



# Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Modern Energy Cooking

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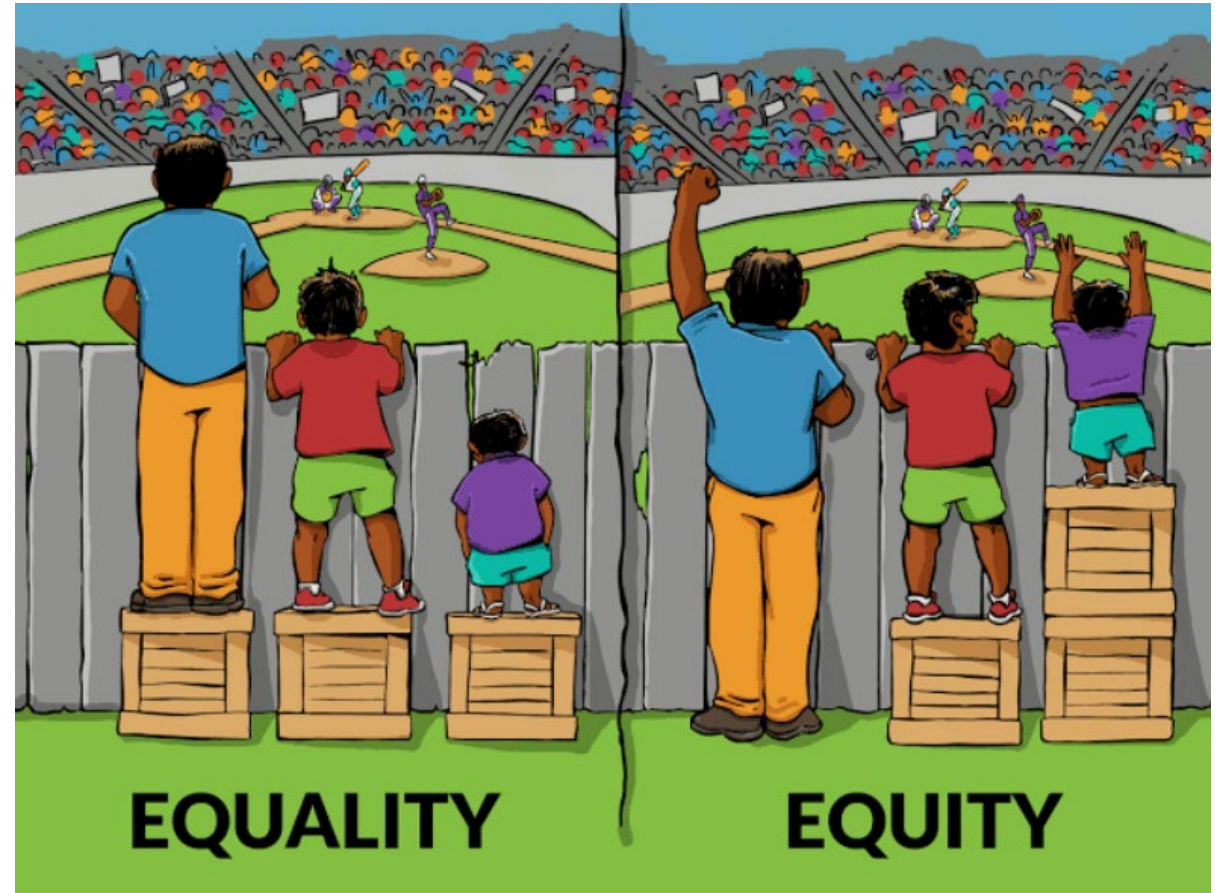
# Gender Equ(al)ity

**Gender equality** means treating everyone the same, regardless of their individual circumstances or needs.

**Gender Equity** goes beyond gender equality to address the specific needs and challenges of different genders.

**Equality** = the end goal

**Equity** = the means to get there



**Equity** sets the stage for **equality**, as it refers to the “fairness of treatment for both women and men, according to their respective needs.”

