



The enabling power of energy for gender equality:

Gender considerations in the SEforALL country action process documents

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Key findings

- Of the 61 country action process documents analyzed, 50 (82%) include gender considerations to some extent.
- Context analysis of the 50 documents that include gender keywords reveals trends in how women are characterized and how gender considerations are taken into account, including that:
 - Women are characterized as potential beneficiaries of activities and actions, but seldom as agents of change.
 - Cross-cutting gender issues related to time poverty, lack of electrification in rural areas and women's health, safety and wellbeing are the most prominently found themes.
 - Often, children and women are grouped together as beneficiaries of activities and actions. Four documents specifically characterize girls as beneficiaries.
 - Seven documents identify women's ministries (or equivalents) and organizations as implementing partners, tasked with specific activities or actions.
 - Four documents identify opportunities for women to be involved in energy sector careers.

Acronyms

AA	Action Agenda
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
EGI	Environment and Gender Information
EU	European Union
GHG	Greenhouse gases
HIO	High Impact Opportunity
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IP	Investment Prospectus
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
IUCN GGO	IUCN Global Gender Office
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
RAGA	Rapid Assessment and Gap Analysis
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEforALL	Sustainable Energy for All
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
UN-DESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

Introduction

Ensuring universal access to sustainable forms of energy is a key development goal and is essential to improving the lives and wellbeing of women, men and children around the world. Energy enhances the livelihoods of women and men through the production of goods, as well as through the provision of and access to services, such as those related to water, health, education and communication.

In spite of the above, approximately 1.1 billion people, globally, have no access to electricity, and nearly three billion rely on inefficient and polluting energy sources for their cooking, heating and other household needs.ⁱ Additionally, sustainable energy sources have the potential to mitigate climate change, as the majority of global carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions are energy-related.ⁱⁱ

To counteract energy poverty and enhance development, the Secretary General of the United Nations launched Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL) in 2012. Coinciding with the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All, this global initiative was designed with the objectives to a) ensure universal access to modern energy sources; b) double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency; and c) double the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

One of the primary ways in which SEforALL drives action is through the formation of high impact opportunities (HIOs), which are voluntary partnerships formed to help inform or deliver SEforALL objectives.ⁱⁱⁱ SEforALL's actions are supported by regional hubs—in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), Asia-Pacific and Africa—and thematic hubs, including energy efficiency and capacity building.

Gender and SEforALL

Gender equality has been a guiding principle of SEforALL's mandate and country actions since its inception. Acknowledging the fundamental role gender equality has for achieving universal access, a two-year campaign was implemented in 2014-2015 to shed light on the impacts of energy poverty on women and girls, as well as the benefits that universal access could provide to their wellbeing and economic empowerment.

Additionally, several HIOs directly addressed the nexus of women and energy from the onset, including:

- Energy and Women's Health HIO
- Modern Cooking Appliances and Fuels HIO

SEforALL's commitment to gender equality was strengthened in its strategic framework for results *Going Further, Faster - Together*, where the initiative commits to having an inclusive and people-centered approach and actively work together with “firms and groups that engage women across the energy value chain, advocating for greater gender diversity in boards of energy companies, management and across the workforce.”^{iv} The strategic framework additionally calls for gender considerations to be

mainstreamed in all SEforALL activities and for the establishment of a Gender and Energy Accelerator.

The Accelerator—a working group on gender and energy—is expected to a) gather and communicate data on multiple development benefits for women through access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy services; b) develop a monitoring and evaluation framework for showing progress made under SEforALL; c) raise awareness and understanding of the importance of inclusive development and advocate for advanced actions to fully support women's participation; and d) guide gender inputs for SEforALL including in communications, country engagement and financing activities.^v

To understand the extent to which gender is being mainstreamed in SEforALL related activities, the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Global Gender Office (GGO) conducted an assessment of 61 SEforALL country action plan documents, from 52 countries. It is expected that the findings of this report will support the work of SEforALL's Global Team and inform future work of the Gender and Energy Accelerator, to further the gender equality objectives of the strategic framework for results.

Objectives

This assessment aims to identify and understand the degree to which gender considerations are addressed in the three types of documents prepared as part of the SEforALL country action process: rapid assessment and gap analyses (RAGAs), action agendas (AAs) and investment prospectuses (IPs). Findings offer insights into the ways that governments recognize gender considerations in the context of sustainable energy and highlight cross-cutting gender issues and regional trends.

Methods

SAMPLE

To understand the manner in which countries are developing gender-responsive country-level actions, this assessment analyzed 61 SEforALL country action process documents. These documents support national energy planning and investment roadmaps, designed to meet SEforALL's objectives.

These 61 documents include: 50 Rapid Assessment and Gap Analyses (RAGAs), 7 Action Agendas (AAs) and 4 Investment Prospectuses (IPs).¹ Thirty-five of the 61 documents analyzed are from sub-Saharan African countries (SSA), 16 are from LAC countries and 10 are from Asia-Pacific countries.

