

The impacts of cooking with solid fuels on the health, safety and economic opportunities of women

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CARE

Meeting the material and
or/developmental/emotional
and spiritual needs of other
people through direct personal
relationships

Direct care responsibilities



Indirect care responsibilities

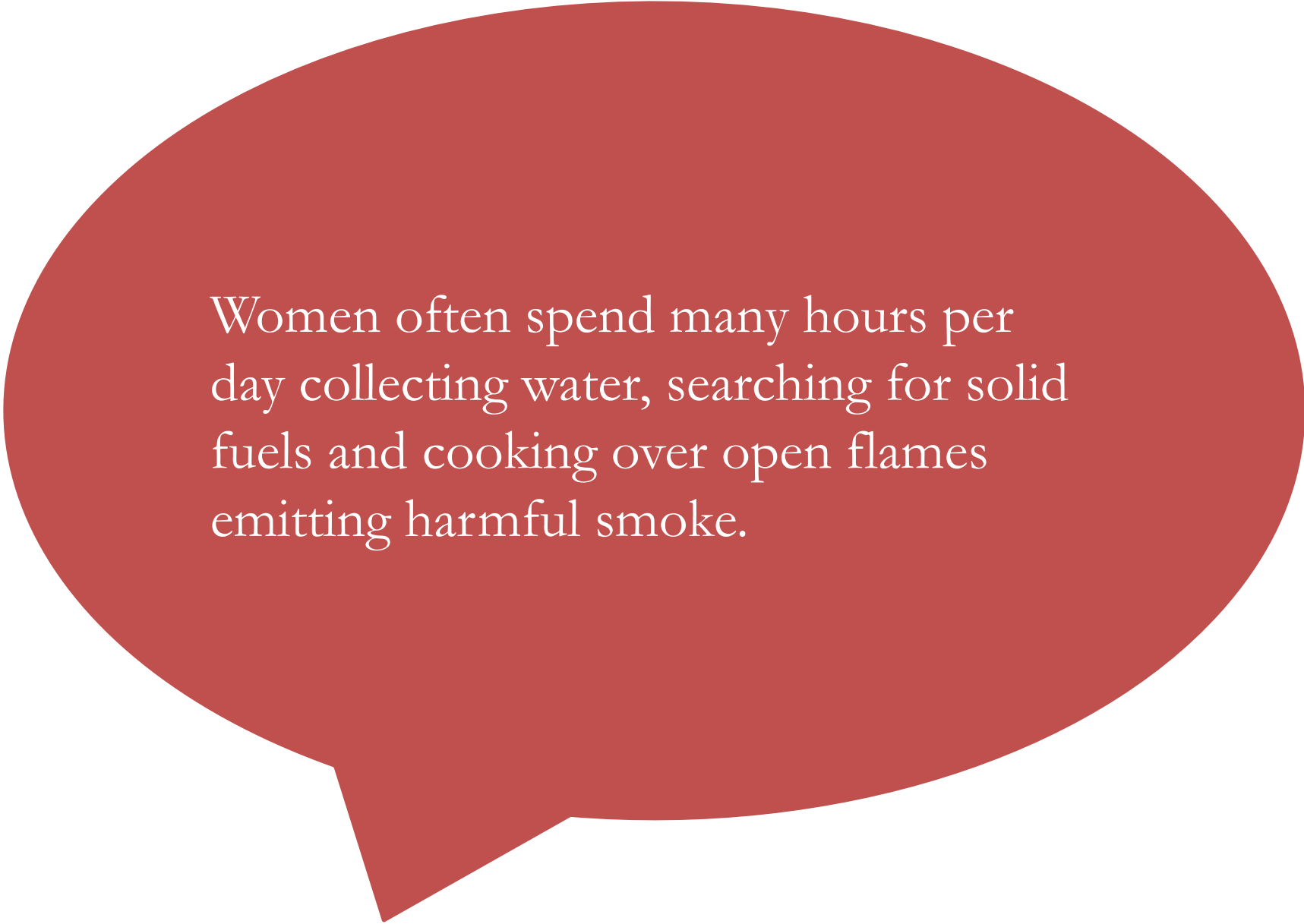


Fundamental premise

- Care has a widespread, long-term, positive impact on **wellbeing** and **development**, it underpins all development policy & is critical to ensuring sustainable **economic empowerment** of women and girls & addressing **inequality** and vulnerability.

Care is Woman's Work

- Women and girls are responsible for collecting water and firewood, cooking, cleaning, taking care of the children, the infirm and the sick, producing food, and marketing any surpluses. All these tasks are considered to be low-status activities, unremunerated and unrecognised in the national statistics.



Women often spend many hours per day collecting water, searching for solid fuels and cooking over open flames emitting harmful smoke.

A natural feminine
activity



Deeply embedded societal assumptions



The division of responsibility in caring is informed by ideologies of what it means to be male and female.

