



GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN BIOGAS PROGRAMMES

Gender mainstreaming can be defined as:

“...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned actions, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated.” Guide on Gender Mainstreaming in the Africa Biogas Partnership Programme (ABPP), July 2010, ENERGIA

This technical brief provides guidance to development practitioners on how to integrate gender concerns within biogas programmes. It highlights opportunities that exist for the inclusion of women in such programmes, given the socio-cultural and economic disadvantages that women in developing countries face.

Biogas is a renewable energy technology that has the potential to reduce women’s workloads, improve their health, reduce the cost of energy for households, and provide livelihood opportunities for women and men in the community.

This technical brief provides information on approaches that can help maximise benefits for women. It was jointly produced by ENERGIA and Practical Action Sri Lanka, with financial support from Sida.

How biogas technology can change women’s lives

MDG 1: Eradicate poverty and hunger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and female-headed households in rural areas are typically the poorest; biogas programmes can reduce their expenditures for fuelwood and other traditional cooking fuels • Use of biogas plants reduces the time and labour of women and girls in collecting fuelwood and other biomass fuels, freeing them for economically productive activities • Construction and installation of biogas plants creates employment and additional income • Additional income opportunities include selling bio-slurry residues for fertiliser, selling more agricultural produce due to fertiliser availability, and using biogas for activities such as commercial cooking • Use of bio-slurry on fields improves agricultural production and food availability
MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of biogas plants enables girls to attend school by freeing them from fuelwood collection • Biogas can provide light so women and girls can extend time spent studying and gain access to information
MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biogas programmes improve the quality of life for women and promote social, political economic empowerment by freeing up their time, which can then be used for education, community engagement and economically productive activities • Women can take new roles in the community and enjoy improved livelihoods by working as biogas masons, managers, supervisors and social mobilisers
MDGs 4, 5 and 6: Improve health and combat diseases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biogas reduces women and children’s exposure to health risks associated with open fires and indoor air pollution (e.g. respiratory diseases, eye ailments, burning accidents) • Biogas improves the sanitary condition of the farmyard and its immediate surroundings, by disposing of animal and human wastes • Application of bio-slurry can improve agricultural production and food availability

WOMEN AND BIOGAS TECHNOLOGY

Women's Roles/Opportunities in Biogas Programmes

- Working as biogas masons
- Taking responsibility for the operation, management and maintenance of biogas plants
- Taking on the roles of social mobilisers, supervisors and extension personnel in biogas programmes
- Engaging in community and extension forums concerning energy use and biogas technology
- Using biogas slurry for their own crops and selling it to others
- Accessing credit from women's groups for the purchase of biogas plants
- Using the time that is freed up following the adoption of biogas plants (through reduced effort in fuelwood collection) for income generation activities and personal development

In order for all these opportunities to be realised, aspects of gender empowerment need to be included in biogas initiatives at the field and policy level.

