

OAP Fellowship is for the Young African Woman with interest in a Clean Energy future



The Open Africa Power initiative is a program, created by Enel Foundation in partnership with Academic partners in Italy and Africa which aims to forge a new generation of African leaders deeply engaged with their countries' clean energy future. The program is broken down into three modules; The African Module which in 2019, took place in Addis Ababa, the online module to improve the fellows technical, regulatory and business skills needed to work in the private and public sector towards the electrification of Africa and the final residential leg of the program in Italy which is a two weeks program fostering knowledge exchange with key Italian partner tertiary institutions such as the Polytechnic University of Milan, Polytechnic University of Turin, SDA Bocconi School of Management in Milan, Venice International University, and Florence School of Regulation covering various subjects including in engineering, legislation, economics and finance.

It was a humbling opportunity being accepted as one of the 60 fellows to the 2019 OAP fellowship in Addis Ababa which saw a conglomerate of brilliant energy minds involved in different capacities in the energy field with a mission to increase electrification in Africa.

It is no secret that in most African households, women carry the heaviest burden when it comes to a lack of reliable and clean energy. Therefore, the involvement of women towards this clean energy future is imperative. I am passionate about mentorship of young women and encourage them to take up careers, projects and participate in programs that could contribute to a clean energy future in Africa.

In that respect, I collected the experiences of a few of the female participants of the OAP 2019 cohort to further foster an interest of as many young women as possible to participate in the program. The interviews were indicative of the brilliance of these women and their day to day contribution to Africa's energy future. The main purpose of this initiative is to encourage the Queens in Energy (QUEENERGY leaders) to apply to the OAP fellowship as a way of beginning that journey towards a clean energy future. The ladies from different backgrounds, careers and, countries share their roles, career paths, hobbies, and a description of their give back experiences after the fellowship.

Once of the most exciting case studies under the give back experiences is the birth of the Ethiopian Women in Energy association which came up from knowledge sharing and networking during the Ethiopian module. The founder, Filagot Tesfaye, a 2019 Mandela Washington fellow, provides an overview of how the networking association was formed, its aims and objectives and future plans. I hope you enjoy this collection of stories and that in some way your interest will be inspired to find energy solutions in Africa through applying to the OAP fellowship program.

Carol Ofafa

2019 OAP fellow

M.Sc. Electrical and Electronic Engineer.

Kenya Electricity Transmission Company.

Marylyn, Bime

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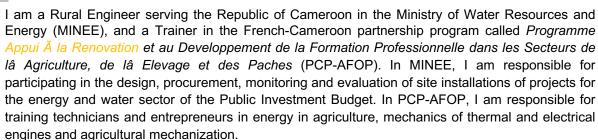




Course: Agricultural/ Rural Engineering

Universities: University of Dschang – Cameroon

PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT



My job is directly related to achieving SDGs 4, 6 and 7 (quality education for all, clean and potable water for all, and access to reliable and affordable energy for all by 2030 respectively). From a young age, I've always been science inclined (maybe because my dad is a Mathematics and Physics teacher), so I term it in-born. But most importantly, growing up as a great Mathematics and Physics student, I always wanted to dive into real life applications of Mechanics, reason for embarking on an engineering career. My role impacts access to electricity by participating in implementation works for grid extension projects of the Public Investment Budget by representing as the projects engineer for the projects owner (MINEE), and in bimonthly planning and coordination meetings for all the stakeholders of the energy sector in the West Region of Cameroon.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about reaching a decision-making/ policy taking position in my country. I believe the decision makers hold the key to any development in a country. World trends show that the competitive market is the way forward for Africa's development, Cameroon is still far from this pathway.

What would you enjoy doing even if you were not paid to do it?

I would enjoy training the Muslim women in the Bamoun communities (a large section of the West Region of Cameroon) on the advantages of education, women empowerment and the disadvantages of early marriages as they generally marry at the age of 14.

What are some of your hobbies?

I enjoy family outings, road trips, tourism, singing (a church choir), counseling and studying.

OAP EXPERIENCE

Briefly describe what the OAP experience means to you?

