



Using Energy Programming to Address Violence Against Women and Girls in Humanitarian Settings

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About the Moving Energy Initiative

The Moving Energy Initiative (MEI) is working to achieve access to clean, affordable and reliable energy among displaced populations by:

- **Working with humanitarian agencies and donors** to change policies and practices based on evidence from practical projects;
- **Working with the private sector** to design and implement innovative market-based solutions;
- **Improving the evidence base** through original research and the demonstration of new approaches tried and tested in camps and host communities; and
- **Cooperating with host governments and national NGOs** to improve energy security among both local and refugee communities.

The MEI is a collaboration between Energy 4 Impact, Chatham House, Practical Action, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).



Preface

The Moving Energy Initiative (MEI) is a collaboration between Energy 4 Impact, Chatham House, Practical Action, the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), supported by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

The initiative began in 2015 to explore the current energy situation in contexts of displacement globally through desk and field research. After Phase I of the initiative ended in November 2015, the MEI subsequently set out to take the findings forward through further targeted research and testing in Phase II, from June 2016 to November 2018. The MEI developed new approaches to providing improved energy access in refugee camps and among forcibly displaced people, with the aim of reducing the costs, environmental impact and personal harm related to energy generation and consumption in these contexts, while also benefiting host countries and communities. Phase II included projects to provide safe, reliable, secure and more efficient energy solutions to domestic and commercial users, as well as to administrative and public service facilities.

This 'learning brief' is one in a series of five publications that present the lessons that can be drawn from the MEI's work so far. The paper explores the issue of violence against women and girls (VAWG) in energy programming. It introduces a framework to enhance the sensitivity to VAWG among practitioners designing humanitarian energy projects. As VAWG is often intensified in displacement settings due to additional strains on these communities and individuals, the MEI conducted further research to better understand the context at the time of project implementation.

The paper draws on published research as well as on new data collected as part of a study commissioned by the MEI on gender-based violence at project sites in Kenya. This research has been merged with lessons learnt from MEI pilot projects in Burkina Faso, Kenya and Jordan. The paper offers practical guidance for energy programme development and implementation, illustrating that VAWG need not be the principle focus of a project for it to be addressed.

Summary

- Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a major issue occurring within the context of displaced populations and humanitarian settings, particularly refugee camps.
- Evidence shows intersections between energy access in these situations and VAWG – for example, poor lighting in camps and the social expectation that women and girls will collect firewood are both factors that heighten their exposure to violence.
- The issue can be addressed through energy programming if donors, policymakers and practitioners view programme design and implementation through a lens that is sensitive to gender and VAWG.
- MEI experience and research suggest four measures that would contribute to tackling VAWG through energy programming: improved lighting; providing alternatives to firewood; better housing; and establishing income-generating opportunities for women.
- This paper reviews the evidence in support of this argument, and offers a framework for how to respond to and prevent VAWG when designing and implementing energy programmes in humanitarian settings.

Introduction

This paper reviews the existing evidence to present what is known about the links between energy and gender, and to explore the results of efforts to mainstream gender in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 (i.e. to ensure ‘access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all’ by 2030). It argues that energy programme design and implementation should be seen through a lens that is more sensitive to violence against women and girls (VAWG). The paper presents a framework as a mainstreaming tool to support this objective and to guide those working in the energy space towards a more VAWG-sensitized approach. It combines a gendered approach with a focus on how to increase sensitivity to VAWG within energy programmes by adapting and responding to its prevalence through programme design and implementation.

Although examples and some of the literature drawn upon are rooted in humanitarian contexts, the guidance and recommendations in this paper are applicable for energy programmes in any context.¹

Current knowledge on the intersections between VAWG and energy clearly indicates that a range of energy-related measures can improve the security of women and girls and can promote greater well-being and empowerment. This in turn can help to build the resilience of women and girls to violence. However, for interventions to achieve these results, programme design needs to address a number of issues and questions relating to VAWG. Doing so as part of the design and implementation processes will increase the likelihood that energy programmes contribute to reducing levels of VAWG.

Evidence has existed for a while on the impact of energy access on women and girls in humanitarian crisis settings. For example, poor camp lighting and the need to collect firewood mean that women and girls have increased exposure to VAWG risk factors. This increased exposure may heighten the likelihood that VAWG will occur, but importantly it should not be regarded as its cause.²

Less is known about the other links between VAWG and energy that programmes might positively feed into (e.g. sustainable energy-efficient housing, energy-related income activities).

Donors, practitioners and policymakers working on or funding energy programmes for displaced populations are encouraged to consider the suggestions in this paper to incorporate VAWG-reducing strategies into programme design.

¹ For guidance on VAWG in humanitarian settings specifically, see DFID (2018), *Humanitarian Guidance Note on VAWG in humanitarian emergencies*, London: Department for International Development.

² Casa Consulting (2001), *Evaluation of the Dadaab firewood project, Kenya*, Montreal: CASA Consulting, <http://www.sddirect.org.uk/media/1197/vawg-helpdesk-report-94-camp-based-settings-vawg-and-energy.pdf> (accessed 23 Feb. 2019).