**MEC solutions were designed to remove the burden of unpaid work and improve women's well-being, did we achieve these targets?**



**Access to MEC**

**Gender equality**



**Access to MEC**

**Gender equality**



**Gender inequalities still exist**

# Key Challenges

- SDGs are interlinked directly and indirectly. For example: SDG 6 Target 6.21 provides direct evidence for the interconnections between SDG 5 (gender equality) and SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), by highlighting the importance of understanding the needs of women and girls to achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation. Similar connections have not been made for SDG 5 and SDG 7 when SDGs were proposed; none of SDG 7 targets include special considerations or gender-specific indicators for the needs of women regarding access to modern energy services or clean cooking.
- Data on energy are rarely disaggregated by gender. Monitoring gender equality in the energy sector and MEC requires gender statistics which include but also extend beyond sex-disaggregated data.
- The lack of formal recognition of [SDG 7 and SDG 5 interlinkages](#) and gender-specific data delayed the development of indicators to monitor progress.
- The lack of a unifying framework to measure and assess gender impacts of MEC solutions.
- None of existing methodologies were originally designed to quantify gender co-benefits of MEC projects apart from Clean Cooking Alliance & ICRW [Social Impact Measurement Tool](#) that was developed for clean and/or efficient cookstoves and fuels value chains in 2016. Based on [ESMAP 2020 report](#), the tool requires further alignment with other co-benefits methodologies. Additionally further modification might be required to capture MEC gender co-benefit.
- Existing methodologies were developed to measure gender impacts of other sectors (such as agriculture and WASH sectors), 'time savings' was the most common and easiest indicator that could be used to measure gender co-benefits of MEC projects. Measuring social impacts is difficult, therefore project developers usually measure time savings to claim their contribution to SDG 5. Achieving **one** SDG 5 target out of **nine** targets.
- The benefits of investing in women are not widely understood by project owners and developers, however, there is a growing group of buyers searching for high integrity carbon credits that come with 'co-benefits' for communities, but the lack of robust methodologies to measure gender impacts and provide clear evidence for buyers is an issue ([ASEAN 2022](#)).

## Gender inequalities in the energy sector

Recently, the [UN identified 4 key areas](#) where gender inequalities are substantial in the energy sector:

1. Access to electricity and clean cooking fuels and technology
2. Employment and leadership
3. Entrepreneurship
4. The enabling environment for women's participation in the energy sector

And proposed 3 indicators to measure and track the progress of energy access (theme 1) and the enabling environment (theme 4) - based on the availability of data at the national level globally:

1. Proportion of population with access to electricity, disaggregated by female-headed and male-headed households (aligned with indicator SDG 7.1.1).
2. Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean cooking fuels and technology, disaggregated by female-headed and male-headed households (aligned with indicator SDG 7.1.2).
3. Whether or not national energy policies and frameworks are in place that promote, enforce, and monitor equality and non-discrimination on the basis of sex (aligned with indicator SDG 5.1.1).

