Dr. Mary Greene expands her research to explore the lived experience of energy transitions in Global South contexts

As a successful applicant of the H2020 SHAPE ENERGY Research Design Challenge, Dr. Mary Greene, collaborating with Dr. Anne Schiffer (Leeds Beckett University), travelled to Africa over the Christmas break to conduct novel ethnographic research on past and ongoing energy transitions in The Gambia. During the duration of their field research stay, Dr. Greene immersed herself in the local culture and life of the community of Kartong to investigate the intersections of energy systems change and the performance of daily life. Kartong is a village located in the South coastal region of The Gambia that recently underwent electrification in 2013. However, some sections of the community continue to remain unconnected to the fossil fuel powered grid system. Employing an immersive ethnographic methodology, the two researchers lived with a local family, participated in local daily practices and conducted a series of biographic interviews with elderly local residents of Kartong to explore how life has changed over time. They supplemented this data with visual photographic and audio-visual ethnographic accounts of local ways of performing energy practices and the material landscapes and infrastructures which frame these performances. During their stay, Dr. Greene and Dr. Schiffer also travelled to Serekunda to meet with governmental officials at the Ministry for Petroleum and Energy and participated in a meeting focused on curriculum design for sustainable energy practices. This meeting was also attended by UNESCO and staff from The University of The Gambia. The fascinating narratives, images and accounts of change emerging from this research is revealing crucial insights into the ways in which human-environment and community relations and traditional social practices are being transformed in light of energy transitions, development and change. This research will be disseminated through a number of means, including a coauthored paper that will be published with high visibility and sent to the EC's strategy for research and innovation in March 2018 as part of the H2020 SHAPE ENERGY Research Design Challenge.

For further information see: https://shapeenergy.eu/index.php/activities/research-design-challenge/