

WOMEN DELIVER & CLEAN COOKING:

FUELING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FOR GIRLS AND WOMEN



Increasing access to clean and efficient cookstoves and fuels can deliver dramatic gender and empowerment impacts, while also improving health, protecting the environment, and enhancing livelihoods—all of which help to achieve multiple Sustainable Development Goals. Women Deliver is an opportunity to encourage policymakers, advocates, and implementers to ensure that clean cooking and energy access remain a global priority and part of the global gender equality and women's health agenda.

THE CHALLENGE

Daily exposure to toxic smoke from traditional cooking practices is one of the world's biggest killers, particularly for girls and women in the developing world. There are dire health, environmental, and socio-economic consequences for the nearly 3 billion people, or 40% of the world, who rely on biomass for cooking. Smoke from cooking causes a range of deadly chronic and acute health effects, and babies born to exposed mothers are on average 90 grams lighter at birth. Additionally, women and girls spend many hours each day on unpaid work, including cooking and collecting fuel, which contributes to time poverty that drives gender inequality. For instance, the burden of household responsibilities is one of the main causes for girls to miss school. It's even worse for crisis-affected women who, in many cases, walk for hours to find firewood, sometimes spending the night outside of refugee camps, which increases their vulnerability to the risk of gender-based violence, dehydration, and physical injuries.

THE IMPACTS OF CLEAN COOKING AND ENERGY ACCESS

Adoption of clean cookstoves and fuels can impact women and girls in the most critical areas of their lives. Research shows that when levels of cooking smoke are significantly reduced, women and children are healthier and less likely to suffer from deadly diseases. Clean cooking can also be an important component of integrated approaches to preventing child pneumonia deaths. Access to clean cooking solutions can decrease time-intensive cooking and fuel collection tasks, allowing women and girls to pursue other activities, such as education, earning income, or rest. Additionally, when clean cooking solutions reduce unpaid work burdens for women, they report increasing their involvement in social and family activities and attending community meetings.

WOMEN DRIVE ADOPTION OF CLEAN COOKING SOLUTIONS

Women benefit from clean cooking solutions in a myriad of ways, but they are also major contributors to the growing sector and play a crucial role in the widespread use of cookstoves and fuels. Women's active involvement in design, production, maintenance, marketing, distribution, and sales are imperative to scaling adoption.

Women can be economically empowered through their engagement in the clean cooking sector. They can catalyze the market as clean energy entrepreneurs by leading efforts that develop effective, culturally-appropriate, and sustainable solutions. A recent study found that

KEY STATISTICS ON ENERGY POVERTY

1.2 BILLION

Number of people without access to electricity

3 BILLION

Number of people in the world reliant on polluting, inefficient stoves and fuels to cook

4.3 MILLION

Number of people who die prematurely each year from exposure to household air pollution

90 GRAMS

Babies exposed to household air pollution in the womb are born 90 grams lighter at birth

5 HOURS

Women and children in the developing world can spend up to 5 hours a day gathering fuel in certain contexts

3X

A study in Kenya showed that women cookstove entrepreneurs outsold their male counterparts by nearly three-to-one

42%

In Chad, 42% of households reported incidents of gender-based violence during firewood collection over a six-month span.

women cookstove entrepreneurs sold three times as many cookstoves as their male peers when given the same level of training and support. Additionally, women's networks can provide access to consumers in hard-to-reach markets and women distributors may better understand the needs of women and more easily approach their clients.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Let's work together to move this issue up higher on the global development agenda and prioritize energy access as a way to ease the burdens placed on women and girls, as well as to leverage opportunities for empowerment. We hope that those working to promote gender equality will raise awareness about the role that access to energy plays in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment, and to incorporate it into their own strategic goals and priorities.

The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves and its partners recommend the following actions to advance progress:

- 1 Advocate for the inclusion of energy access as a global gender priority.**
- 2 Initiate internal discussions around how energy access for women and girls might be integrated into your organization's gender strategy and how doing so can amplify gender impacts.**
- 3 Partner with energy organizations to help provide expertise and technical assistance when considering how to integrate energy access into your work.**
- 4 Ensure that women's empowerment, health, and sustainable development programming and funding have provisions for clean cooking.**
- 5 Incorporate energy access, into humanitarian response for women and girls.**

Energy access and gender equality are too often thought of as unrelated goals. It's time to shift the way we think about energy access and to recognize the interconnections and prioritize it as an issue central to gender equality.

ABOUT THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR CLEAN COOKSTOVES

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.

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THE ALLIANCE PROJECTS THAT BY REACHING OUR 100 MILLION BY 2020 GOAL, WE CAN DELIVER THE FOLLOWING IMPACTS:



640,000

lives saved, including **170,000** children



2.1 million
sector jobs



102 hours saved
annually per household
collecting firewood



1.6 billion metric tons
of CO₂e saved



6.2%
of household
income saved