Figure 2: Gender Concerns in Biogas Programmes

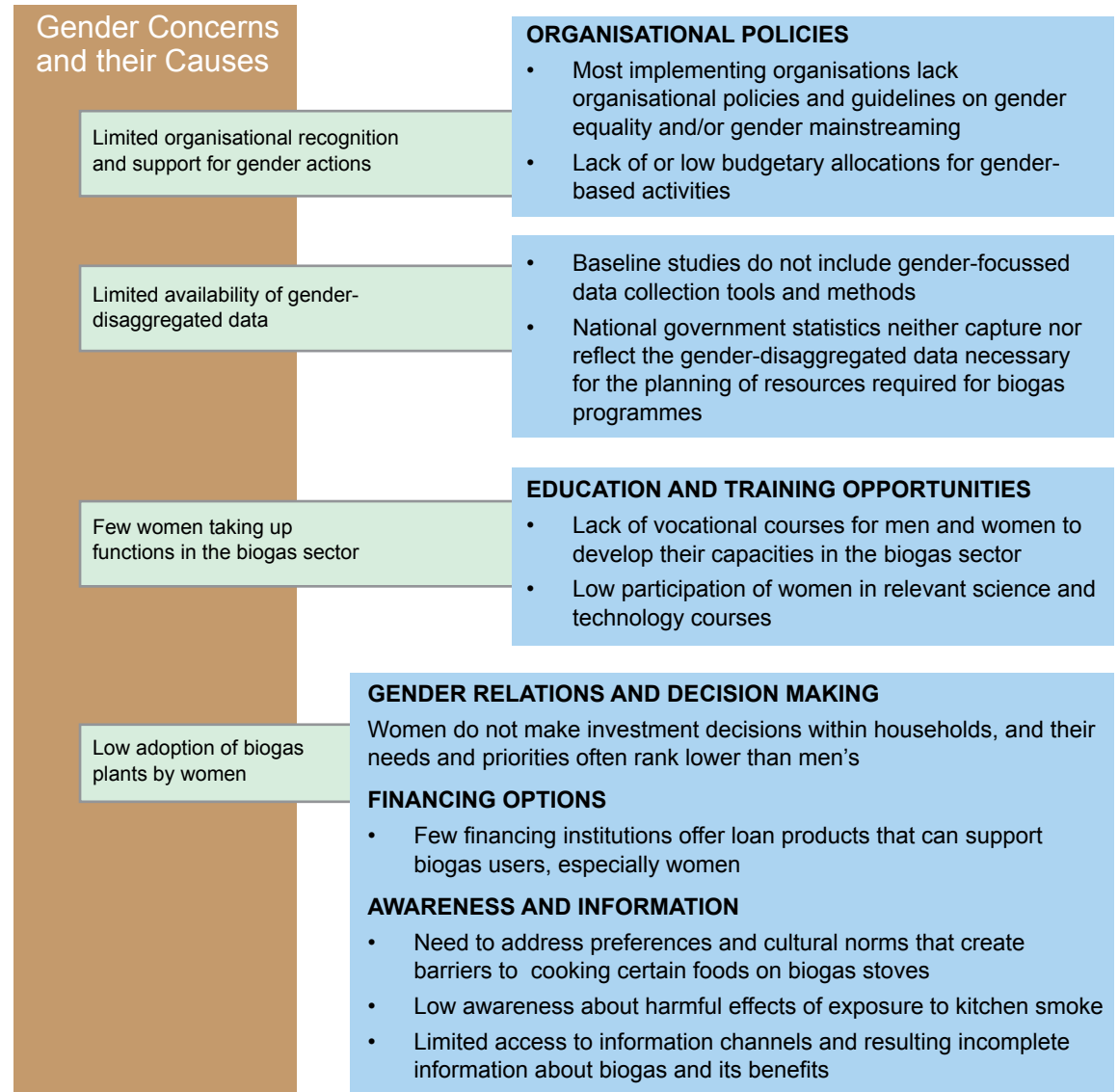
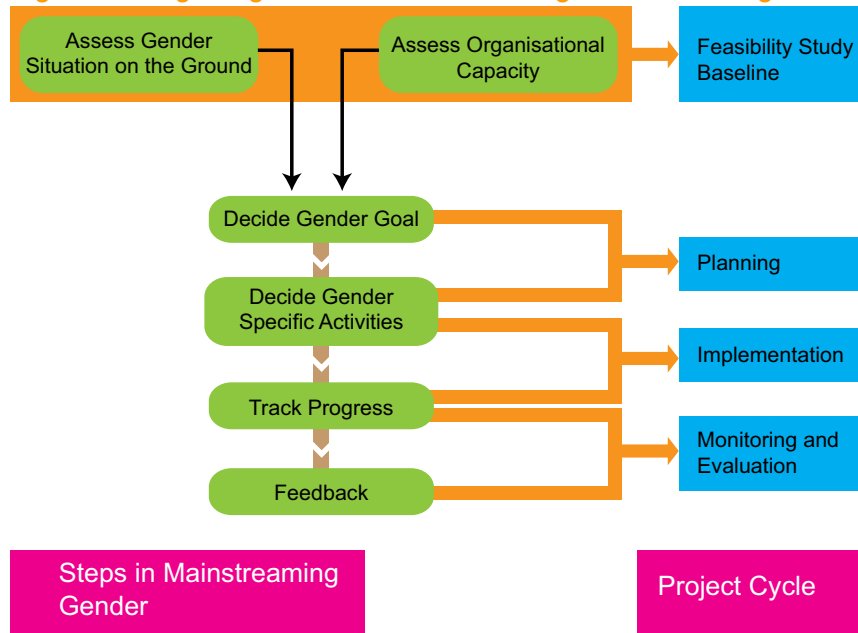


