



FACTSHEET: WCARO BEST PRACTICES
ON WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT IN THE CLIMATE-CARE NEXUS IN RURAL MALI

Funded by the Mali Climate Fund, UN Women and the Government of Mali implemented the project “**Climate and Energy Mali**” (CEMALI). The project, that supports women entrepreneurship in sustainable forestry and clean energy, has contributed to climate change mitigation and adaptation, to a reduction of women’s care work, as well as to improve the health of household members by reducing Indoor Air Pollution. Through reduced biomass consumption, the project has also led to an estimated reduction of GHG emissions of 23,689 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per year.

- **Project Title:** Climate and Energy Mali (CEMALI)
- **Duration:** April 2017 - June 2019
- **Geographical Coverage:** Bamako district, Sikasso, Ségou
- **Budget:** USD 846,342 funded by the Governments of Sweden and Norway via the Mali Climate Fund
- **Partners:** UN Women, UNDP, Government of Mali
- **Impact:** 2,550 direct beneficiaries (over 50% women), 40,000 indirect beneficiaries (end users of the domestic cookstoves)

The climate-care nexus in rural Mali



In Mali, only 1.2 percent of the population has access to clean fuels and technologies for cooking¹ (compared to 20.7 percent for sub-Saharan Africa). In rural areas, 11.67 million Malians still rely on biomass (wood, animal dung, and crop waste) for cooking, using open fires and energy inefficient stoves². In addition to having a direct impact on deforestation, reliance on such fuels demands significant time for gathering fuel and cooking and poses serious health risks as a result of household indoor air pollution. These impacts are particularly high among women and girls who are responsible for household chores and spend approximately twice as much time each week gathering wood and four times more time cooking compared to men.³

Climate change exacerbates women’s unpaid care work by reducing the availability of resources. As a result of deforestation, women are forced to travel greater distances to acquire fuel for domestic tasks. Longer distances, also increases the risk of gender-based violence for women and girls. Time- and energy-efficient cookstove technologies and infrastructure can help reduce the burden of unpaid care work and contribute to mitigating climate change.

The project and its impact

The CEMALI project trained women in the production of improved cookstoves and sustainable fuels, reforestation activities, forestry management, and improved and efficient carbonization techniques. It also established women-led forest management mechanisms.

As a result, the project has contributed to:



Economic empowerment and income generation in green value chains.

Women's access to skills in production and entrepreneurial management, enabled them to establish and run small-scale businesses in two key value chains in the green economy in rural Mali with a lot of potential for growth. This initiative not only created direct job opportunities and increased their household incomes but also expanded their market access in non-traditional, green value chains.



Reduction of women's unpaid care work and time poverty.

The introduction of more efficient cooking technologies has reduced the time spent in fuel collecting and household cooking, thus lessening their overall burden of unpaid domestic work. This has freed up valuable time for women to engage in income-generating or educational opportunities, and/or leisure activities.



Improved household health.

Adoption of energy-efficient cookstoves has reduced household members' exposure to Indoor Air Pollution (IAP) from cooking, particularly black carbon emissions, leading to better health outcomes for them and their households. IAP is the cause of death of 167822 children under five in Sub-Saharan African countries⁴.



Climate action and environmental impact.

Involvement of women in sustainable environmental practices and climate change mitigation and adaptation activities has led to significant benefits in terms of climate action and community resilience but also allowed to contribute to shifting social norms and positioning women in leadership roles in climate action and sustainable management of natural resources. Through reduced biomass consumption in cooking and income generating activities, such as soap manufacturing, the project led to a reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, estimated to be equal to 23,689 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per year.

What's interesting about this initiative

Opening opportunities for women to access green finance. The project's activities in reducing biomass consumption and GHG emissions have set the stage for generating carbon credits. By selling these carbon credits on the international market, the initiative could secure additional financial resources to support the economic activities of women and their communities, expand training programs, and enhance the overall sustainability. This innovative financial mechanism could provide a new revenue stream, aligning with global climate change efforts and positioning the project as a model for sustainable development and to support financing for gender equality and community-based climate change mitigation initiatives.

Endnotes

- 1 the International Energy Agency (IEA), the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO). [Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report](#)
- 2 *ibid*
- 3 UN Women and ONDD, [Measuring And Valuing Unpaid Care And Domestic Work In Mali](#), 2022.
- 4 WHO - The Global Health Observatory Database