Honestly speaking, OAP is the breakthrough I needed in my career. OAP has oriented my goals, adjusted my career objectives, given me a new way of thinking and triggered a strong urge in me for a clean energy future race.

Give back experiences

I'm currently coordinating a team of five staff in the Ministry of Water Resources and Energy in the preparation of the country project for universal access to energy in Cameroon, drawing lessons from the FSR online course and the country project carried out on Zambia.

What advice would you give to young women looking to apply for future OAP fellowships?

My key message to young women is hard work. OAP is a very prestigious and educative program. You will have the one in a life-time opportunity to meet and network with young and talented minds so engaged in developing their country's clean energy sectors from all over Africa. Always work so hard to get outstanding results in school.

What would you like to be remembered for? I would like to be remembered for my contribution to my country's development pathway. Hoping to attain the policy making level, I would love to be an active participant in reforming the policies of the energy sector in Cameroon.



Aimee, Chinda Lugarde

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Current Occupation: International Human Rights

Law/Project Management

University: Saint Monica University Higher Institute

Buea, Cameroon



PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

I am an International Human rights Expert/Arbitrator. Human rights abuses, human rights awareness, where to seek redress when your rights are violated and resolving conflicts between companies who want to settle their disputes out of court (arbitration).

My job is really impacting the world because people are really becoming aware of their human rights and where to seek redress when their rights are violated. Companies can equally settle their disputes speedily and less costly through arbitration. To defend the less privilege in society. I noticed most of them were being abuse and violated and were unable to seek redress. Most of them were psychologically traumatized. I believe ,with the knowledge gained from OAP fellowship, I can come up with projects and suggestions that can help governments better electrified rural areas using solar panels and stand-alone which will be less costly and maintenance will be done by locals since technological know-how will be transfer.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

What would you enjoy doing even if you What are some of your hobbies? were not paid to do it?

Defending human rights and putting smiles on the faces of those whose rights are violated.

Reading books especially the bible, watching motivational speakers and cracking jokes.

What are you passionate about?

Defending human rights and sensitizing people on their basic human rights.

OAP EXPERIENCE

Briefly describe what the OAP experience means to you?

It was a wonderful and memorable experience for me because it was my first time to venture into the energy sector. I learnt a lot in the sector of clean energy as a whole, how solar panels work, grids and mini grids and how NGO's implements their projects in communities respecting the principle of Corporate Social Responsibilities.

I came in contact with very jovial and aspiring youths who are ready to take the energy sector in Africa to another level. I was greatly impacted and my drive to learn further was increased."

Give back experiences

My give back on the OAP 2019 Will be to organize workshops in my country, wherein I will encourage young girls to engage in the domain of renewable energy because it is one of the keys for us attain emergence by 2035 in Cameroon

What advice would you give to young women looking to apply for future OAP fellowships?

I will encourage them to apply to this fellowship because it is the right platform to impact young Africans with the right knowledge on the electrification of their continent using clean energy. It is a wonderful fellowship and OAP is they to work with young Africans in the domain of clean energy.

What would you like to be remembered for?

My selfless and relentless efforts in the domain of defending human rights abuses in Africa.





Mercy Ndinda, Kiio

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Country: Kenya

Current Occupation : Lecturer

Course: Electrical And Electronics Engineering Universities: Jomo Kenyatta University Of Agriculture And Technology (J.K.U.A.T) (B.Sc. & M.Sc.)Pan African University Institute Of Technology-Kenya(PhD)



PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

My job is mainly based on training students in the field of Electrical and Electronics Engineering at the University. It also involves carrying out research and coming up with innovative solutions in the field of Renewable energy, automation, computers and Electronics. I also work with students to help them implement their innovative technological ideas and nurture their talents through technical exhibitions. The greatest influence of my career was the desire to carry out research and nurture young upcoming engineers. Research and innovative solutions contribute a lot in increasing access to electricity. Most people in the world are enjoying access to electricity, thanks to innovative solutions like solar based lanterns among others.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

What are you passionate about?

I am really passionate about technology and energy and I can work late into the night working on a project as long as technology is involved. I am also passionate about imparting knowledge to the young optimistic students in the Electrical Engineering field.