TABLE 1: TYPES OF SEFORALL COUNTRY ACTION PROCESS DOCUMENTS

DOCUMENT NAME	DESCRIPTION
Rapid Assessment and Gap Analysis (RAGA)	This document describes the status quo of energy in the national development context, providing the political, economic, social and environmental background for the subsequent drafting of plans to promote SEforALL objectives in a particular country.
Action Agenda (AA)	This document provides a long-term vision to ensure sector-wide coherence and synergy of accumulated efforts toward meeting the three SEforALL objectives at the national level.
Investment Prospectus (IP)	This document aims to operationalize the Action Agenda by identifying a set of implementable programmes and projects, including their investment requirements, which can be presented to potential private and public investors.

All country action documents included in this assessment are the approved and current documents developed and endorsed by national governments and stakeholders. These documents were all publicly available as of February 2017.

The IUCN Environment and Gender Information (EGI) platform² methodology was applied to determine if and how countries recognize and link sustainable energy commitments with gender equality and women's empowerment objectives.

¹ The 61 documents included in this analysis are publicly available and were retrieved directly from www.se4all.org. Last retrieval February 27th, 2017.

² See <http://www.genderandenvironment.org/EGI>

THE ENVIRONMENT AND GENDER INFORMATION (EGI) PLATFORM

IUCN's Environment and Gender Information (EGI) platform aims—through data and analysis—to convey the value of gender-responsive environmental conservation and sustainable development. By providing evidence-based information and knowledge products, the EGI platform guides action toward a more just world. Since its inception in 2013, the EGI has evolved into a source for new knowledge creation and dissemination—and for revealing progress and challenges in meeting commitments to women's empowerment and gender equality in environmental spheres.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

To determine whether and how often SEforALL country action documents discussed gender equality and women's participation, the assessment counted the number of times gender-related keywords were found in each document. IUCN's EGI gender keyword dictionary defined 73 unique English, Spanish and French terms, grouped into nine broad categories: *gender*; *sex*; *female*; *woman*; *women*; *girl*; *equity*; *equality*; *maternal*.³ The gender keyword dictionary includes multiple forms of keywords in these categories to ensure every mention is counted. For example, the terms *gender*, *genders*, *gendered* and *gender-based* were included in the search to capture all instances where gender is discussed.

MaxQDA, a qualitative data analysis software, was then used to identify keyword mentions in all 61 SEforALL documents. Each keyword mention was subsequently reviewed for context. Where keywords were mentioned and were not relevant to this study's focus on gender equality they were excluded from the analysis.⁴

The keywords were then analyzed for context to identify the ways in which women and gender considerations are characterized in each document. (See following sections for more on this qualitative assessment.) Final keyword counts were tabulated to determine the overall frequency of keyword mentions and to identify regional trends.

³ This report excludes analysis of 26 additional gender keywords grouped into four additional categories: *male*, *men*, *man*, and *boy*, as the inclusion of these words did not show that gender considerations are being included. The results reported only reflect analysis of the 73 keywords in eight groups listed above.

⁴ For example, mentions of "genre," which is the French word for "gender" were not included when they referred to a "type" or "sort."

Findings

FREQUENCY OF WOMEN AND GENDER KEYWORDS

Including gender-related keywords in SEforALL-related country action documents indicates some level of awareness of gender considerations relevant to the sustainable energy and development, and is a precursor to any potential action to advance

gender equality, beginning, for example, by recognizing the differentiated roles and opportunities of women and men as energy providers and users. *Of the 61 documents analyzed, 50 (82%) include women and/or gender keywords* [Figure 1a, b]. A total of 727 gender keywords are included in these 50 documents.

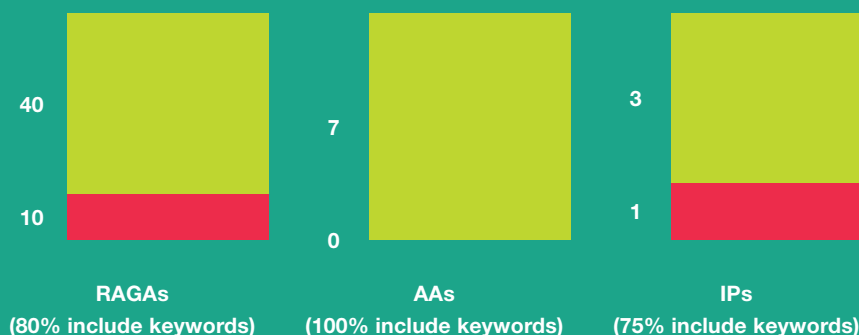
Figure 1a: Inclusion of gender keywords in SEforALL country action documents



Figure 1b: Keyword inclusion by document type

● # of documents with gender and/or women keywords

● # of documents with no gender and/or women keywords



INCLUSION OF GENDER ACROSS THE SEforALL COUNTRY ACTION PROCESS DOCUMENTS

Six countries—Cabo Verde, Gambia, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria and Tanzania—prepared two or more documents related to the SEforALL country action process. Gambia, Kenya and Tanzania produced all three document types. It is worth noting that five countries that addressed gender considerations in their RAGAs have further reflected gender considerations in their AAs, and that

Gambia, Kenya and Tanzania—only three countries producing also an IP—have ensured gender inclusions are further addressed in their IPs.

Though the sample of countries with two or more country action documents is small, *Figure 2* suggests there may be an emerging trend in the development of these documents, and that when gender considerations are included in the RAGAs it is likely these considerations will also be reflected in the AA and IP.

