

A photograph of two women in a rural setting, working with charcoal briquettes. They are using a large, circular, woven basket to sort or shape the briquettes. The background shows lush green foliage and a simple building. The text 'Strengthening Enterprises through' is in white, and 'GENDER CAPACITY BUILDING' is in large, bold, white capital letters.

Strengthening Enterprises through **GENDER CAPACITY BUILDING**

Photo Credit: AEST Ltd.



The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves explicitly prioritizes women's empowerment in its mission statement and implements a robust gender capacity building program to ensure cooking sector enterprises prioritize and understand how to integrate gender throughout their business models. Involving women as users, entrepreneurs, and employees is critical for generating demand, increasing adoption, and reaching scale, while at the same time benefiting women and their families.

Women can catalyze the market as clean energy entrepreneurs by leading and participating in efforts that seek to develop effective, culturally-appropriate, and sustainable solutions. Research shows that women can outsell men cookstove sellers by nearly 3 to 1 when they received agency-based empowerment and leadership training. Women consumers also report greater customer satisfaction when they purchase clean cookstoves from women because they are more likely to use it predominantly, consistently, describe its multiple benefits, and to promote the stove to others.

OVERVIEW OF THE ALLIANCE'S GENDER CAPACITY BUILDING APPROACH

The Alliance's [Resource Guide on Scaling Adoption of Clean Cooking Solutions through Women's Empowerment](#) serves as a foundation for helping enterprises understand how to mainstream gender throughout their work. Additionally, the Alliance has developed an approach for gender capacity building that is specifically designed to help individual enterprises meet their goals. The capacity building approach follows this process:



ASSIGNING A FOCAL POINT

During the capacity building process, the enterprise should appoint one, preferably two, gender focal points. These people will receive extra training and coordinate communication. They are not responsible for implementing all gender actions, but will facilitate planning, follow-up, and monitoring. Including at least one person from management is recommended, as this enables a smoother integration of the gender-focused actions into regular business operations.

KEY COMPONENTS OF GENDER CAPACITY BUILDING

1 Understanding Gender Due Diligence Outcomes and Establishing a Baseline

The Alliance conducts gender lens due diligence on its grantees. This assessment examines the enterprise's potential impact on women's empowerment and the level of integration of gender issues into its overall business model. During the first stage of gender capacity building, the outcomes of the gender due diligence and recommendations for capacity building will be shared and reviewed with each enterprise. The results of the due diligence will serve as a starting point and baseline.

2 Increasing Gender Awareness and Understanding

Gender expert(s) will conduct a half-day training to increase staff and management's understanding of basic gender concepts and how and why women's empowerment can strengthen the overall business model. The workshop will result in increased awareness and understanding of gender issues and their relevance to cooking sector enterprises.

Example:

GENDER SENSITIVITY TRAINING



Value for Women, an Alliance partner and firm specializing in gender and business, conducted gender sensitivity training with the Alliance's 2015 Spark grantees, Ecozoom and Eco Fuel Africa. This training raised awareness about gender issues and unconscious gender bias, specifically drawing attention to the unique challenges and opportunities for men and women working throughout the value chain. The training increased understanding of how productive, reproductive, paid, and unpaid work impact levels of access and control of resources, such as time and money, for both women and men. Increased understanding of gender issues allowed participants to face challenges with new knowledge and offered participants new levels of understanding when working with men.

3 Conducting Gender Analysis

Gender analysis leads to understanding of how gender roles and relations impact the enterprise and its core activities, and in what ways the enterprise may impact gender relations and the position of women. A gender-sensitive value chain analysis provides clarity on the roles that both women and men play along the value chain, potential for improving the position of women, and the benefits for the business. Gender analysis takes place at the beginning of the capacity building and usually involves conducting interviews and group discussions with both women and men.

4 Creating a Gender Action Plan

Based on the gender analysis and inputs from the enterprise, the gender expert will develop a Gender Action Plan (GAP) with clear gender objectives, proposed actions, and indicators for success. The GAP outlines what the enterprise wants to achieve from a gender standpoint, what activities it will undertake to achieve these goals, and how it will monitor progress.

Example:

ECO FUEL AFRICA

As part of its gender action plan, Eco Fuel Africa outlined ways to improve the performance of women retailers in order to contribute to the enterprise's growth strategy, as well as to contribute to the retailers' personal growth. One of the gender activities identified in the GAP included piloting a basic accounting training for illiterate retailers. The training increased retailers' knowledge and skills on basic business accounting and was a valuable tool for Eco Fuel Africa trainers to use in the future.



Photo Credit: Norman Sarria

5 Implementing Gender-Focused Actions

Gender Action Plans usually have three to seven gender-focused actions. Some actions require more time, effort, and budget than others, and for some, extra support in terms of training or consultancy may be needed. The enterprise will decide which gender-focused actions to implement, how, and in which order.

Examples actions could include:

1. **Using market research data, develop gender-sensitive marketing strategies that consider male and female customers' preferences**
2. **Establish workplace policies and practices that are gender-sensitive and provide equal opportunities for women and men to be recruited, retained, and promoted**
3. **Increase skills and knowledge of women entrepreneurs through business and agency-based empowerment training using the Alliance's [Empowered Entrepreneur curriculum](#), including the development of a mentorship network for post-training support**

Each GAP is designed with the management team and is unique to the enterprise's business model and context. The gender consultants work with the enterprise to identify actions that can increase revenue or reduce costs in addition to empowering women. Past grantees have found this support to be beneficial in achieving their social and financial goals.