What would you enjoy doing even if you were not paid to do it?

Helping students and any other person to implement their innovative technology based ideas and also motivating any person out there willing to pursue technology based training at the University.

What are some of your hobbies?

Reading technological materials, Comedy Shows.

OAP EXPERIENCE

Briefly describe what the OAP experience means to you?

Open Africa Power has been quite an eye opener to me. It has opened a new world to me and taught me the numerous opportunities that I can engage in to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 7, i.e. access to energy and to make the world a green global village. The opportunity to interact and network with other professionals across the world is quite invaluable.

What advice would you give to young women looking to apply for future OAP fellowships?

Grab the opportunity and move with it. The experience in training, online classes and networking will leave you a totally different person.

Give back experiences

Providing Mentorship to students through IEEE Power and Energy Society (PES) JKUAT Technical Chapter where I serve as the Advisor. Over and above the Technical training offered to the students, exposing them to Business and regulatory aspects of Energy aids in opening the horizon for them to venture in energy sector.

What would you like to be remembered for?

By lifting just one person and help them achieve their dreams and making the world a better place for another person.

Betty N., Muthoka

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Current Occupation: Electrical Engineer and Energy

Expert

Course: B.Eng. Electrical & Electronic Engineering &

M.Sc.. Energy Technology

Universities: Technical University of Kenya & Jomo Kenyatta University Of Agriculture & Technology



PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

I am an electrical engineer and an energy expert. My job helps to solve the electrification problem by working with governments, agencies and companies to help inform policy development and strategic decision-making and planning, in a bid to solve/ balance the energy trilemma (energy security, energy equity and environmental sustainability.) and this is how we make the world a better place because electricity is the brain of all development. The greatest influence in my choice f career was that I was very god in STEM related subjects and therefore ended up in Engineering school. My role aid

PERSONAL INTERESTS

What are you passionate about?

I am very passionate about the energy sector, particularly renewable energy.

What are some of your hobbies?

Reading and Cooking.

What would you enjoy doing even if you were not paid to do it?

Mentoring upcoming STEM ladies.

OAP EXPERIENCE

What advice would you give to young women looking to apply for future OAP fellowships?

OAP is the real deal of fellowships. It will not only grow your network but it will also equip you with a mass wealth of knowledge. You get to interact with great minds from Africa, for Africa on matters energy. Someone said "if you are associated with Enel, you are right in the middle of what mattes in the energy sector."





Ujunwa, Ojemeni

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Country: Nigeria

Current Occupation:Senior Technical Advisor, Office of the Honorable Commissioner for Energy & Mineral resources, Lagos state government

Course:Master's Degree In International Development - Development Finance &

First Class Bachelor's Degree In Banking & Finance:

Universities: University Of Manchester

& University Of Nigeria, Nsukka.



PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

As the Senior Technical Adviser, I am tasked with: Driving the development and implementation of the key energy strategies for the State to ensure reliable energy is delivered to all citizens in the State. Identify key investment opportunity to improve energy supply to the State and work with the private sector to participate in these. Monitor the implementation of projects by the key energy agencies including powering key public facilities including schools, and health centers, clean transportation, driving the deepening of LPG adoption and much more. Lead the review and update of relevant State energy policies and regulations as and when due. I grew up in Northern region of Nigeria, and witnessed a high level of underdevelopment and poverty. Over time, I realized that access to energy is crucial for all aspect of development economic, social, and environmental sustainability, thus I resolved to make a positive impact through improving access to the clean energy and finance. Investing in the clean energy companies enables them to scale thereby increasing access to electricity for the end users while the funding platforms attracts more funding for electrification.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about sustainable development, specifically, universal access to energy and finance, as they are crucial to achieve any level of economic growth, and poverty alleviation.

What are some of your hobbies?

I love to play lawn tennis (I once considered becoming a professional player, African Serena) and I enjoy exploring new places.

What would you enjoy doing even if you were not paid to do it?

