

Catalyzing Change

Clean Cooking Alliance CEO Dymphna van der Lans brings together global partners to protect the environment and empower women.



CLEAN COOKING ALLIANCE / BECKY HALE

Around the world, billions do not have the luxury of safe meal preparation. Instead, they depend on polluting, open fires or inefficient, climate-harming stoves to cook their daily meals. Globally, a shocking 4 million people die annually from cooking on open flames.

“People must be able to provide their families with home-cooked meals prepared in a safe and healthy environment; this is a fundamental right,” says Dymphna van der Lans, CEO of the Clean Cooking Alliance (CCA), a leading organization working to deliver clean cooking to those without it. “Clean cooking transforms lives by improving health, protecting the environment,

empowering women, and helping consumers save time and money, yet nearly one out of three people rely on polluting cooking fuels like charcoal, wood, and kerosene.

“Such ‘dirty cooking’ is a leading source of both annual deaths and carbon emissions. If you care about people’s well-being, empowering women, and sustaining a healthy planet, you simply must care about clean cooking,” she says.

Passion for the Problem

Leading CCA’s global partnership efforts, van der Lans brings more than 25 years of experience managing and leading development, energy, and climate initiatives—and an incredible passion for the work.

“When people discuss possible solutions to climate change, they tend to focus on big industry and electricity generation. They often overlook the other significant contributor to climate change: the burning of polluting fuels to cook by the 3 billion people around the world who have no other choice,” van der Lans explains. “If we don’t collectively address access to clean cooking, we will not meet our climate targets or our development targets, particularly Sustainable Development Goal 7: energy access for all. It is vital to the health of women and children globally that people can

cook without toxic smoke exposure.”

Van der Lans envisions that, within 10 years, clean cooking will be part of a vibrant ecosystem based on sustainable businesses—meaning CCA would have a much smaller footprint. “We’ll have helped build an ecosystem where businesses and other organizations meet the needs of the market and its different segments,” she says.

Sustainable Solutions

While it seems like a straightforward problem, solving the issue of clean cooking requires a whole-systems approach. That’s why CCA’s convening power is critical in bringing together global partners and women’s voices to bring safe, healthy cooking appliances and affordable, accessible, easy-to-use fuels to families everywhere.

“In my four years as CEO, we have strongly positioned CCA as an industry builder, bringing on board partners who can confidently put the financial resources into CCA to help us realize a sustainable, clean cooking sector,” notes van der Lans. “I am immensely proud of our progress supporting businesses, and I’m excited to see so much innovation happening across the sector. We’re also boosting women’s leadership in the conversation through a Women in Clean Cooking mentorship program that launched in 2021 and has already doubled in size for 2022. As someone who has benefited from strong mentorship throughout my career, I believe in the value of reciprocity.”



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