Figure 2: Gender considerations carried throughout the country action process

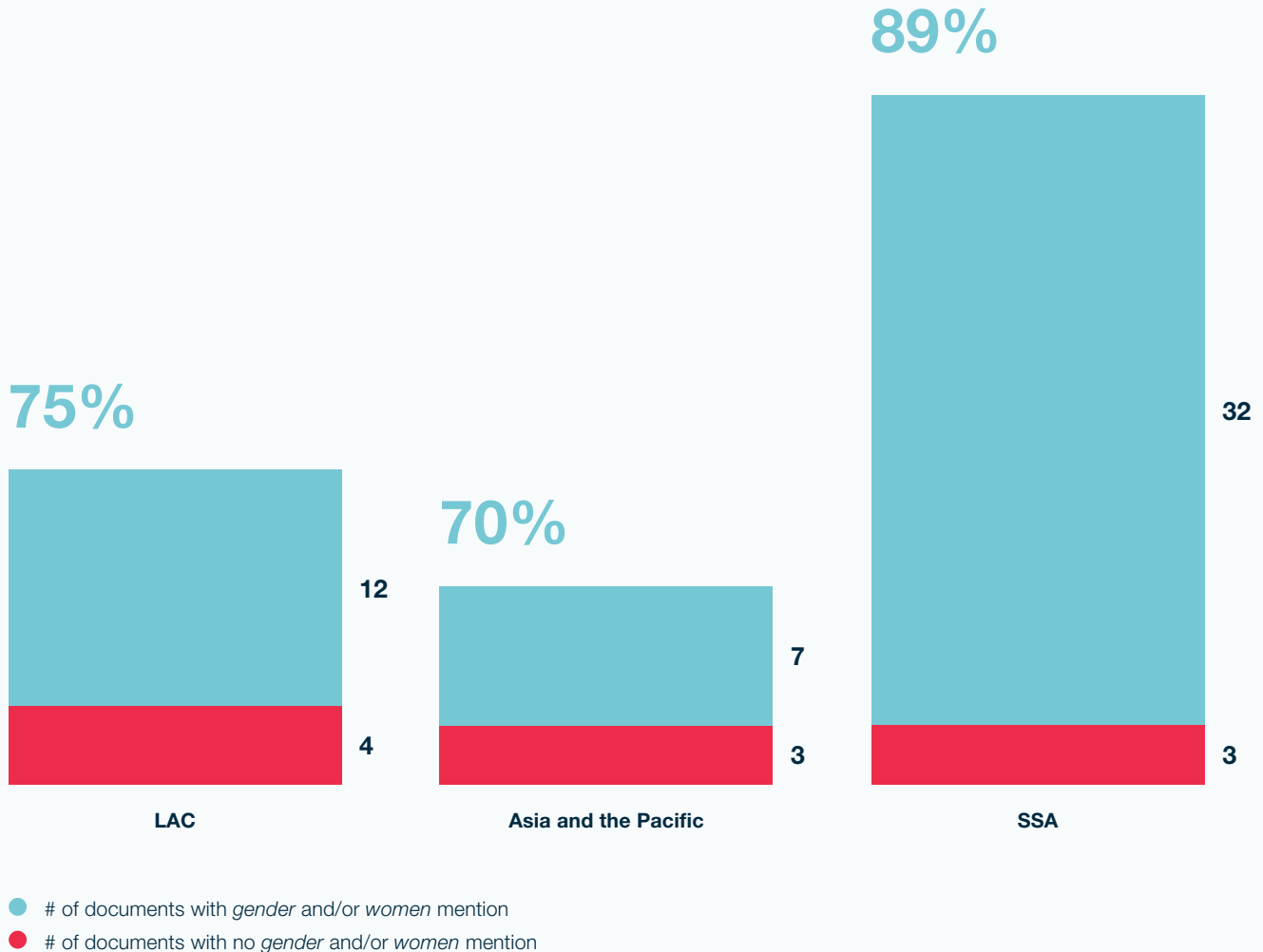


REGIONAL ANALYSIS

While 82% of SEforALL-related country action documents included gender keywords, attention to gender issues in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)

region significantly exceeds the global average; 89% of SSA documents analyzed included one or more keywords.

Figure 3: Regional comparison of SEforALL country action documents



MAINSTREAMING GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN SEforALL COUNTRY ACTION DOCUMENTS

Fourteen (23%) country action documents (6 RAGAs, 7 AAs, 1 IP) include gender equality or gender mainstreaming as a guiding principle, or commit to a gender mainstreaming process for

sustainable energy development. For example, Pakistan's RAGA lists several objectives to mainstream gender into national energy policies, such as developing a baseline survey to identify gender-related needs for biogas and clean cookstove technologies.

Characterization of women

The EGI methodology noted above includes a framework for context-specific analysis, which was applied in this assessment to determine the characterization of women in country action

documents. Each gender-related keyword was categorized into one or more themes according to the criteria listed in *Table 2*.

TABLE 2: CHARACTERIZING WOMEN: FOUR THEMES FOR ANALYZING CONTEXT PER EGI METHODOLOGY

	AS:	WHEN:
How are women portrayed?	Vulnerable	Document discusses women's vulnerability to the effects of climate change, environmental degradation, gender-based violence and discrimination.
	Beneficiaries	Document includes policies, programmes or measures acknowledging women as recipients of economic, social or other benefits, including educational and capacity-building opportunities.
	Stakeholders	Document identifies women as decision makers or as a group targeted for participation in decision making.
	Agents of Change	Document describes women as driving sustainable energy development activities or having a voice in policy change.