I would be helping SMEs to succeed. I enjoy working on the SME transformation projects where I provide business advisory and micro-credit to SMEs in low-income communities in Nigeria. I am also a mentor with the Cherie Blaire Foundation Mentoring Women in Business Program.

OAP EXPERIENCE

Briefly describe what the OAP experience means to you?

The program is providing me with the opportunity to expand my knowledge on the current state and future of the energy sector, a unique support system and a network of young energy leaders all working towards the electrification of Africa and an avenue to develop an innovative energy access idea through the capstone project.

Give back experiences

I enjoy sharing the knowledge I have gained through mentoring clean energy entrepreneurs/enterprises in Nigeria one of such is Econegroco an enterprise building an innovative energy hub that utilizes various sources of clean energy to deliver electricity to customers. Also for younger women and girls who are either in or would like to join the energy sector, through the African Women in Energy Development Initiative (AWEDI Network), I find fulfillment in sharing my knowledge and experience with them while helping them to gain visibility and find opportunities within the sector.

What advice would you give to young women looking to apply for future OAP fellowships?

First, be confident and give yourself credit. You are qualified and have something unique to offer. Second, be ready to work very hard as you will need to read a whole lot, engage in insightful discussions forums, think outside the box and meet set deadlines.

What would you like to be remembered for?

I want be remembered for driving sustainable development through access to energy, finance, and supporting SMEs thereby making other people's lives better. Specifically I want to be instrumental in significantly reducing the statistics of 120 million people living without access to reliable and affordable power in Nigeria.

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Christine, Juta

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Country: Zimbabwe

Current Occupation: Programs Officer

Course: M.Sc. Renewable Energy Engineering

Universities: University Of Zimbabwe



PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

I work as a Programs Officer for one of the top-most Zimbabwean NGO on action research in the fields of Renewable Energy, Youth Development, and Climate Resilience Advocacy. I abhor poverty in all its forms and I am quite convinced of the potential of access to clean energy services in contributing move Zimbabwean women and their families out of poverty. The debate around sustainable energy and access to energy for all is a pertinent issue in Zimbabwe, with significant levels of energy poverty.

My job allows me to take an active role in seeing my country and the African continent as a whole achieve Energy Decentralization, Digitalization and De-carbonization. Africa is the only region in the world with an increasing youth population. This trend in the growing youth bulge implies a significant increase in the global energy requirement by 2050. As such, the prosperity of emerging economies, hinges on investing in human capital and African countries should seriously consider bolstering human capital investments.

For the first time in history, all countries are united in pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 4 which speaks to Education and SDG 7 which speaks to Energy and Youth Participation. African youth are the future of Africa and that future is now. I am an African Union/International Center for Girls and Women's Education STEM Ambassador and my efforts as a STEM Advocate seek amplify the voices of those communities living in energy poverty, all this in an effort to influence policy with regards to provision of energy services. I also provide thought leadership as a Future Africa Forum content contributor under the Energy and Development thematic areas with the objective of stimulating conversation on energy access issues as well as promoting the development of African solutions to African challenges.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

What are you passionate about?

I am a progressive Renewable Energy enthusiast who is passionate about renewable energy technology uptake as a tool for providing quality education for all. I am driven by a burning desire to change the African Narrative. Africa matters, and we are the ones we have been waiting for.

What would you enjoy doing even if you were not paid to do it?

Travel Photography, I am quite good at it and I would love to get to do it more often.

What are some of your hobbies?

Sewing, graphic designing and watching documentaries.

OAP EXPERIENCE

Briefly describe what the OAP experience means to you?

The OAP experience is a priceless opportunity to become part of an elite network of brilliant African Clean Energy Leaders. Open Africa Power has afforded me access to prestigious academic institutions as well as key captains of industry.

What advice would you give to young women looking to apply for future OAP fellowships? Dare to have those big audacious dreams and just don't give a care what happens.

What would you like to be remembered for? Academic excellence, ambition and curiosity.

Carol Awuor, Ofafa

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Country: Kenya

Current Occupation: Electrical & Electronic Engineer Course: Electronic And Electrical Engineering With

Management (M.Sc.) & 1st Class Electrical And Electronic

Engineering (B.Sc.)