Before the gender capacity building, the company did not differentiate between men and women, whereas now, there is more awareness that gender differences are important to take into consideration, there is more understanding of how the product contributes to women's empowerment, and of the fact that gender equality has to be understood and enforced throughout the company."

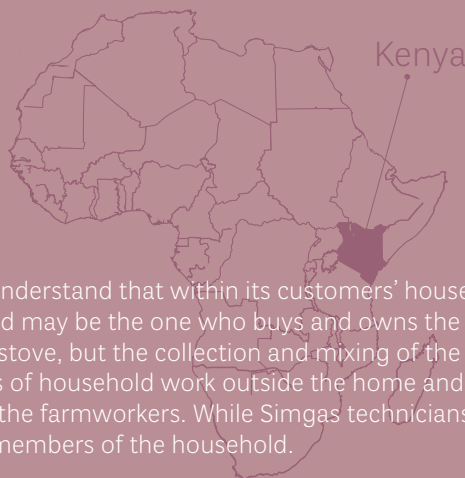
– **Carlo Talamanca,**
CEO, Sustainable Green Fuel Enterprise

Example: SIMGAS

Gender capacity building has helped Simgas to better understand that within its customers' households there are different users and beneficiaries. For example, the husband may be the one who buys and owns the biogas system and the wife or female laborer may be the main user of the stove, but the collection and mixing of the dung might be done by a male casual laborer. Additionally, many male heads of household work outside the home and their wives or female members of the household often manage and support the farmworkers. While Simgas technicians were aware of these realities, they did not consistently train and engage all members of the household.

As a result, Simgas included these gender-focused interventions in their GAP:

1. **Ensure that everyone (husband, wife, male, and female workers) in the household is trained in all aspects of biogas (maintenance, cooking, feeding) by requiring technicians to train all members.**
2. **Ask both male and female partners in the household (eg. husband and wife) to sign contracts regarding the biogas system to encourage joint ownership and decision-making, and to ensure that women are consulted regarding the location of the digester.**



6 Learning through Monitoring, Evaluation, and Documentation

The gender consultant will support the development of a monitoring and evaluation framework to understand the results of implementing the gender action plan and to evaluate the effectiveness of the overall gender capacity building program. Measurement plans will focus on a few key indicators, and measure both social impact and business effectiveness, including sustainable changes in the enterprise's approach. The indicators will align with the Alliance's [social impact monitoring and evaluation system](#) developed together with the [International Center for Research on Women](#).

At the end of the capacity building support, with input and feedback from the enterprise, the consultant will develop a case study to document results, highlight successes, and outline challenges, as well as provide material to showcase the enterprise's gender approach through the Alliance's network and via media opportunities. The gender due diligence will be conducted again to assess progress and decide if more activities are needed to sustain or improve the results.

Example:

SUSTAINABLE GREEN FUEL ENTERPRISE (SGFE), CAMBODIA

Almost all SGFE production workers are heavily indebted to local money lenders. This impacts women factory workers more than men, and this causes motivation, attendance, and retention issues with staff. In order to address this issue, SGFE partnered with a local micro-finance institution to set up a payroll system and provide loans with low interest rates. In order to measure progress throughout the implementation of this payroll/loan repayment pilot, the enterprise formulated a number of indicators that were measured at the start and end of the pilot.

Some results after nine months of providing loans to five female employees (average \$520 per person) included:

- 1. 75% of the men and 50% of the women employees have taken a loan from an entity other than the MFI. At the end of the pilot, none of the women with the MFI loan was indebted to a moneylender.**
- 2. 100% of women employees now have a savings account. On average, women saved \$95.**
- 3. Women take less advances on their salaries from the company than the men.**

This data shows that the intended result of helping women relieve burdensome debts is being achieved. It furthermore demonstrates that the men are also in need of a formal loan facility and that the pilot should be extended to all workers who fit the criteria.

FOR MORE INFORMATION



Information on best practices and tools for engaging women and addressing gender issues can be found on the Alliance's [website](#) and in the Alliance's [Resource Guide](#) on Scaling Adoption of Clean Cooking Solutions through Women's Empowerment.

The Alliance is working to ensure that cookstove and fuel enterprises utilize gender-informed business models in order to ensure effectiveness and sustainability, as well as strengthen and scale gender and empowerment impacts.

To request support to conduct gender capacity building, please contact Corinne Hart, Director of Gender and Humanitarian Programs at the Alliance at chart@cleancookstoves.org.



THE OPPORTUNITY IS REAL. THE MARKET IS POISED TO SCALE. THE IMPERATIVE FOR ACTION IS OURS.

The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves is a public-private partnership hosted by the United Nations Foundation that seeks to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women, and protect the environment by creating a thriving global market for clean and efficient household cooking solutions. The Alliance's 100 by '20 goal calls for 100 million households to adopt cleaner and more efficient cookstoves and fuels by 2020. The Alliance is working with its public, private and non-profit partners to accelerate the production, deployment, and use of clean cookstoves and fuels in developing countries.