Stickiness of gender roles

Unpaid Care Work

<http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/womens-rights/unpaid-care-work>



Collection of Fuel or Water: Kenya



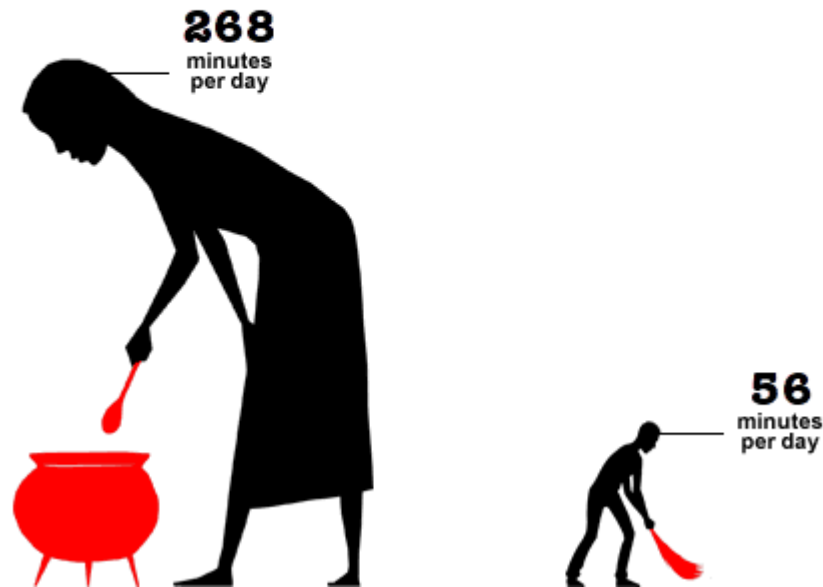
Source: <http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/womens-rights/unpaid-care-work>

Collection of Fuel or Water: Nigeria



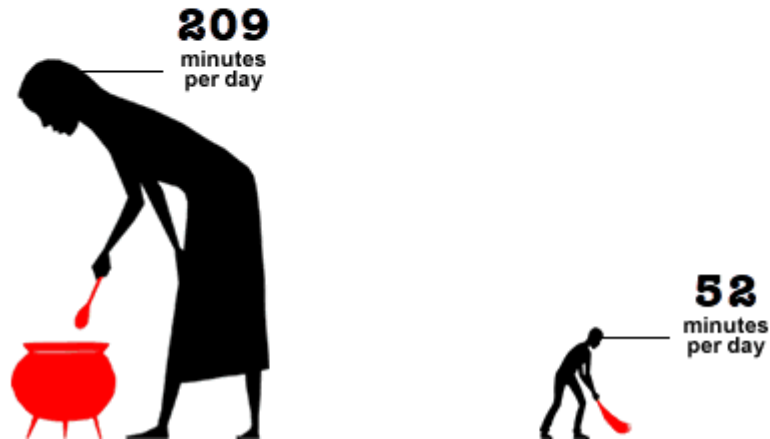
Source: <http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/womens-rights/unpaid-care-work>

Housework (incl. Cooking) - Nepal



Source: <http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/womens-rights/unpaid-care-work>

Housework (incl. Cooking) - Uganda



Source: <http://www.actionaid.org/what-we-do/womens-rights/unpaid-care-work>



**Women are disproportionately impacted
by cooking practices and reliance on solid
fuel.**

Impact of Solid Fuels on Women's Lives

- Occupies large amounts of women and girl's time – in search of fuel, gathering fuel, carrying these heavy loads to cook on crude and inefficient stoves.
 - Leading to time poverty which impacts directly on the rights that women and girls can enjoy – including the right to work, right to education, the right to participation and the right to leisure. These links have been made explicit in the [UN special rapporteur's report on unpaid care](#)

Impact of Solid Fuels on Women's Lives (cont'd)