WOMEN AS VULNERABLE

Five (8%) country action documents (3 RAGAs, 2 AAs) identify women as vulnerable or as part of a vulnerable population that requires specific consideration in designing country-level actions. For example, Nigeria's AA acknowledges that women and children are vulnerable to health problems—and even death—resulting from inefficient and polluting indoor cooking methods.

Inequalities of access to and control and power over rights, resources and services make women more vulnerable in the energy sector. However, women are much more than their vulnerability—women have the knowledge, experience and means to be active and engaged as beneficiaries and stakeholders in the energy sector. Shifting beyond the narrative of women's victimhood to a narrative as women as agents of change can

result in a more robust impact on gender equality throughout the energy sector.

WOMEN AS BENEFICIARIES

Universal access to affordable, efficient and clean energy is a key development goal and critical to sustainable development. When women are the beneficiaries of energy interventions, there are opportunities to equitably address many development and environment challenges. As energy is a cross-sectoral issue, women not only benefit from direct household access, but also

from diverse opportunities for empowerment through improved economic, health and education outcomes driven by gender-responsive initiatives.

Thirty-three (54%) country action documents (24 RAGAs, 6 AAs, 3 IPs) identify women as beneficiaries, either of specific interventions or more broadly of key objectives. For example, Kenya's IPs references the country's "Biogas for Better Life Programme," which has the potential to improve the lives of women and girls by decreasing drudgery and allowing more time for women and girls to pursue education or economic activities.

GIRLS AS BENEFICIARIES

While this analysis focuses on the characterization of women, four country action documents specifically characterize girls, in addition to women, as beneficiaries. Gambia's IP and Kenya's RAGA list girls as beneficiaries of actions to reduce indoor air pollution resulting from the use of inefficient and harmful cooking sources. In another example, Tanzania's RAGA mentions the installation of a wind turbine at a girls' secondary school.

WOMEN AS STAKEHOLDERS

As energy producers, consumers and users, women's lives and livelihoods are affected by decisions in energy sector management at all levels. Yet, recognizing and including women as stakeholders in energy sector decision making is minimal. When women are excluded as stakeholders, women lose the opportunity to share their knowledge, advocate for their needs and rights and prioritize policies and actions that are gender-inclusive and gender-responsive. As a result, policy makers lose the opportunity

to develop comprehensive plans that address inequitable access to, use of and control over energy resources.

Twenty-two (36%) country action documents (16 RAGAs, 3 AAs, 3 IPs) identify women as important stakeholders in energy sector/ sustainable development governance and decision making at the local or national level. Swaziland's RAGA identifies women's community-based organizations as an entry point for the deployment of energy technologies for communities.

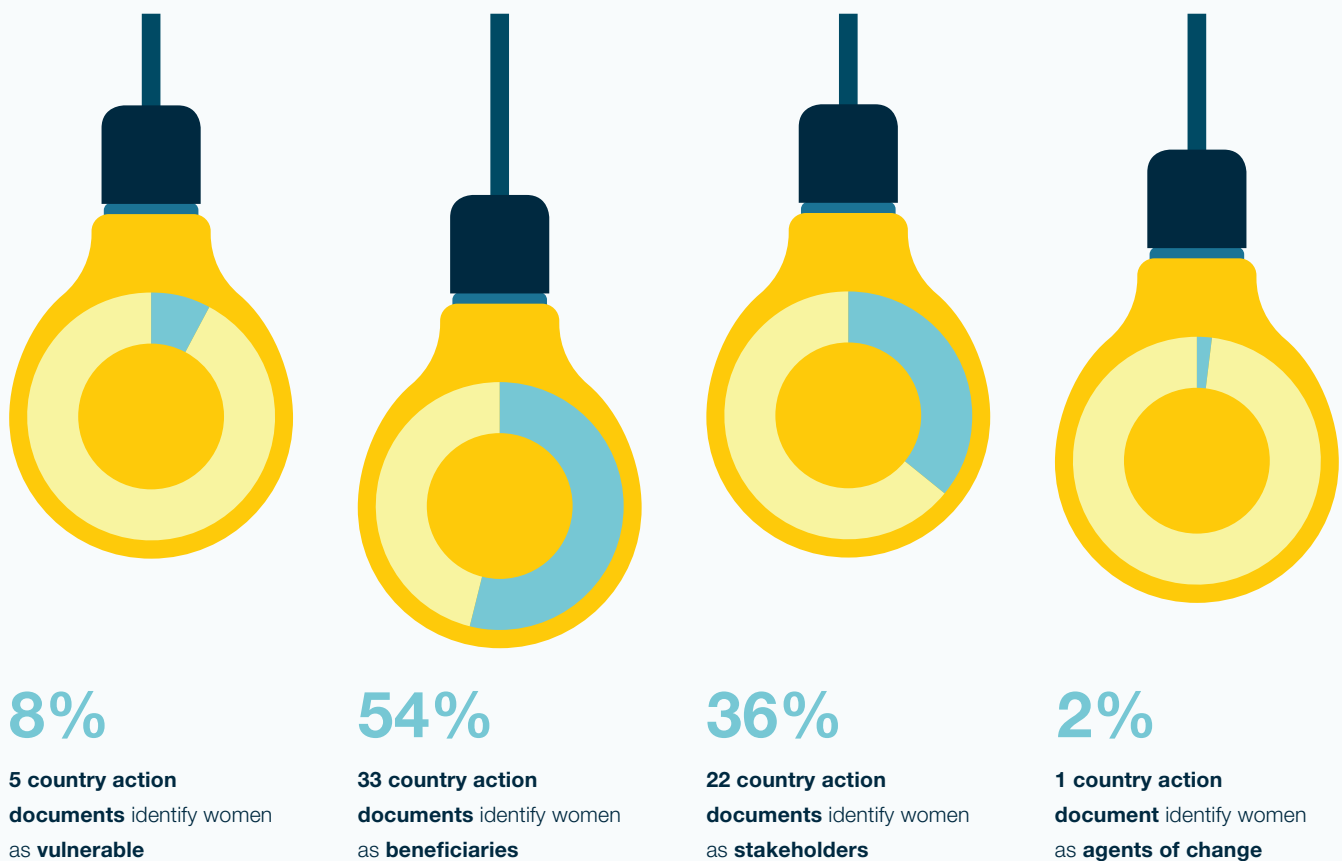
WOMEN AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

