Gender Fact Sheet

**THE ISSUE**

Each day nearly 3 billion people rely on solid fuels to cook their food. Exposure to smoke from cooking over open fires kills 4.3 million people annually—that is one death every 8 seconds, mostly women and children. Everyone needs cooked food, and lack of access to cooking energy has significant consequences for women and girls. Women and children spend up to 5 hours a day collecting solid fuels, or use significant household income to purchase fuel. Not only is the task of fuel collection extremely time consuming and laborious, but in conflict settings, women face an increased vulnerability to physical and sexual violence when leaving their communities or refugee camps. Many gains have been made over the past 20 years for women and girls, but they remain on the frontlines—the first responders to some of life’s most difficult and dangerous moments. They are the first to feel the impacts of poverty, which is exacerbated by not having access to household energy. They are the first to be removed from school if firewood collection needs to be done, walking increasingly further distances carrying extremely heavy loads when deforestation occurs, and their health is endangered from inhaling the thick toxic smoke emitted during cooking.

**THE SOLUTION**

Clean cooking solutions significantly benefit girls and women. For instance, reducing the amount of time required to collect fuel with more efficient cookstoves allows girls and women to engage in other activities such as income-generating opportunities, education, or rest—as they choose. The Alliance recognizes that women play a substantial role in increasing awareness and generating demand for clean cooking solutions. Women’s networks and community relationships can be instrumental for accelerating adoption and widespread use. The clean cookstoves and fuels value chain also offers new pathways for women’s economic empowerment.

Women can significantly improve their livelihoods through participation in the clean cooking sector—including product design, engineering, manufacturing, maintenance, marketing, distribution, sales and related enterprise such as restaurant ownership or street vending. The Alliance works with partners to build the evidence base showing the impact women can have on adoption when they are engaged as entrepreneurs in the value chain. Through the annual Women’s Empowerment Fund grant program, the Alliance supports testing the most effective gender-informed business models. The Alliance also provides targeted capacity building, training, and tools to help partners address gender issues and integrate women in the clean cooking sector.

**KEY STATS**

- **5 hours** Women and children in the developing world can spend up to 5 hours a day gathering fuel.
- **3x** A Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health research 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.
The Alliance has a specific gender strategy. The sector needs to increase the role of women and address gender issues to scale adoption:

- Women, as the users, will ultimately determine use and adoption of cookstoves and fuels.
- Women entrepreneurs are an untapped resource to scale adoption.

Gender-informed practices have two important outcomes for the clean cooking sector:

- Leverage gender information to identify barriers and opportunities, leading to increased effectiveness of businesses.
- Increase gender and empowerment impacts.

There are four major challenges to scaling women’s empowerment and entrepreneurship in the clean cooking sector:

- Capacity of implementing organizations to address gender and women’s entrepreneurship needs to be strengthened.
- Financing needed for gender components of cookstove projects.
- Need increased evidence of the specific gender impacts in the sector.
- Need to set and influence policies through awareness raising and advocacy.

Moving forward, the Alliance is focused on scaling effective approaches and increasing gender impacts that:

- Build the evidence and share data.
- Increase access to finance.
- Build capacity of enterprises.
- Raise awareness.
- Set and influence policies.

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 with the goal to save lives, improve livelihoods, empower women and protect the environment by creating a thriving global market for clean and efficient household cooking solutions. Our ‘100 by 20’ goal calls for 100 million homes to adopt clean and efficient stoves and fuels by 2020. The Alliance is working in partnership with 46 national governments, 12 UN agencies, hundreds of NGOs and scores of foundations across six continents to help overcome the market barriers that currently impede the production, deployment, adoption and use of clean cookstoves and fuels in developing countries.