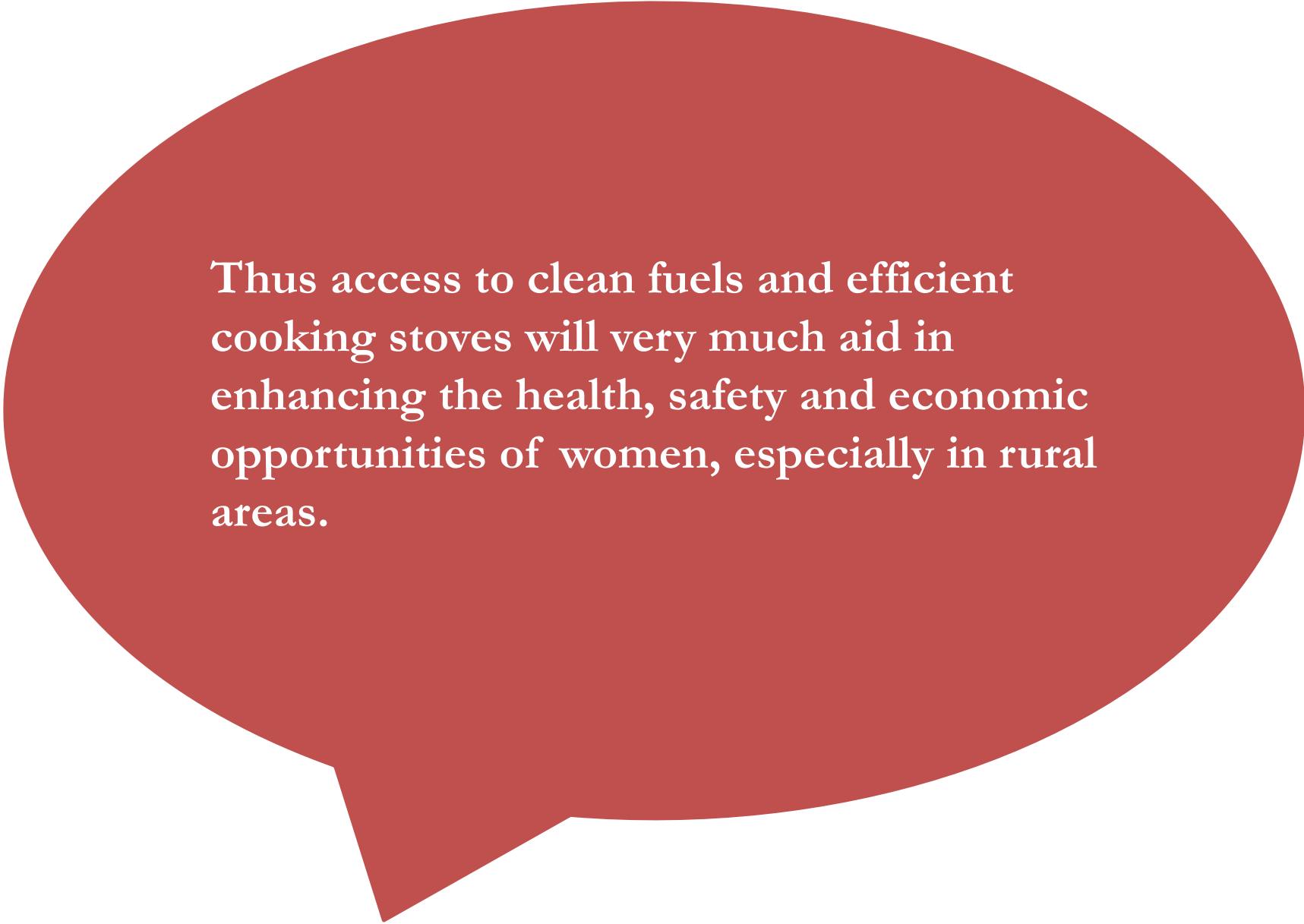
– Comes with detrimental health effects

(unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/.../2013/.../Session%205%20UNSD.ppt)

- Responsible for more than 1 million female deaths in 2004 - almost 2 million deaths estimated at the world level.
 - Increases the risk of developing acute lower respiratory infections, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer. Women are more likely than men to develop such health outcomes.
- Increased risk of gender-based violence, especially in conflict areas and refugee camps.

Impact of Solid Fuels on Women's Lives (cont'd)

- Economic empowerment through paid work ... individualised, limited and unsustainable
 - Women may be too ill to undertake paid labour
 - Women may be pushed into flexible, low-skilled and low-paid, informal work that accommodate care responsibilities
 - Women in the paid labour market may not be able to provide for adequate substitutes for their care responsibilities, compromising the human development outcomes for those that they are caring for. Any substitutes may come through pushing the care responsibilities to older women and girls, which impacts on their development and rights.



Thus access to clean fuels and efficient cooking stoves will very much aid in enhancing the health, safety and economic opportunities of women, especially in rural areas.


Framework for Change Using Clean Stoves

- **Recognise*** care and care work
- **Reduce** difficult, inefficient tasks
- **Three positive effects**
 - Time, Health, Economic Opportunities



... as a precondition for achieving women's political, social and economic empowerment, and for addressing poverty and inequality

* "Three Rs of Unpaid Work" Prof. Diane Elson 2008



In order to achieve sustainable empowerment of women and girls there is need for complimentary measures

Complimentary Methods

- **Redistribute**

- **Women to men:** men take on more household responsibilities and changing gender divisions of labour

- **Families to the state/employers:**

- Increased care budgets, employer –childcare (responsibility of the state to provide ECDs to give time to undertake paid work), health, maternity, pensions

- Infrastructure & services in poor communities (better roads, drinking water closer to house)

WHO CARES



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VVW858gQHoE>

Conclusion

- Women undertake the bulk of the work pertaining to solid fuel collection and cooking with it
- Women are disproportionately impacted by negative effects of solid fuels
 - Time, Health, Economic Opportunities
- Clean Cooking Stoves are a way to minimise negative impacts and maximise sustainable and collective empowerment of women and girls
- **BUT** this is not enough and there is also need for complimentary measures