

# The role of gender in urban energy transitions

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# Aim of the paper

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- Use existing case studies and literature to interrogate demand for energy by women in the urban settings,
- Explore who is making decisions affecting energy choices at the policy level and highlight the absence of women in business,
- Conclude with suggestions for policy makers on how to address gender equality in Sub-Saharan Africa that will enable the region to transition to a clean, affordable and sustainable energy future

# Introduction

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- ❑ Sub-Saharan African countries are faced with:
  - High urbanisations rates
  - High use of solid biomass
  - High electricity installation costs
  - Increasing informal settlements
- ❑ This contributes to adverse health problems
- ❑ While everyone is affected by the lack of access to modern fuels, women and children are often the most affected.
- ❑ Women in the household are responsible for cooking and collecting fuels in the household.
  - lose as much as 20 hours per week while collecting biomass fuels and cooking for the household
  - women and children are vulnerable to sexual attacks at night due to lack of lighting on the roads as well as while wood collecting due to having to go further and further afield with deforestation

# Household energy

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- ❑ Men and women play different roles with solid biomass fuels
- ❑ Decision making around which fuels to use and which appliance to purchase still lies with men
- ❑ Men purchase for pleasure while women purchase for the family
- ❑ Women lose out

# Transport

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- ❑ Transport plays a critical role as a means to access to markets, jobs and information
- ❑ Women's mobility is often limited
- ❑ Males typically have priority over private car use and as a result women are more likely to use public transport

# Women in Entrepreneurship

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- ❑ According to the African Development Bank 2016, there are more women entrepreneurs compared to male entrepreneurs
- ❑ A close analysis shows that most of the enterprises owned by women are in the informal sector and therefore do not contribute to the inclusive growth in the countries
- ❑ For women, entrepreneurship is a necessity as result of their **disadvantage of not having access to capital or land and the need to make income**
  - Women more likely to be involved in briquette and cookstoves businesses than in solar technology and cell phone charging businesses
- ❑ The businesses often operate in the immediate area and everything is sourced and sold in the surrounding area to cut down on costs
- ❑ Women run businesses have been shown to return a far greater proportion of their earnings into the household and community compared to men run businesses

# Women in Power

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- ❑ Women are critical in making energy access for all possible
- ❑ Currently, 5% of private sector companies are led by women CEOs, 29% of senior positions are held by women; in the public sector 22% of cabinet members are women and 25% of parliament seats are held by women
- ❑ The energy sector along with treasury, infrastructure and defence departments in the public sector are some of the sectors lagging behind in terms of women representation and this is because these sectors have traditionally been viewed as masculine sectors
  - This has resulted in women being unable to be involved in policies or take part in decision making around household energy use
- ❑ The positions given to women have often pay less, hold less power and influence
  - Female senior management for example occupy staff management roles while in the public sector female ministers occupy social welfare positions as these are viewed as feminine and to some extent play to the traditional women's role of being people orientated, nurturers with less technical engagement

# Solar Sister

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- ❑ An organisation that aims to empower women in East Africa through entrepreneurship
- ❑ Using a network of other women a Sola Sister not only has access to employment, but is also able to convert the local community to safer and more environmentally friendly sources of energy
- ❑ Each entrepreneur receives training from Solar Sister before purchasing solar lamps and clean cook stoves which they can sell on, woman-to-woman throughout their social networks
- ❑ Access to solar lamps and clean cook stoves means they can work or study for longer, leading to an increase in wages of up to 59%
- ❑ Also results in improved health due to a reduction in harmful emissions and can make communities safer, particularly at night

# Polokwane case study

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- ❑ A project in Polokwane is testing a services delivery model that involves the municipality procuring energy services from small scale community-based enterprise in a way that creates job opportunities and reduces energy poverty and negative environmental impacts
- ❑ Five young women from the area (peri – urban community) have been selected to run a hotbox making businesses that will be distributed to vulnerable households
  - Using a hotbox the project aims to reduce ‘on fire’ cooking time, or longer lasting of electricity
  - A hot box is a simple heat-retention cooker developed in South Africa, can save up to 30% on fuel and electricity costs
- ❑ Project experience indicates that mentorship and training are critical support needed to ensure the success of the business
- ❑ The project is also learning that while technical skills are critical, small interventions such as constant encouragements are more important as it is easy for the women to give up because of the daily barriers they face

# A hotbox



- Made of two polycotton bags which are filled with either recycled polystyrene balls or foam chips which provide the insulation needed
- A simple heat-retention cooker developed in South Africa, can save up to 30% on fuel and electricity costs.
- Cuts down on energy usage, once food has been brought to the boil
  - Saves time and fuel
  - Reduces vulnerability to attacks for those that use firewood
  - Reduces impact on the environment

# Conclusion

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- ❑ To ensure urban households are able to transition from using fuels such as paraffin, coal, firewood to clean energy, it is important to include both men and women in the policy making as to ensure that the energy-gender gap is closed
  - ❑ Policies must promote equal gender opportunities
- ❑ Create enabling environment for women that will unlock opportunities for women and ensure a balanced and informed dialogue, around urban energy transition
- ❑ Provide support to women e.g. Solar Sister and Department of Energy in South Africa

# Thank You

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