Universities: University of Glasgow (M.Sc.) & University of

Nairobi (B.Sc.)



PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

I am an Electrical and Electronic Engineer at the Kenya Electricity Transmission Company (KETRACO). I serve in the Power Systems Planning and Design department as a protection engineer where I am responsible for preliminary design of high voltage transmission infrastructure as well as on-site supervision of construction, commissioning works and testing. I took up Engineering to satisfy the curiosity on how machines work. My role in design continues to impact the sustainable way in which electricity is transported to the consumer. My job's main focus is to transport electricity from the point of generation to the point of distribution. Therefore, our aim is to increase access to affordable and reliable electrification and provide reliable and a robust electrical grid.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about mentorship of women in energy and community development through the involvement of women in development of reliable and efficient energy infrastructure. I am mentor at Akili Dada(Kenya) and FemEng (University of Glasgow) where I use my skills and abilities to influence the lives of young girls interested in STEM related courses. This passion for mentorship has led to various other opportunities such as invitation to speak at the Africa Power roundtable conference in Sandton, Johannesburg 2017, a panelist at the Women in extractives conference in Kenya,2017 and one of the invited speakers at the Kenya mining forum 2017.

What would you enjoy doing even if you were not paid to do it?

I would definitely enjoy impacting/empowering the lives of women and girls in any capacity that would bring social and economic change.

What are some of your hobbies?

I have a passion for sampling different cultures and make an effort to travel out of my zone of comfort at least once a year. I love dancing, swimming, kick boxing and weight lifting

OAP EXPERIENCE

Briefly describe what the OAP experience means to you?

The OAP experience was a life changing experience that opened my eyes to the significance of policy and regulation in influencing action towards sustainable electrification.

What would you like to be remembered for?

I would like to be remembered for my passion and commitment to my country, my charm ,good sense of humor but mostly for my contribution in the increased access to sustainable, reliable and efficient electricity in Africa.

Give back experiences

Knowledge obtained at the OAP fellowship has greatly influenced my design of transmission infrastructure to include a more sustainable approach. I have collected the OAP 2019 alumni experiences which will be shared to encourage more women to apply and participate in the fellowship.

What advice would you give to young women looking to apply for future OAP fellowships?

Do it! Do not second guess yourself, the time is now. OAP will provide you with knowledge, the technical know-how and a network of like-minded individuals that could not only open doors in your career but also open your mind to new ideas that could effect change in your field.

Fundiswa, Mthethwa

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Current Occupation: Electrical & Electronic Engineer

Course: Electronic And Electrical Engineering

Universities: University of The Witwatersrand (M.Sc.)

University of Kwazulu Natal (B.Sc.)



PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

I am an Electrical Engineer at South African Utility (Eskom). My job involves working towards achieving the seventh Sustainable Development Goals (SDG7) which is Universal Access to Energy by grid extension and ensuring reliable and sustainable supply to all. By achieving SDG7 it is possible to achieve the most of other SDG's thereby ensuring a sustainable and economically effective universe. I have always been fascinated by Mathematics and Science from a very young age. It was easy for me to channel myself towards engineering. My role aids in increasing electricity access by electrifying households through the grid one household at a time and ensuring reliable supply.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about the youth development; I believe it is a great idea to invest on the youth because we are the future leaders of this world. I like to engage, share knowledge and listen to future leaders about what is evolving in the world and recent topics on how to achieve the better future.

What would you enjoy doing even if you were not paid to do it?

What are some of your hobbies?

Educating and mentoring young leaders on how to choose a career path

I enjoy working out, reading and travelling

OAP EXPERIENCE

Briefly describe what the OAP experience means to you?

OAP experience has been an amazing platform for me. It has broadened my knowledge and experience in the energy sector. It was highly useful for me to also learn about clean cooking.

Give back experiences

This will involve me educating young professionals on various ways to achieve access to energy in remote areas. I will encourage clean energy, which will also ensure reduction of emissions. The majority of my country's electricity is generated from coal fired plants. It would be of great value to diverse more to renewables.

