



INTEGRATING GENDER THROUGHOUT THE VALUE CHAIN

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Why does the sector need to focus on women and gender issues?

Women, as the users, will ultimately determine use and adoption

Women entrepreneurs are an untapped resource

- *Women are the fastest growing cohort of entrepreneurs and business owners in many developing countries*

Women entrepreneurs can better reach female consumer segments and increase overall sales

Women can enhance development impacts

- *Women reinvest 90% of their earnings back into their families and communities*

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



- 1. Leverage gender information to identify barriers and opportunities, leading to increased effectiveness of businesses.**
 - Enterprises need to understand the impact of gender dynamics on every part of their business (production, marketing, distribution, after sales service, operations, etc.).

- 2. Increase gender and empowerment impacts.**
 - By understanding gender dynamics, cooking sector players can better leverage opportunities to empower women and promote gender equality.

Best Practices along the Value Chain



Universal Best Practices

- Conduct analysis to understand gender roles and dynamics in a community
- Develop a strategy to engage men
- Schedule times and locations of meetings/activities around women's availability and remain flexible
- Identify and build strong local partnerships with trusted individuals and organizations; Strongly consider working with women's groups
- Conduct gender sensitive training on relevant topics; Offer continuous training opportunities and mentorship



PRODUCT DESIGN

Women's input in design is critical. Engaging women can help generate demand, create appropriate products, and increase adoption.

Best Practices

- Conduct household questionnaires and surveys, as well as one on one discussions
- Conduct expert interviews
- Conduct focus group discussions
- Conduct cookstove performance tests with users in the field to ensure performance
- Observe women cooking on both their traditional cookstoves and with the improved models
- Conduct cookstove field trials and gather feedback



PRODUCTION

Women can be economically empowered in the production of clean cookstoves. As producers, women become experts in the products they use regularly and are likely to further help generate awareness and demand among a wider cadre of consumers.

Best Practices

- Integrate livelihood opportunities for women in manufacturing processes that involve producing components locally
- Work with women's groups or create groups of women to scale efforts, build capacity, and provide a support system
- Provide training on quality assurance and quality control; Provide production manuals



CONSUMER FINANCE

Consumer finance options enable women to purchase clean cooking solutions. When diverse finance options are available to purchase expensive products, consumers have more purchasing power and are able to consider higher-priced, but better quality options.

Best Practices

- Educate women's groups on how to access consumer finance as a group
- Emphasize money management and savings in trainings
- Consider flexible repayment plans, micro-consignment, or rent-to-own schemes
- Consider providing consumer finance directly through the project or develop partnerships to provide direct access to credit for product purchases
- If working with financial institutions, provide support to make them comfortable lending to women, as well as education working with women clients



SUPPLIER FINANCE

Women-led businesses have a unique role to play in the cooking sector. They have direct access to consumers and can expand access to a variety of clean cooking products. Women-led businesses are often unable to obtain loans or connect directly with investors, and need training to support their business and its growth.

Best Practices

- Train women borrowers on financial management and provide mentorship
- Ensure women have equal access to innovative finance mechanisms
- When working with financial institutions, provide financial support to reduce their risk lending to cooking sector businesses; Conduct education and advocacy to lend to women energy entrepreneurs
- Organize women borrowers into groups or networks in order to access and/or repay loans more efficiently
- Create flexible terms such as low interest rates and small repayment



DISTRIBUTION

Women can be the key to scaling distribution. Women have access to hard-to-reach households, can utilize woman-to-woman marketing techniques, and are trusted promoters of household products among their peers.

Best Practices

- Create selection criteria
- Create market maps and emphasize customer service within trainings
- Offer trial periods
- Provide an entrepreneur starter package
- Use gender-informed marketing messages/methods
- Create a tiered system of accountability
- Provide incentives
- Provide opportunities for successful women to share their experiences and take on leadership roles
- Engage intermediaries and work with men to provide transportation support
- Create central product hubs



AFTER-SALES SERVICE

Women are well-positioned to ensure proper maintenance and care of improved cooking solutions. Woman-to-woman knowledge transfer in maintenance is often more effective than man-to-woman knowledge transfer, particularly in conservative communities. Women have direct access to users.

Best Practices

- Offer product trial periods
- Provide support networks and oversight
- Provide warranties with women servicing repair and/ or maintenance needs
- Emphasize technology, repair, after-sales, and customer service within trainings
- Create central energy hubs where maintenance and service can take place
- Encourage the use of or provide mobile phones

All Alliance gender resources can be
found at
(www.cleancookstoves.org/gender)

Comprehensive set of gender tools
at www.energia.org