Women’s knowledge and capacities, or their agency,⁵ often goes unrecognized because of social, political and economic structures hindering both their access to reliable, clean and affordable energy resources and their participation within the energy sector. As the primary gatherers of energy resources and as energy suppliers and consumers, women’s unique knowledge and experiences provides them with the potential to be powerful agents of change. Although evidence suggests that integrating women into all levels

of the energy sector can lead to more effective energy initiatives,^{vi} only one country action document includes this characterization.

Among the 61 country action documents analyzed, only Guatemala’s RAGA categorizes women as agents of change. It recognizes women’s potential to unlock more effective energy activities and to drive policy change. Guatemala’s RAGA states that civil society plays an important role in the delivery of sustainable energy sources for all, and particularly recognizes women as agents in sustainable development.

Figure 4: Characterization of women in country action documents



⁵ Agency is an individual's or group's ability to make effective choices and to transform those choices into desired outcomes. World Bank (2014) Voice and Agency: Empowering Women and Girls for Shared Prosperity. Retrieved from: http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/Gender/Voice_and_agency_LOWRES.pdf

WOMEN'S MINISTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTATION OF SEFORALL COUNTRY ACTION DOCUMENT OBJECTIVES

Eight (13%) of the 61 country action documents analyzed identify women's ministries (or equivalents) or women's organizations as implementing partners.⁶ The ministries and organizations identified as implementing partners are often listed in tables and connected to specific energy subsectors, activities or actions. Women's organizations and ministries are occasionally listed as the primary group responsible for specific activities and actions, but are more commonly listed among many implementing groups. For example, in Rwanda's RAGA, the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion is responsible for monitoring progress toward the principle of mainstreaming gender-based equity into national actions. Sri Lanka's RAGA identifies the National Network on Gender in Energy as having a role in national biogas activities.

6 An additional five documents identify women's ministries and organizations as stakeholders, but do not task the ministries/organizations with specific implementation activities.

Cross-cutting gender issues reflected in country action documents

ENERGY, GENDER AND TIME POVERTY

In many societies, women and girls hold the primary responsibility of collecting biomass fuel sources, such as animal dung, wood or charcoal, to meet their household's energy needs. This time-consuming responsibility contributes to *time poverty*—the amount of time lost that could be spent on education, income generating activities or leisure—among women and girls. Deforestation and environmental degradation increase the distances that women and girls must travel to collect fuel. Longer distances not only exacerbate women's and girls' time poverty, but also make them more vulnerable to attack and assault.^{vii}

Eighteen (30%) country action documents (14 RAGAs, 3 AAs, 1 IP) mention time expenditure as a gender dimension of energy. Many of these documents note that the burdens of fuel collection and cooking—examples of reproductive tasks—fall on women. These documents posit that reliable

access to efficient energy sources or electricity will allow women more time to pursue productive activities, such as education or profitable economic activities. The Dominican Republic's RAGA states that introducing efficient biomass stoves will reduce women's work loads and also reduce community reliance on natural resources.

THE GENDER-ENERGY NEXUS IN RURAL AREAS

Approximately 85% of those who lack access to electricity, globally, reside in rural areas.^{viii} The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) calls for Parties to ensure that rural women have the right to enjoy adequate living conditions, including access to electricity. *Article 14* of CEDAW lays out measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas by ensuring that rural women participate in, and benefit from, rural development programmes and activities.

GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON RURAL ENERGY ACCESS

In 2013, SEforALL organized⁷ the Global Conference on Rural Energy Access. The objective of the Conference was to “provide an opportunity to strengthen capacities on policy, technical and entrepreneurial approaches to rural energy access for eradicating poverty and promoting sustainable development in rural communities.”^{ix} A specific objective included, “assessing potential integrated policy options to address rural energy and to identify synergies that can be realized from the links between energy and other development factors including health, education, economic growth, gender, water and food security.”^x

Fifteen (25%) country action documents (10 RAGAs, 3 AAs, 2 IPs) include references to women and/ or gender in the specific context of rural energy access and electrification. Peru’s RAGA cites statistics gathered by the Women’s Ministry, finding that nearly 1.5 million of the 1.6 million households in rural areas are without access to modern cookstoves. In another example, Tanzania’s AA mentions the joint World Bank and International Finance Corporation (IFC) “Lighting Africa” programme, which promotes the use of renewable electricity in rural areas, with the ultimate goal of, “contributing to improve the health of women and girls.”