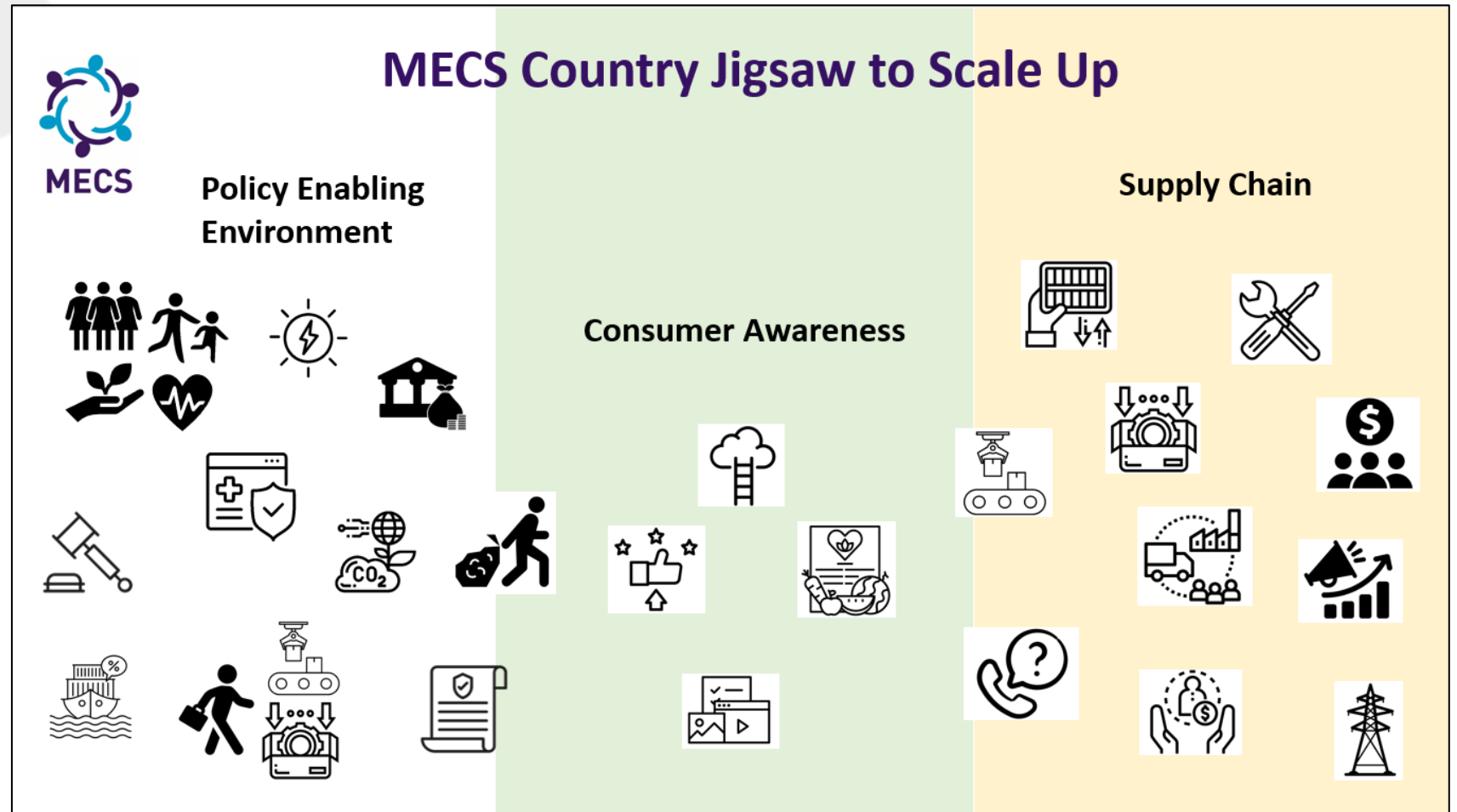
More indicators were proposed to measure and track progress of SDG 7 and SDG 5 interlinkages, but data on gender is an issue that needs to be addressed.

# Towards a just transition

We need to develop an integrated approach to promote gender equality and women empowerment in MEC sector and MECS programme by considering multiple dimensions (same concept as MECS jigsaw and complex systems)



