

CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM

CDM AND WOMEN



United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change



CLEAN DEVELOPMENT MECHANISM

CDM AND WOMEN

United Nations
Framework Convention on
Climate Change



INTRODUCTION

The Clean Development Mechanism has the potential to help the empowerment of women through its various methodologies. While these methodologies may not have started out to be gender-friendly per se, their application has improved women's lives and by extension the lives of their communities.

This publication will highlight some of these gender-friendly methodologies, as well as further work being done by the secretariat to enhance gender equality through ensuring that gender is a consideration in the CDM process. This publication also aims to encourage potential developers to consider this mechanism when planning projects to help empower and improve women's lives.



BACKGROUND

Climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions threatens everyone, but women and men will experience it differently. Discriminatory gender norms mean that women often have fewer social and economic resources than men, which reduces their resiliency to natural disasters and other fallout from climate change. In many countries, women are the primary managers of household resources, such as water and fuel, which may be in increasingly short supply. In addition many women make their living in ways that are highly vulnerable to climatic variations, such as agriculture.

Consider that:

- Women and children make up the majority of the world's rural poor living in developing countries;
- Most rural poor rely on agriculture for their livelihoods;
- Women are 43 percent of the agricultural workforce in developing countries;
- Changing climatic conditions have most seriously affected those who make their living from the land, due to exacerbating drought conditions or inundation.

However, women are not just the victims of climate change; they represent, in the words of UNFCCC Executive Secretary Christiana Figueres, *“the strongest key agents to adaptation – as they represent both the problem and the solution.”* Providing women with access and the ability to make climate friendly changes enables them to not only improve their lives but also the lives of their families and communities.

The CDM aims to promote greenhouse gas emission reduction through projects in developing countries, while assisting in sustainable development in those host countries. It is the latter aim of the CDM – that of sustainable development – that has shown the mechanism to be a powerful tool for gender equality and specifically in the empowerment of women and for improving their daily lives. Gender equality and sustainable development are widely recognized as interdependent. The CDM is said to have brought about “the most tangible advance on gender to date.” The link between gender equality and sustainable development provides strong justification for an explicit focus on women and their active participation in the CDM project cycle.¹

CDM METHODOLOGIES

Methodologies are the lifeblood of CDM projects. They are used to set the baseline emissions and then measure emissions once a project has begun. Registered projects are eligible to earn saleable certified emission reduction (CERs) equivalent to the difference between the two – baseline and post-project emissions. CERs can be used by industrialized countries to meet part of their emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol. There-in lies their value.

Currently, there are nearly 200 methodologies available to allow developers to implement projects under the CDM. These methodologies are classified by scale and sectoral scope. An overview of the CDM methodologies can be found in the CDM Methodology Booklet, which is available for download from the secretariat website:

<http://cdm.unfccc.int/methodologies/index.html>.

¹ GREENSTREAM. 2010. *Gender and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM): Opportunities for CDM to Promote Local Positive Gender Impacts*. pg. 17.

In addition to contributing to sustainable development, a large number of project types under the CDM also generate gender-positive impacts. The secretariat has labelled these methodologies with a “Women and children” icon in the methodology booklet. The methodologies have received this label because of their potential to:

- Utilize community-based participatory approaches, that give women and children an opportunity to learn about the projects and contribute to decision making processes;
- Improve the living environment of women and children (e.g. better air quality, heating, lighting);
- Optimize tasks typically undertaken by women or children (e.g. fuel wood gathering, cooking, water purification);
- Increase access to affordable household fittings and appliances (e.g. light globes, refrigerators).²

In the case of afforestation/reforestation CDM activities, the generation of new local employment opportunities was also used as a criterion because many of these new positions are filled by women.

“Women and children” methodologies can roughly be divided into two categories: technologies that improve livelihoods at a household level and those that improve lives more broadly. This publication explores a methodology type from each category to illustrate their benefit.



² UNFCCC. 2012. *CDM Methodologies Booklet*. pg. 11.



I. HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL IMPROVEMENTS

FUEL EFFICIENT COOK STOVES

(METHODOLOGIES AMS I.E/II.G)

The use of fuel – either gathering firewood or purchasing fuel such as charcoal or kerosene – for cooking and water boiling can represent a significant portion of women’s time and household budget. In addition, using these fuels indoors causes air pollution and fire hazards that threaten the health and safety of those responsible for the cooking (usually women and girls). Unsustainable firewood collection causes deforestation and degradation, increasing risks such as soil erosion. Finally, families can spend nearly a third of their household income on fuel, keeping many locked in poverty.

Fuel efficient cook stoves improve the lives of women and girls in a variety of ways. First, they increase free time through the reduced need for firewood collection. This additional free time can be spent on education or income generating activities. Using less wood for fuel also means forests are preserved. In addition, the stoves produce less indoor smoke, improving air quality and lessening the associated respiratory problems. Finally, the stoves help households save money through lower fuel use.

For example, in the project *Efficient Fuel Wood Stoves for Nigeria* (CDM PROJECT 2711), approximately 12,500 fuel efficient wood burning stoves were distributed in the Guinea Savannah Zone of Nigeria. The SAVE80 type stoves, so-called because they are 80 percent more efficient in wood usage, replaced traditional stoves. The households in the project zone saved roughly a quarter of their annual income through reduced firewood costs. The stoves themselves created local employment opportunities as community members, including women, were engaged in their assembly, maintenance and distribution.



II. BROAD-LEVEL IMPROVEMENTS

RURAL ELECTRIFICATION

(METHODOLOGIES AMS-III.AW/AMS-I.L, AMS-I.A, AMS-III.BB)

Providing access to clean sources of power – to run household appliances, provide lighting, etc. – has long been viewed as a key means of helping communities along the path to sustainable development. In 2012, the CDM Executive Board approved new methodologies that take into account unmet demand for energy and that allow renewable energy electricity generation technologies – such as solar panels for lighting or micro hydro power – to qualify for CERs, provided that 75 percent of the beneficiaries are households.

Lack of access to reliable sources of electricity can create many problems for rural households and the women who run them. Time spent collecting firewood for fuel as well as the cooking and related cleaning activities are a drain on the time of the women and girls primarily responsible for these tasks. Thus, lack of access to electricity can limit income generation opportunities. The lack of reliable and safe lighting also limits evening activities, including school work. Finally, spending for fuel – on items such as coal or kerosene – places a significant drain on household income, which could otherwise go toward food, medicine and other needs.

The availability of regular electricity frees more time for women. Regular electricity supply, particularly for lighting, allows women to engage in income-generation activities and to pursue educational opportunities. There is also an accompanying income savings, as fuel costs are lowered, as well as an upgrade in appliances (often women will purchase other energy efficient and cost saving technologies for the household).

An example of how rural electrification projects can improve the lives of women and children is the *E7 Bhutan Micro Hydro Power Project* (CDM PROJECT 62). A small run-of-river hydropower turbine provides clean electricity to the village of Chendebji in Bhutan, the surrounding topography of which makes connection to the electricity grid virtually impossible. Access to the low-cost electricity from the micro hydro project has had a large impact on the households that have so far been connected. Women have more free time, which has resulted in greater uptake in other income-generating activities such as weaving and cattle tending. Light bulbs have replaced traditional kerosene lamps, and energy-efficient appliances, such as electric rice and curry cookers, have replaced traditional stoves, providing significant improvement in the household indoor air quality. In addition, indoor lighting has meant longer study hours for children: from 30 minutes a night when having to use kerosene lamps to now nearly 90 minutes.

FUTURE GENDER SENSITIVE WORK

The secretariat is committed to improving the operation of the CDM in order to make it both more flexible and robust.

Next to the gender-sensitive analysis of the CDM methodologies that continues, strategic planning, both at the level of the UNFCCC secretariat and the CDM Executive Board, has led to the formulation of a set of activities dedicated to the enhancement of gender mainstreaming through the CDM process.