THE GENDER-ENERGY NEXUS IN URBAN AREAS

While there is much research and action focusing on the gender-energy nexus in rural settings, there is very little discourse and action on addressing

gender-related energy challenges specific to urban settings. One such challenge, for example, is that due to bureaucratic barriers—such as a lack of a birth certificate or proof of a registered address—poor urban women may need to rely on energy connections that are illegal, unreliable and dangerous.^{xi} As these connections are often informal, those owning the energy connections, such as a “slum lord,” have the potential to exploit users by charging exorbitant rates.^{xii}

Five (8%) country action documents (the RAGA of Bhutan, the AAs of Tanzania and Kenya, and the IPs of Gambia and Kenya) acknowledge gender-related energy challenges in urban settings. Bhutan’s RAGA mentions a UNDP initiative in the country that aims to improve service delivery of municipal solid waste management and reduce the environmental impacts of waste through piloting public-private partnerships that are gender sensitive. Kenya’s IP and AA recognize

⁷ The Global Conference on Rural Energy Access was organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), UN-Energy and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 4-6 December, 2013.

that widowed or separated women—who then often have no access to land—migrate to cities, where they often remain poor and lack access to modern energy.

ENERGY AND WOMEN’S HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

Nearly half the world’s households’ meals are cooked over open fires or on rudimentary cookstoves, using inefficient and polluting biomass fuel sources.^{xiii} As a result, millions suffer from cancer, lung disease and other respiratory diseases caused by chronic exposure to indoor air pollution and poor ventilation.

Twenty-five (41%) country action documents (18 RAGAs, 5 AAs, 2 IPs) recognize that household use of biomass fuel sources is detrimental to women and children’s health. Cambodia’s RAGA states, “deaths largely affect women who are chiefly responsible for cooking, and their children, who are often with women as they cook.” This text is similar to other documents that recognize this link.

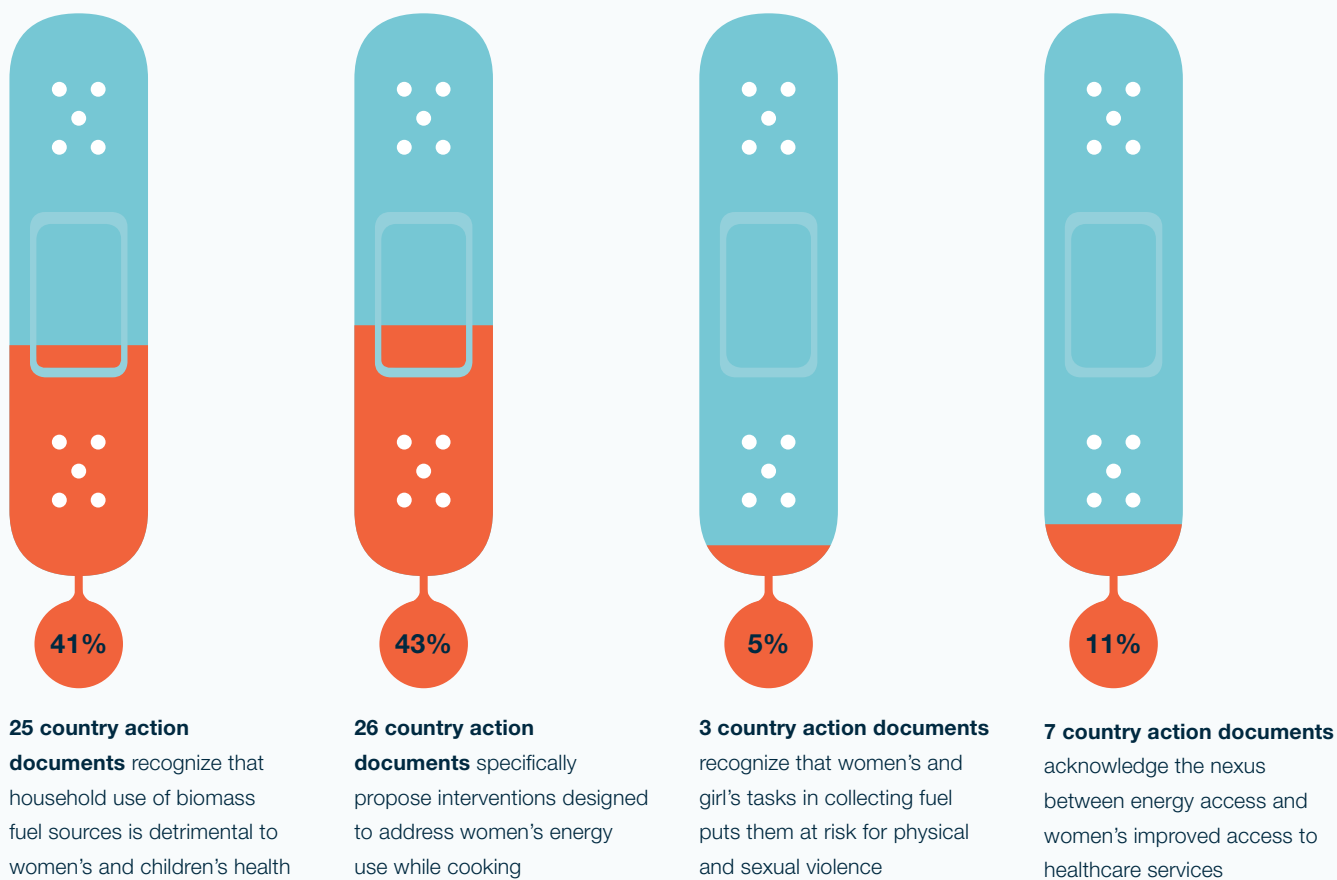
Twenty-six (43%) country action documents (17 RAGAs, 7 AAs, 2 IPs) specifically propose interventions designed to address women’s energy use while cooking. Many of these documents cite specific cookstove activities and actions, such as an objective in the Dominican Republic’s RAGA to install 2,000 improved stoves

