

REDUCING TIME POVERTY & UNPAID CARE WORK



WHAT IS UNPAID CARE WORK AND TIME POVERTY?

In developing countries around the world, women and girls often spend hours each day caring for their families and performing routine household chores, such as cooking, cleaning, and collecting water and firewood. This **unpaid care work** limits the amount of time left for activities such as rest, leisure, or potential income generating opportunities. **Time poverty** is the result of this debilitating loss of time, and it is a global issue that carries widespread impacts on women, their families, and their communities.

COOKING AND FUEL COLLECTION CAN LEAD TO TIME POVERTY

Nearly 3 billion people, or 40% of the world, rely on biomass (e.g., wood, dung, agricultural waste) to cook their daily meals. Women and children perform the biggest share of unpaid work required to collect fuel and cook.* **Globally, cooking and cleaning makes up the majority of unpaid work.**¹ In developing countries, a significant portion of this time is spent collecting firewood and water.

TIME SPENT ON FUEL COLLECTION AND COOKING

While cooking and collection times vary depending on cuisine and location, women still spend hours on cooking-related tasks each day.



Women in South Asia spend on average 374 hours collecting fuel per year.² Daily collection times may range from 1 to 5 hours.

Women in rural Uganda report spending up to 6 hours per day collecting fuel.³ In Kenya, daily fuel collection is estimated at 3.5 hours.⁴

Globally, women spend 4x as much time cooking and preparing meals compared to men.⁵ For example, women in South Asia spend 4 hours on average each day cooking.⁶

CLEAN AND EFFICIENT COOKSTOVES AND FUELS CAN REDUCE UNPAID CARE WORK

The good news is that investing in time-saving technologies such as electricity and cleaner, more efficient cookstoves and fuels has the potential to significantly reduce unpaid care work burdens, particularly for women and girls. With more time available, women and girls will have increased ability to engage in the activities of their choosing, whether they be social and family activities, community meetings, spending time with their children, attending school, or income generation. More time can also lead to paid work, as in Nicaragua, where women with increased access to energy

* In some locations, men spend time collecting fuel as well, and may even spend more time collecting fuel than women.

3X

Globally, women take on three times as much unpaid care work as men, especially women in rural areas.

1 IN 2

1 in 2 women is in paid employment compared with 3 in 4 men, on average.

\$12 TRILLION

If women played an equal role to men in the labor market, \$12 trillion or 11% could be added to global GDP



were 23% more likely to seek paid work opportunities.⁷ Additionally, when cooking and fuel collection needs are reduced, children are less likely to spend time on these tasks, which increases available time for education.⁸

CALL TO ACTION

At the global level, reports from the OECD, McKinsey Global Institute, and the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment detail the detrimental effects of unpaid care work on girls and women and the need to **recognize** and find practical solutions to **reduce** and **redistribute** the burden.

It is widely understood that unpaid care work must be addressed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender equality targets call for recognizing unpaid care work and providing services and infrastructure to address this burden. McKinsey's Power of Parity report prioritizes technology (including cooking) as one of six priority interventions to bridge the gender gap, while the UN High Level Panel calls for investment in energy access and affordable time and labor-saving technologies as a proven and promising way to reduce unpaid care work.

The following areas must also be prioritized to advance evidence-based efforts to address time poverty:

- 1 Donors and governments prioritize clean and efficient cookstoves and fuels to address time poverty and gender inequality.
- 2 Development actors bundle clean cooking solutions with poverty alleviation programs to maximize impact.
- 3 Regional-specific research examining what women do with freed time and how household dynamics are shifted as a result of clean cooking solutions.
- 4 Time use studies pairing technologies with livelihoods and/or education interventions to understand the potential impacts on individual and household well-being.
- 5 Streamlined data collection methods and questions to ensure comparable and reliable data.

WORKS CITED

- 1 OECD. (2011). *Cooking and caring, building and repairing: Unpaid work around the world*. OECD.
- 2 Practical Action. (2014). *Gender and livelihood impacts of clean cookstoves in South Asia*. *Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves*.
- 3 EAC, 2006
- 4 The Kenya data point should be cited: Mukherjee, N. (2003). *Participatory appraisal of natural resources*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company
- 5 OECD, 2011
- 6 Practical Action, 2014
- 7 Grogan, L. & Sadanand, A. (2013). Rural electrification and employment in poor countries: Evidence from Nicaragua. *World Development*, 43 (252-265).
- 8 Brooks, N., Bhojvaid, V., Jeuland, M., Lewis, J., Patange, O., Pattanayak, S. (2016). How much do alternative cookstoves reduce biomass fuel use? Evidence from North India. *Resource and Energy Economics*, 43: 153-171.
- 9 Practical Action, 2014
- 10 Brooks, 2016.
- 11 World Bank. (2004). *Nigerian LP Gas Sector Improvement Study*. Energy Sector Management Assistance Programme (ESMAP).
- 12 Practical Action, 2014
- 13 Malla, M., Bates, E., Bruce, N., & Rehfuess, E. (2011). Applying global cost-benefit analysis methods to indoor air pollution mitigation interventions in Nepal, Kenya and Sudan: Insights and challenges. *Energy Policy*, 39: 7518-7529.

View additional references at cleancookstoves.org/timepoverty

RESEARCH SHOWS:



18% less time spent on fuel collection when using more efficient cookstoves in South Asia.⁹

80% less time spent on fuel collection using LPG in rural northern India.¹⁰

76% less time collecting firewood using LPG in rural Nigeria.¹¹



30% less time spent cooking using clean fuels in South Asia.¹²

2.6 fewer hours per day cooking with LPG in Kenya.¹³

HOW CAN WE MEASURE TIME USE AND THE IMPACT OF CLEAN COOKING ON UNPAID CARE WORK?

The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) and the Alliance have developed a Social Impact Measurement System for the clean cooking sector, including indicators, surveys, and guidance for tracking time spent on fuel collection and cooking, as well as tracking how freed time is used. The tools allows practitioners to explore in-depth how involving women in the value chain enhances women's social and economic empowerment, and how users of cleaner and more efficient cookstoves and fuels benefit from social impacts.

The Alliance calls for the development of a global platform to aggregate and share data on time use and social impacts.

To access the tools visit: cleancookstoves.org/socialimpact.org