Figure 1: Integrating Gender Mainstreaming within the Programme



PROCESS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN BIOGAS PROGRAMMES

PREPARE Identify relevant gender issues. 1) Review programme documents to check whether women's issues are identified, and whether specific gender goals, supported by appropriate strategies and indicators are mentioned. 2) Assess organisational readiness (i.e. capacities, resources and existing gaps) to address women's concerns in the biogas programme. 3) Consult with men and women in the communities to document the baseline situation the project is trying to improve, identify specific product features that women would prefer in the biogas plants, and problems they may face in accessing biogas plants. Check existing literacy levels and the feasibility of women taking on roles as masons, supervisors and social mobilisers, and use this

information to design women's roles in the project and identify what capacities need to be built further. Such information collection can be incorporated within project baseline surveys and feasibility studies.

DESIGN Plan gender-focussed programme activities. 1) Agree on a gender goal stating what the biogas programme aims to achieve in terms of specific impacts on women and men. 2) Plan gender-focussed activities, identifying where, how and by whom they will be carried out. 3) Incorporate gender into programme documents like progress report formats. 4) Develop a Gender Action Plan incorporating a gender goal, expected outcomes, activities, and monitoring indicators, and a plan, implementation timeline and budget.

IMPLEMENT gender-focussed activities. All programme functions have specific women's issues that need to be considered. 1) Promotion: develop promotional activities and material that specifically target both male and female users and ensure that correct, complete and relevant information is provided to them. Use appropriate promotional tools and agents. Field test promotional materials, engage local leaders in the promotion, and locate promotional material to facilitate easy access by women. 2) Training: ensure that training provided for users, masons, supervisors, and extension personnel is responsive to the needs of women participants. Use local institutions to identify

women to train as masons and supervisors, and provide a system that builds the confidence of these women, as well as community confidence in them. When training biogas users, make sure that women in the biogas households are trained in use and maintenance of biogas plants and that training times and locations are sensitive to women's requirements. 3) Extension: activities after installation should increase users' awareness on bio-slurry use and engage women in producing and selling bio-slurry. Women working in agricultural extension services and door-to-door visits can be used to get information to other women effectively. 4) Finance: explore alternative means of finance (e.g. through local institutions, self-help groups, use of group collateral) to enable women to access finance facilities easily. 5) Research and development, and standardisation: incorporate mapping of cooking practices in baseline surveys and involve women in product design processes and field testing of new designs.

MONITOR AND REPORT Monitoring and evaluation processes should use gender-sensitive indicators and measurable targets. 1) Ensure that monitoring and evaluation teams have gender expertise and include gender experts, and assemble mixed assessment teams (consisting of men and women from different social, ethnic, religious and minority groups) for surveys. 2) Provide a gender brief or training for the monitoring team. 3) Collect data that is, at a minimum, disaggregated by sex and age, and set a minimum number of questionnaires to be answered by women. 4) Measure and report on gender-sensitive indicators in user surveys and progress reports.



GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN BIOGAS PROGRAMMES - SUCCESSES IN THE FIELD



Why pay attention to gender in biogas programmes?

- To further improve the positive impacts of biogas technology on women
- To maximise the overall impacts of biogas programmes
- To help biogas programmes meet their goal of contributing to the achievement of the MDGs or other higher order goals
- To improve women's and men's livelihood opportunities
- To empower women
- To bring about better gender relations within homes and communities
- To ensure that both women and men benefit equally

Successes in the field have proved the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in biogas programmes. For instance, through targeted measures, the Biogas Support Programme (BSP) Nepal today has ten women-owned biogas companies, approximately 50% women's participation in training programmes, and performance incentives for men and women masons and supervisors, all of which have contributed to a 94% functionality rate in biogas units. Under the Africa Biogas Partnership Programme 67% of the supervisors were women in Burkina Faso, with women making up 41% to 67% of the trained biogas users in most of the countries.

* The Technical Brief uses information from 'A Guide on Gender Mainstreaming in the Africa Biogas Partnership Programme (ABPP), July 2010' developed by ENERGIA for the Africa Biogas Partnership Programme



ENERGIA International Network on
Gender & Sustainable Energy



Practical Action (Sri Lanka, India, Pakistan Programme)