a daughter's decision to study engineering if she were academically qualified and has a strong interest.

Most of the students indicated that the curriculum they selected in schools and universities met their expectations. Still, some students felt that their curriculum needed to be updated for the new generation. Most schools in Thailand do not reinforce the Child Protection Policy. There are numerous instances of both students and teachers being abused in schools. Yet, there are no clear standards or regulations for a penalty to abusers.

Although many students reflected that an internship is a great opportunity for them to get to know the organization and workplace culture before they enter the existing workforce, the opportunity for energy sector jobs available to graduates of vocational colleges is limited. Various employers prefer to hire engineers who have at least a bachelor's degree.

Due to the increasingly competitive environment in the energy sector, many companies become more proactive to reach out to the brightest STEM graduates, but the focus is still on men. Many female STEM graduates end up in non-STEM jobs.

Female graduates who are recruited by energy companies usually have excellent academic records. Female graduates with less attractive GPAs or those from a disadvantaged background are less likely to be recruited. Some companies prefer male candidates regardless of their GPAs. Employment opportunities for women are further limited by the Labour Protection Act which prohibits employers to assign women to tasks that could be physically dangerous or harmful to their health.

All companies comply with the Thai law on maternity leave and, in some companies, paternity leave has been introduced. Men and women are entitled to the same rights to apply for paid leave in connection with religious practices, yet it is not widely recognized. They are also entitled to the same employee benefits, but women tend to enjoy privileges connected to their maternity function.

In principle, women and men have equal opportunities to be promoted to leadership roles based on performance. However, there are several factors of concern for women to advance to leadership positions. This includes timing, whether it is about family planning, age, or readiness, as well as the concern about organizational politics. Several measures are adopted by energy employers to retain their employees, but there are no specific gender-responsive retention initiatives. There is a clear need for corporate governance policies and practices to promote a gender inclusive and equitable work environment that will benefit women, the organizational culture, as well as the bottom line of energy companies because of diversity of thought that is conducive to more innovation and higher productivity.

REFERENCES

In addition to references included as footnotes throughout the report, the following additional references were useful for the initial development of the GESI Analysis and subsequent research and analysis to inform the GESI Analysis and GIDAP as part of this report.

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