The skills and awareness of workers facilitating participatory processes depend largely on the training given, which is in turn governed by the remit of their parent organisation. If energy is not included in the training, it is unlikely to be recognised by either extension workers or villages as a need leading to gaps in communication.

Key findings included:

- The provision and use of energy is an important consideration in all environments
- Processes seeking to identify household problems should be participatory and ideally without a pre-set agenda
- Broad general knowledge is needed to facilitate agenda free needs assessment
- Facilitators or animators of participatory processes are often to blame for communities not reporting energy needs
- Workers can be trained to "see" energy issues, basic energy awareness should be a part of broader training programmes



This DFID funded research project sought to test this hypothesis. The project methodology included a review of existing training materials for institutes, a survey of extension workers throughout the world to gain an insight as to how widely participatory processes are used in the field and to determine which tools are commonly used, and workshops with trainers of participatory processes were undertaken in Ghana and India.

The research project has confirmed that one of the ways of creating a suitable awareness of

energy is to present to extension workers participatory tools that illustrate the possible responses of the community regarding energy needs. Tools and guidelines have been developed and have been distributed so as to be embedded in standard teaching and training, not presented as a new curriculum per se on energy.

The research has also highlighted the more general linkages between training curriculum and needs assessment. It suggests that it is important that workers who are undertaking an "agenda free" needs assessment need a broad general knowledge, possibly with the comprehensiveness of the Livelihoods framework, in order to facilitate the community. The potential weakness of a facilitator who does not have a broad general background is that the facilitation can result in semi closed questioning.

The summary report is available to read here: Extension Processes For Rural Energy - Summary