**5** GENDER EQUALITY



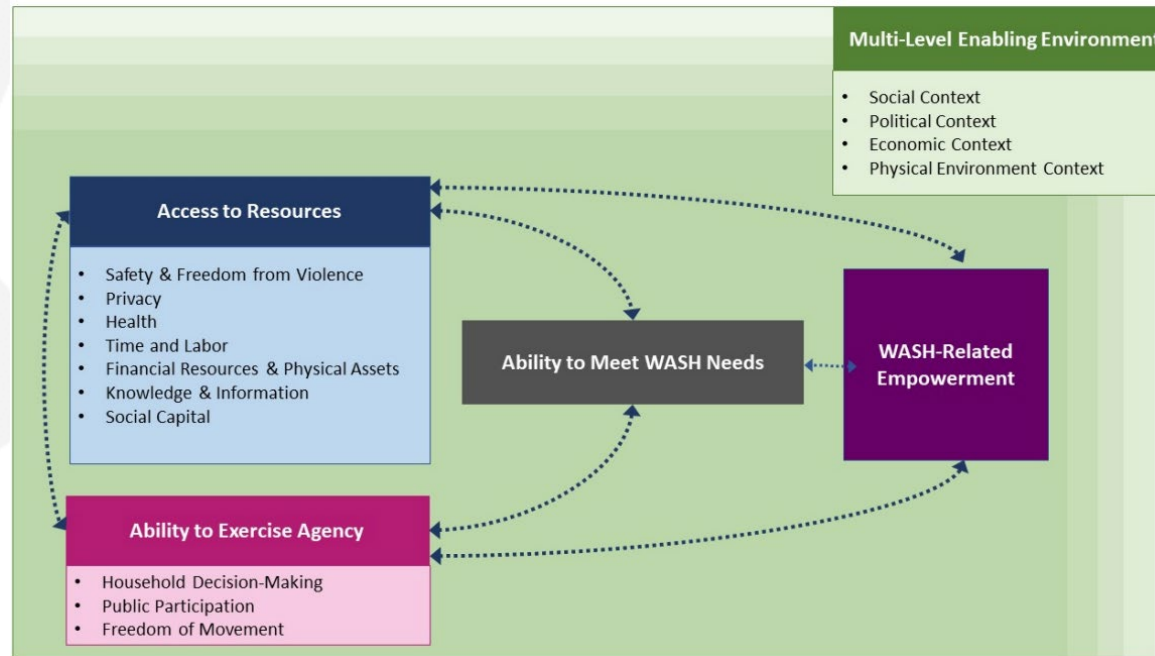
# Opportunities

## SDG 5 and SDG 7 interconnections

- Understanding the needs of women regarding access to modern energy cooking and providing solutions that meet their needs.
- Understanding the intersections of energy and gender is needed to bring attention to missed opportunities for progress of SDG 5 and SDG 7.
- Mapping synergies and trade-offs between SDG 5 (gender equality) and access to MEC is crucial to accelerate access to clean cooking and close the gender gap.
- **Developing a conceptual framework to monitor gender equality in MEC.** [WASH Conceptual Framework](#) can be **adapted** and used to monitor gender equality and women empowerment in MEC ([Measures and indicators for Gender in WASH](#)).



### Conceptual Model for Achieving Gender Equality and Equity in and from WASH



## Gender Data

- Applying the gender lens to the energy and MEC data collection is key to achieve gender equality in the energy sector and MEC
- Gender disaggregated data in the energy sector are limited and data are the key to track policies effectiveness and to monitor trends over time. There is an opportunity to (partially) address this gap by applying the gender lens to MEC data collection (for example, we can add more questions/or a gender section in MECS cooking diaries). We can encourage project developers to collect gender disaggregated data. Gender disaggregated data is not only important for MECS team and our research on gender, but the data is also important for project developers because they can use this data to claim their contribution to SDG 5 and obtain financial support.