What advice would you give to young women looking to apply for future OAP fellowships? The program is without a doubt inspirational and a learning opportunity, it is indeed advisable to apply and acquire that knowledge.

What would you like to be remembered for? I would like to be remembered for the hard work and passion on uplifting young leaders.

Sinafikish, Lemma

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Current Occupation: Community mobiliser for rural mini-grid

development

Course: Economics(BA), Management(MA) & Agricultural

Economics (MSc)

Universities: Arbamich, Civil Service and Dilla Universities-

Ethiopia University of Kwazulu Natal (B.Sc.)



PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

I am currently working as community mobilization adviser for rural mini-grid development. I am responsible for sustainable development in my community through Social and Economic development. I believe that, for sustainable development active engagement of the society and community is very vital where I am working closely with community to bring them to frontline & as a major stakeholder in the implementation of mini-grid development through contributing their time, idea, labor and money for mini-grid development where they own their project and sustain it.

The greatest influence in my career choice is addressing marginalized community through social and economic development. Access to electricity to rural community through national grid is very difficult in Ethiopia where more than 80% of the population is living in rural areas. It is my pleasure to work with the organization like GIZ-EnDev who seeks to solve the low access to electricity of rural people through mini-grid and other renewable electricity options. My role is increasing access to electricity through mobilizing government partners and community to replicate the experiences of the project implementation.

PERSONAL INTERESTS

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about livelihood improvement of rural community through linking energy access with agriculture, so that they have better information, skill, agricultural practice and better income. I am working for that and I want to be a change agent for such changes with my country, Ethiopia.

What would you enjoy doing even if you were not paid to do it?

I am very interested to mentor teenagers and youth as a volunteer, where I am currently engaged in such activities.

What are some of your hobbies? Some of my hobbies are reading holy bible, listening motivational videos and serving the needy.

OAP EXPERIENCE

Briefly describe what the OAP experience means to you?

Give back experiences

learning moment for me.

OAP 2019 experience was great exposure to OAP 2019 created an opportunity for the birth of me where it inspired me through looking and Ethiopian Women in Energy(EWiEN)where five sharing the bigger potential among young Ethiopian professional women managed to establish it generation in the energy sector. It was an and we started exploring our potential and aspiration excellent networking, experience sharing and in the process of eradicating energy poverty from our country, Ethiopia.

What advice would you give to young women looking to apply for future OAP fellowships? I want to encourage young women to use this opportunity to capacitate their own experience and knowledge so that they can contribute on the energy sector in a best way.

What would you like to be remembered for?

I want to be remembered for Gods mercy upon me, who strive for positive change and action, who really aspire to contribute for country sustainable development.







Give back experience Case Study: Ethiopian Women In Energy(EWiEn)

Ethiopian Women in Energy (EWiEn) is a networking association that connects and empowers Ethiopian women working in the energy sector with the aim to encourage greater visibility, networking opportunities and professional connections between women.

EWiEn Vision is "To see Ethiopian women in the energy sector playing significant role in the effort of eradicating energy poverty". EWiEn Mission is to empower women in the energy sector through networking and training".

EWiEn was established on January 2019 by five Ethiopian professional women. When four engineers by training named Filagot Tesfaye, Mizan Wolderufael, Adey Getachew, Hana Mekuria and an economist by training Sinafikish Anbese met in Ethiopia, Addis Ababa for Open Africa Power 2019 training, they shared a strong interest about the energy transformation in Ethiopia and the role of women in the energy sector. They had a chance to find out that they had much more in common and decide to start the first association promoting the role of young women in the energy work space.

EWiEn is established to promote the visibility of women in energy and encourage others to follow their example, ultimately contributing to gender balance and diversity. Gender diversity drives innovation, opens new pathways for technology deployment, and brings fresh perspectives to the development of the societies. To achieve our objectives, we are Facilitating platforms where members interact with each other and maximize their opportunities. We have designed a platform that encourage new members to working in the energy sector and providing information on initiatives development, job and business opportunities. We also facilitate platforms to encourage innovations and develop skills.

Article by:

Filagot Tesfaye

2019 OAP Fellow