through a European Union (EU) grant. Gambia’s RAGA recognizes that cookstoves have additional benefits, such as alleviating women’s time collecting fuel and allowing them to pursue other economic activities.

Argentina’s, Nicaragua’s and South Sudan’s RAGAs recognize that women’s and girls’ tasks in collecting fuel puts them at risk for physical and sexual violence. Argentina’s RAGA calls fuel collection a “dangerous burden” for women, and Nicaragua’s calls the task a “risk.” South Sudan’s RAGA specifically mentions snakebites as a danger for women while collecting fuel.

Energy is critical for the provision of health services, yet many healthcare facilities and clinics—as many as 58% in SSA—have no access to electricity.^{xiv} Seven (11%) country action documents (2 RAGAs, 3 AAs, 2 IPs) acknowledge the nexus between energy access and women’s improved access to healthcare services. Most of these specifically refer to maternal health. Kenya’s IP states, “energy is a critical enabler for vital primary health care services, especially during maternal and childbirth emergencies. Without electricity, mothers in childbirth are particularly at risk.” Guinea’s RAGA mentions that poor lighting in delivery rooms and lack of refrigeration for medications affects the health and well-being of women and children.

Figure 5: Energy and women’s health, safety and wellbeing



WOMEN IN ENERGY TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Access to affordable and renewable energy technology not only increases energy security and reduces GHG emissions, but can also provide new economic and educational opportunities for women. For example, an electrified drinking water pump can reduce women’s labor time, or more efficient and affordable transportation can connect women to goods and services. As for the energy sector as a whole, research from other sectors reveals that gender diversity in the workforce can enhance innovation and creativity, which can lead to a more sustainable energy sector.^{xv}

Six (10%) of the country action documents (4 RAGAs, 1 AA, 1 IP) analyzed include women and/ or gender keywords, either acknowledging a disparity in access to energy technology between women and men, or identifying diverse opportunities for women in energy technology and innovation—not including clean cookstove technologies. Gambia’s IP mentions an activity by the Gambia Technical Training Institute to develop courses and provide trainings for women to enhance their skills required for the design and construction of solar heaters. Kenya’s AA includes a target to involve more women along the value chain for the marketing of renewable energy technologies.