# Opportunities

## Gender impacts

- With the significance progress of MEC solutions, technologies, and value chains, there is a potential to increase women's engagement and participation across MEC value chains rather than being beneficiaries only.
- Measuring gender impacts at household level is more difficult than measuring gender impacts across MEC value chains. Identifying new domains and impact areas of women's engagement and empowerment across MEC value chains and developing new measurable, practical (can be easily collected), and efficient (cost-effective) indicators will enable project developers to demonstrate gender co-benefit contributions alongside carbon reductions and other SDGs to obtain financial support (such as results-based financing).
- In [IFC recent report](#), 'Quality time' was used to measure the gender impacts (a shift from lower-valued to higher-valued activities in terms of income generation) rather than measuring time savings because women's saved time could be used in other unpaid work. While [ESMAP](#) used 'time use' and 'time-use agency' to measure gender impacts, and other unrelated factors to time use were considered (such as input in household decisions, changes in traditional gender norms related to cooking, cost savings, and/or impacts on stress and overall well-being and quality of life). **We need to develop a unifying framework to monitor gender equality in MEC and to identify new domains and impact areas instead of considering 'time savings' as the main domain for gender equality and women empowerment in the context of modern energy cooking.**
- There is an opportunity to work with project developers to explore gender impacts of MEC projects. We can work with and/or encourage project developers (or MECS partners) to consider and explore new gender impacts outside the sphere of time use. For example, our work with WFP – Lesotho project, we were able to identify new gender impacts such as improving women's work environment, reducing the stress of running out of gas while cooking or preparing meals for students, additionally EPCs require less supervision than other cooking fuels that enables staff members to work/teach while cooking.



# Opportunities

## Carbon finance and carbon crediting programmes

- There is a growing interest in promoting gender equality in [VCM projects](#); evidence shows that women's empowerment in climate projects can improve climate outcomes for all. IPCC pointed out the necessity for gender integration in climate finance and has taken steps to ensure gender integration across climate finance modalities ([GSMA 2023](#)). Furthermore, there is an increasing group of buyers who are interested in high integrity carbon credits that come with clear evidence of gender impacts.
- SDG 5 reporting requirements should be significantly improved across the market to give buyers greater confidence that the 'gender positive' credits that they are buying are meaningful and not just labelled or tagged as a 'tick box' or light touch exercise ([ASEAN 2022](#)). This will require adoption of robust and rigorous quantification of SDG 5 impacts.
- To make a real change and promote gender equality in MEC projects, carbon crediting programmes can encourage PDs to achieve more SDG 5 targets by providing higher prices for projects that contribute to more SDG 5 targets and provide clear guidance and technical support for PDs to demonstrate gender co-benefits.
- Labelling and ranking projects based on their contributions to SDG 5 is important to make these projects visible for carbon credit buyers who are interested in projects that achieve carbon reductions and contribute to gender equality and will enable carbon credit buyers to compare these projects and make better decisions.

## Business models

- Tailoring business models that address women's needs and tackle challenges to remove barriers to access clean cooking services and finance are crucial to promote gender equity and build resilient business models. For example, 'woman-to-woman' direct sales model which provides home delivery options to overcome women's limited mobility, reduced awareness, and lack of trust in new technologies, the provision of credit for clients to remove financial barriers combined with an upfront fixed-fee and returning options for EPCs for example, the usage of mobile money, product demonstrations at local churches and community centers or leveraging the existing social capital/networks specifically in rural areas.
- [Business Profiles](#) the Care Economy Knowledge Hub identified 175 business models (focused on 60) market-based solutions that recognize, and reduce, redistribute and reward unpaid and paid care and domestic work.





**MECS**  
Modern Energy  
Cooking Services

## Useful resources

- [Kenya- Ministry of Energy Gender Policy](#)
- [Gender and WASH](#)
- [A Conceptual Framework to Inform National and Global Monitoring of Gender Equality in WASH](#)
- [A Review of Measures and Indicators for Gender in WASH](#)
- [Gender Empowerment: How Carbon Finance & Investing in Climate Solutions Drives Positive Impact - Business Fights Poverty](#)
- [Kenyan Ministry of Energy launches first national Gender Policy in the energy sector ever - Energia | Energia](#)
- [Building Evidence to Unlock Impact Finance, A Field Assessment of Clean Cooking Co-benefits for Climate, Health, and Gender](#)
- [Clean Impact Bond: Mobilizing Finance for Clean Cooking](#), Quantifying and Measuring Health and Gender Outcomes (p.18)
- [Integrating a Gender Lens in Voluntary Carbon Markets](#) Executive Summary [Volume 1](#), Main Report [Volume 2](#) & Tools and Resources [Volume 3](#).