



Clean Cookstoves and Fuels are Critical to the Success of the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves calls upon the international community to consider the widespread problem of inefficient, harmful cooking practices and the tangible, positive impacts that clean cooking solutions provide to the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda – in its framework, implementation, and tracking. Improving access to clean cookstoves and fuels is a development objective itself, while also bringing about benefits in the areas of poverty alleviation, food security, health, education, gender equality, energy, economic growth, inequality reduction, climate, and environmental protection.

KEY STATISTICS

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| 4th | Household air pollution is the 4 th greatest health risk for death in the world |
| 3 billion | Number of people in the world using polluting, inefficient stoves and fuels to cook each day |
| 4.3 million | Number of people who die prematurely each year from exposure to household air pollution |
| 21% | Percentage of black carbon emissions attributed to cooking smoke |
| 8 seconds | How frequently household air pollution claims a life |

Overview

The lack of access to clean and efficient cooking solutions has significant impacts on health, economic and social well-being, gender equality, and the environment – all areas of critical importance to the Post-2015 Development Agenda. Household air pollution (HAP) from cooking kills over 4 million people every year and sickens millions more. Major causes of death, sickness, and injury from HAP include cancers, heart and lung diseases, cataracts, and burns.

Inefficient and dangerous cooking practices lead to deforestation and environmental degradation, while also contributing 21% of global black carbon emissions.

Women and children spend many hours gathering fuel – up to 5 hours per day – or spend a significant portion of household income to purchase fuel. In many cases, displaced and refugee women walk for hours to find firewood, which increases the risk of gender based violence, dehydration, and physical injuries. Spending less time collecting fuel and cooking enables women to spend more time with their families, complete other responsibilities, rest and carry out leisure activities, enhance existing economic opportunities, and pursue income-generating or educational opportunities – all of which contribute to poverty alleviation.

Cooking over open fires and traditional stoves is not only harmful on its own, it is a root cause of poverty, gender inequality, and environmental degradation. Conversely, integrating clean cooking into development agendas and approaches can catalyze impacts across all of these areas.



Photo credits left to right: Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves, Ben West, Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves

Lessons Learned from the MDGs

Access to sustainable, safe household energy spurs progress and is a key element for success in other development areas. Despite this, energy was completely left out of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reducing the overall impact of the agenda. Specifically, an increased global focus on clean cooking as a solution on its own and as means of reaching other development goals could have helped the international community achieve the aims of the MDGs.

- **Health:** By omitting HAP, the MDGs omitted the fourth greatest risk factor for death in the world. Exposure to harmful cooking smoke and the drudgery of collecting fuel throughout one's life impacts their health, and yet this constant risk was not addressed at all in the previous global agenda. We must ensure that pollution, both indoor and outdoor, is thoroughly addressed by the Post-2015 Agenda considering its impact on health across populations – urban and rural, young and old.
- **Gender & Empowerment:** Although full and productive employment (for men and women) was featured in the MDGs, in 2012 there was a 24.8 percentage point difference between men and women in the employment-to-population ratio. Unpaid domestic responsibilities, including collecting fuel and cooking, remain a major driver of this inequality, restricting educational and economic opportunities for girls and women. In addition, the clean cooking sector provides career opportunities to women and the Alliance has dedicated itself to ensuring that women's economic empowerment is considered throughout the value chain.
- **Education:** While access to education was a priority in the MDGs, girls still face barriers to entering primary and secondary school because the enabling factors, like access to clean cooking energy, were not addressed. One of the main causes for girls to miss school is the burden of household responsibilities, including fuel collection and cooking. Even if children are still able to attend school, they may not be able to carry out after-school study or enriching activities due to responsibilities at home.
- **Poverty Reduction & Economic Growth:** The international community could have also spurred greater progress when it comes to poverty alleviation and economic growth if clean cooking and HAP were integrated into the MDGs. The economic opportunities brought by clean cooking solutions can be transformational. The entire clean cookstove and fuel supply chain provides economic opportunity and job creation. Reduced time spent on cooking and fuel collection, as well as decreased money spent on fuel, also facilitates important economic benefits.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Additionally, including clean cooking in the MDGs could have helped the international community perform better on MDG 7 on environmental sustainability. We are losing millions of hectares of forest every year and black carbon emissions are contributing to climate change. The adoption of cleaner cooking solutions helps us combat both of these ills.

If clean cooking issues and HAP are integrated into the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda, the international community will make greater strides both in the areas that directly connect to these issues and across the board.

Recommendations

In 2015, the international community has an opportunity to learn from our successes and failures and take action to address the world's most pressing challenges and improve the quality of life for all. We must learn from proven interventions, like clean cooking, and scale what works.

The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves projects the following impacts by 2020:

22 million disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) avoided

470,000 lives saved

130,000 children's lives saved

1.5 million sector jobs created

1.3 billion trees saved

1.1 billion metric tons of CO₂e saved



Goal 7 on Energy

Access to and adoption of clean cookstoves and fuels are imperative for the success of Goal 7 on energy in the Post-2015 Agenda. **The Alliance strongly supports the inclusion of Goal 7**, which reads, *“Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.”* Under the targets section of this goal, **the Alliance recommends adding a target** that reads *“Ensure by 2030 universal access to household energy services, devices and fuels that minimize air pollution, including among humanitarian populations.”* This target will ensure that household energy and air pollution are sufficiently addressed in the Agenda, enabling the world to better address public health, environmental protection, livelihoods, and women's empowerment. For the indicators, **the Alliance suggests revising the indicator on cooking** under Goal 7 to read *“Percentage of households primarily using clean and efficient cooking fuels and technologies”* to ensure that the adoption of clean and efficient cookstoves and fuels is prioritized, financed, and measured, while also aligning the indicator with ongoing international efforts.

Goal 3 on Health

The Alliance recommends revising the air pollution indicator under Goal 3 to read *“Mean air pollution of particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5})”* to ensure that air pollution is measured in rural, peri-urban, and urban settings. **The Alliance also suggests including an indicator on mortality from air pollution** that reads *“Number of premature deaths attributable to ambient and household air pollution.”* Over 7 million premature deaths can be attributed to air pollution every year. We must consider the effects of air pollution in all settings to reduce the number of deaths and illnesses caused by exposure to air pollution.

Goal 5 on Gender Equality

Additionally, the **Alliance supports the inclusion of indicators on unpaid work** in the Post-2015 Development Agenda under Goal 5, but would also like to draw attention to the uncompensated hours that women and children dedicate to cooking and collecting firewood. Therefore, **we suggest including two indicators on unpaid work**: *“Average weekly hours spent on unpaid domestic and care work, by sex, age, and location”* and *“Proportion of households within 15 minutes of fuel and clean water.”*

Conclusion

The Global Alliance for Clean Cookstoves strongly recommends revising the draft components of the Post-2015 Agenda directly connected to clean cooking to enhance accuracy and effectiveness and urges partners to acknowledge the indirect relationship between clean cooking and achieving the other goals and targets.