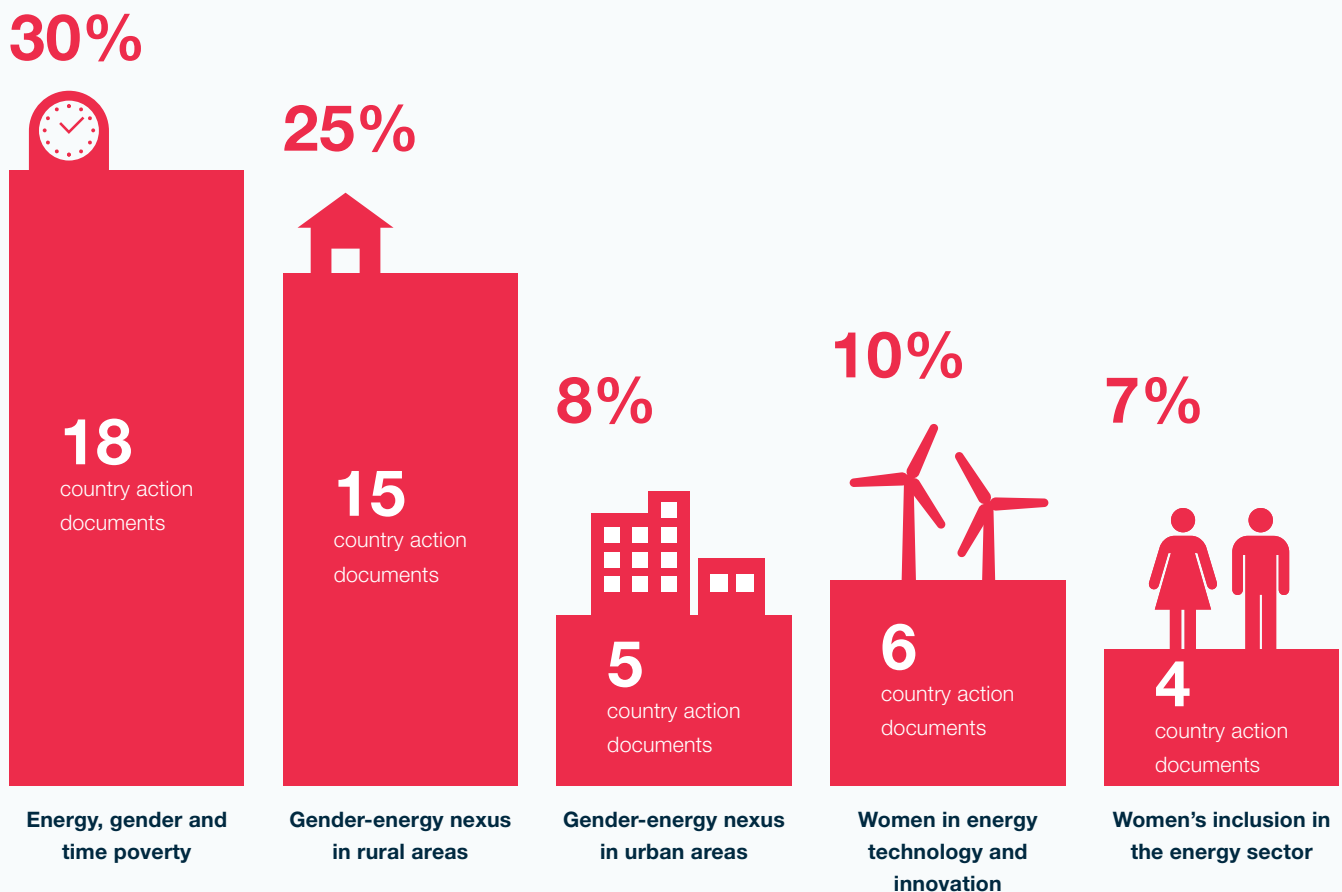
WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ENERGY SECTOR: IN CAREERS AND IN ENABLING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Although it varies from country to country, the gender gap in employment within the formal sector is generally large.⁸ It is often difficult to measure gender inequality within the sector, due to the lack of sex-disaggregated data.

Tanzania's RAGA and AA and Kenya's AA and IP specifically identify opportunities for women to be involved in energy sector careers. Kenya's

documents mention activities to involve more women along the value chain for the marketing of renewable energy technologies. Tanzania's RAGA is the only country action document to specifically list job creation in the renewable energy field (for women) as an expected result of a national program. Tanzania's AA identifies improving women's technical capacity—so that they can take advantage of the market opportunities that result from the implementation of sustainable energy initiatives in the country—as a high-impact opportunity.

Figure 6: Cross-cutting gender issues reflected in country action documents



⁸ The World Economic Forum estimated that women made up less than 20% of the labor force in 2015. World Economic Forum. (2016). The Industry gender gap. Women and Work in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, Chart on Gender wage gap and women's participation by industry, p. 4. At: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_FOJ_Executive_Summary_GenderGap.pdf

Enhancing gender equality in SEforALL country actions and processes

This assessment reveals that the SEforALL country action process offers diverse opportunities to advance a gender-responsive approach, including by addressing time poverty, rural energy access and women's health and wellbeing. There are strong links between the SEforALL country action processes and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in actions and activities designed to address gender targets within SDGs 3, 4, 5 and 7, as well as cross-cutting issues relevant to others, such as SDG 13.

However, where gender is mentioned, references often characterize women as passive users of energy and neglect to outline strategies or objectives to empower women within the energy sector. The limited references to women as energy entrepreneurs or agents of change contrast the more recent trend, which is evident in SEforALL's HIOs and strategic framework for results, in the SDGs and, most strongly, in practices of development agents targeting women's economic empowerment, through energy access initiatives.

The lack of reference to national gender/women's ministries (or equivalents) implies that these institutions are not consulted and/or involved in implementing energy programmes or activities.

Involving these institutions in the delivery of energy solutions can help integrate gender sensitive approaches throughout the country action processes.

The following are suggestions for further strengthening gender considerations in SEforALL RAGAs, AAs and IPs:

- *Produce capacity building materials and identify gender-related good practices:* National governments may benefit from more direct access to gender-responsive materials, such as guidelines and good practices, when designing sustainable energy strategies and interventions.
- *Provide technical support to countries during the development of national RAGAs, AAs and IPs:* Provide support to countries in developing RAGAs, AAs and IPs by including international gender and energy experts in their review. This may help identify additional interventions, address gender considerations and empower women. It may also ensure that gender considerations included in RAGAs are retained through the development of AAs and IPs.
- *Engage the Gender and Energy Accelerator:* SEforALL's Advisory Board members represent some of the most iconic institutions working

on gender, energy and mitigation. These organizations and their experts could provide technical support to national country action processes, and help develop guidelines, and gender-related information sharing platforms to support these processes.

- *Establish a Gender Help Desk:* Create a Gender Help Desk in SEforALL's Global Team and discuss its terms of reference with the members of the Gender and Energy Accelerator. The Gender Help Desk could

ensure structural and timely support is provided to governments as they develop country action documents. It could also help implement guidance provided by the Gender and Energy Accelerator.

- *Develop a Gender Action Plan:* The above elements are some of the activities required for the development of an institutional action plan to address gender considerations in the SEforALL framework.

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