These activities include:

- Enhancing the geographical reach of the CDM, which translates into increased participation by vulnerable social groups, including women and children;
- Ensuring operationalization of a loan scheme (CDM Loan Scheme);
- Assisting project development in least developed countries and small island developing States;
- Developing top-down standards and standardized emissions baselines, which could benefit the livelihoods of vulnerable social groups;
- Implementing an e-learning course that covers the main aspects of gender and the CDM.

CONCLUSION

The CDM has already shown itself to have the potential to positively impact the lives of women and children – by improving livelihoods and health and allowing time for the pursuit of additional opportunities. The mechanism is becoming more streamlined and efficient, with an aim to improve uptake of these sorts of methodologies.

However, the methodologies and the benefits to women and children that they bring only occur with the implementation of projects. It is hoped that through this general overview of the female-friendly benefits of some of the CDM methodologies, NGOs, project developers and others will look to the mechanism as a way to help achieve their aims of sustainable development and support for women and children. In supporting access to renewable energy sources, as well as cleaner, more efficient domestic appliances, it is clear that the CDM translates into support for women, both in terms of health and overall quality of life.

REFERENCES

1. GREENSTREAM. 2010. *Gender and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM): Opportunities for CDM to Promote Local Positive Gender Impacts*. Available at <<http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?contentid=220759&nodeid=40817&contentlan=2&culture=en-US>>
2. 52ND SESSION COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN. 2008. *Issues Paper*.
3. WOMEN FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE. 2008. *Challenges and Recommendations for Clean Development Mechanism Aiming to Improve Women's Livelihood in the Pacific Region*. Available at <www.gendercc.net>
4. LIGHTING AFRICA. 2011. *Expanding Women's Role in Africa's Modern Off-Grid Lighting Market*. Available at <<http://www.lightingafrica.org/new-report-african-women-stand-to-gain-from-modern-off-grid-lighting.html>>
5. UNFCCC. 2012. *The Rio Conventions: Action on Gender*. Available at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/publications/roi_20_gender_brochure.pdf>
6. UNFCCC. 2012. *CDM Methodologies Booklet*. Available at <<http://cdm.unfccc.int/methodologies/index.html>>
7. UN WOMEN. Available at <<http://www.unwomen.org/focus-areas/climate-change-and-the-environment/#intro>>

© 2012 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

All rights reserved

This publication is issued for public information purposes and is not an official text of the Convention in any legal or technical sense. Unless otherwise noted in captions or graphics all matter may be freely reproduced in part or in full, provided the source is acknowledged.

For further information contact

United Nations Climate Change Secretariat
Martin-Luther-King-Strasse 8
53175 Bonn, Germany

Telephone +49. 228. 815 10 00

Telefax +49. 228. 815 19 99

ISBN 92-9219-095-4

Photos:

Page 2 **Rachel Zhang 'Xinjiang Gu Niang'**

(CDM project 0894: Xinjiang Dabancheng Sanchang First Phase Wind Farm Project in China)

Page 4 **Centre for Rural Technology 'Local technicians being trained to install improved cooking stoves'**
(CDM project 4530: Efficient Fuel wood cooking stoves project in foothills of central region of Nepal)

Page 8 **Florian Zerzawy 'Children with the SAVE80 household stove'**

(CDM project 2711: Efficient Fuel Wood Stoves for Nigeria)

Page 10 **Patrick Polack 'Untitled'**

(CDM project 1754: Visakhapatnam OSRAM CFL distribution CDM Project, India)

Cover **Ding Xiaobo 'People pushing solar cooker'**

(CDM project 2307: Federal Intertrade Pengyang Solar Cooker Project)

Inside back **Alexia Pestre 'Tibetan working girl'**

(CDM project 1005: Gansu Diebu Niaojiaga 12.9 MW Hydropower Station Project)

Art direction and design: Heller & C GmbH, Cologne



