

Energy 4 Impact

Energy opportunities for women in Senegal

Background and context

The project will target rural areas in the regions of Tambacounda, and Kedougou in Senegal. These regions are characterised by:

- Very low access to electricity: 9% and 4% respectively
- High dependence on solid fuel for cooking: 89% of rural households use firewood for cooking. Penetration of improved cookstoves remains low at less than 4% in Senegal. Women and girls spend up to 23 hours per week to collect firewood¹, and are at risk from smoke from burning wood. Approximately 6,300 Senegalese die each year as a result of indoor air pollution (WHO, 2009).
- A high level of poverty: 56.2% in Tambacounda, and over 60% in Kedougou, compared to a national average of 40% in urban areas².
- High unemployment rate, in particular for women: 33% of women employed against 67% for men.
- High level of working poor: the proportion of people employed living on an average of \$2 per day ranges from 72% to 88% in rural areas, with more women affected than men (National Statistics and Demography Agency, 2010).
- High potential for agricultural crop and processing activities. This accounts for most of the activity of the 1300 women that SEM is already working with in the target regions, where crops processed include rice, sorghum, millet, maize, cotton, baobab fruit and honey.

Increasing energy access offers economic opportunities for women, both via the sale of energy products and services via productive uses applied to crop processing. However, there are several factors which are impeding progress, including limited awareness and availability of products, lack of business and technical expertise and limited to capital. These factors will be addressed by the project.

The project is also aligned with the GoS poverty reduction strategy which identifies Tambacounda and Kedougou as high priorities, and recognises that increasing access to energy for women has a significant impact on household budgets as it increases productivity.

Project summary

Energy 4 Impact and SEM Fund have formed a strong team to support women's economic empowerment in the energy access market in Senegal. The project will support the growth of 250 women MSEs by an integrated enterprise development approach which includes providing access to finance, increasing vibrancy of local markets and tailored mentoring for up to 3 years. The approach has been well demonstrated in Energy 4 Impact's work in East Africa, where we have worked with over 1,500 micro enterprises in recent years. SEM Fund's credentials are its extensive established network of women's community groups in rural Senegal, as well as its knowledge of the local microfinance industry.

The project supports 250 women MSEs to grow and deploys Energy 4 Impact's loan guarantee model in Senegal. The growth of the MSEs will improve access to energy for 400,000 people over three years. It will also increase the productive use of energy in the local crop processing value chain.

¹ Alliance Reports and Research, Gender | Gunther Bensch and Jörg Peters | Released on June 9, 2012

² Senegal Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2010 – 2015 (SPRSP). Using a \$1/day poverty threshold

At community level, the project addresses the cultural barriers to women's participation in the energy value chain. And at international and national levels, it raises the profile of women's economic empowerment through energy access, opportunities and challenges, and provides detailed insights into productive use opportunities.

Through working with ENERGIA's local partner Enda, amongst others, the project will increase the capacity of Energy 4 Impact and SEM Fund to manage gender issues.