Background and State of Knowledge

Findings from Phase I of the Moving Energy Initiative (MEI) in 2015 are described in the publication *Heat, Light and Power for Refugees: Saving Lives, Reducing Costs*.³ These include the non-financial costs related to energy provision in displacement contexts, such as sustainability challenges and negative impacts on the security and protection of displaced populations. The report also identified some of the challenges for energy programmes in this sector, such as the lack of robust data on how different refugee groups are able or not to access energy and also what the differing priorities may be (e.g. is cooking more important than lighting? And where in the home is lighting more important?).

To respond to the data gap, Phase II of the MEI included detailed research into refugees' energy needs in Burkina Faso and Kenya, as well as data-gathering on energy use in displacement contexts globally.⁴ Several market development and low-carbon energy initiatives were piloted in Burkina Faso, Jordan and Kenya, and a non-wood concession prize of \$50,000 was awarded to the National Oil Corporation of Kenya.⁵

Potential entry points

Four main programming recommendations emerge from the MEI's research and experience, which highlight entry points for energy programmes (see below). These could present 'easy wins' for energy programmes to reduce the risk of VAWG in displacement settings.

MEI Phase II was not designed with a focus on reducing gender-based violence *per se*. However, VAWG was acknowledged as a major issue occurring within displacement contexts, particularly in refugee camps. To better understand the energy–VAWG nexus and the related opportunities, the MEI commissioned a review paper⁶ jointly authored by a renewable-energy consultant and a VAWG researcher. That 2016 paper assessed the existing literature, contested certain established misconceptions about linear correlations between interventions and ending VAWG, and highlighted gaps where further research was required. Once the MEI's low-carbon and market development pilot projects were selected through a call for proposals, the project plans were reviewed by the VAWG researcher to ensure a 'do no harm' approach would be maintained and to avoid inadvertently increasing the risk of VAWG. Suggestions were made at this point to ensure that implementing partners would take into consideration gender and social inclusion as well as VAWG.

³ Lahn, G. and Grafham, O. (2015), *Heat, Light and Power for Refugees: Saving Lives, Reducing Costs*, Chatham House Report for the Moving Energy Initiative, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2015-11-17-heat-light-power-refugees-lahn-grafham-final.pdf> (accessed 9 Jan. 2019).

⁴ This involved a pilot project to map the energy access of refugees across the globe. The data are based on a Chatham House energy access model, with contributions from the UNHCR global trends dataset and local survey data. Chatham House (2018), 'Global Refugee Energy Access' data visualization for the Moving Energy Initiative, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, <https://mei.chathamhouse.org/hdx-visualisation> (accessed 9 Jan. 2019).

⁵ Patel, L. and Gross, K. (2019), *Cooking in Displacement Settings: Engaging the Private Sector in Non-wood-based Fuel Supply*, Research Paper for the Moving Energy Initiative, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/2019-01-22-PatelGross2.pdf> (accessed 23 Feb. 2019).

⁶ Bradley, T. and Gunning, R. (2016, unpublished), *VAWG and Energy Access*.

In October 2017, just prior to the start of the pilot projects in Kenya, the MEI commissioned a qualitative study in the Kakuma refugee camp complex and neighbouring Kalobeyei settlement. This provided a snapshot of the situation for women and girls on issues related to VAWG that helped to shape more complex understanding of the link between VAWG and energy. The insights were presented as having relevance beyond the MEI programme, and were intended to support future project design and implementation.

Four programme recommendations emerged out of the research in Kakuma:

1. **Improved lighting** in public spaces, key facilities such as health clinics and in the home will make a critical difference to improving the psychological and physical safety of women and children.
2. **Providing alternatives to firewood** for cooking will reduce the need for women and girls to put themselves at risk by collecting firewood. This will increase levels of physical safety and also reduce actual instances of non-partner violence.
3. **Better housing** will improve well-being by reducing family tensions and instances of domestic violence triggered by poor, uncomfortable shelter.
4. **Income opportunities for women** will mean that they can buy better energy solutions, which will in turn improve both their feelings of safety and actual safety. For example, with income women can buy more cooking fuel, removing the need to take risks in collecting firewood (see above). They can also purchase better lighting solutions for the home, thereby reducing significant fear associated with living in a dark home.

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) has been keen to develop the evidence base around the linkages between energy poverty and VAWG in humanitarian contexts. This research has added to the growing literature on this topic, particularly the evidence developed by DFID's flagship global programme, What Works to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls.⁷ The findings from the What Works programme demonstrate the need to mainstream VAWG awareness across development sectors – and especially in humanitarian settings, where instances of VAWG increase significantly. A second key DFID-funded research programme is Sustainable Energy, Access and Gender (SEAG). SEAG's first component, run by the international gender and sustainable energy network ENERGIA,⁸ stresses the importance of embedding gender in energy programming. The research outputs of this component⁹ delve deeper into this issue to unpack the linkages involved, and offer guidance for future programme design.

The MEI is monitoring the recently completed low-carbon projects to deepen the understanding of what works for implementing sustainable energy access projects in displacement settings. This includes capturing gender-disaggregated data to monitor how effective the projects are at increasing energy access and livelihood opportunities for the local populations. For instance, the MEI is interested to see women's participation in the activities offered by the ICT hub in Kakuma, or how many women see their livelihood opportunities improve after participating in the market gardening project in Burkina Faso.

⁷ What Works to Prevent Violence (2018), 'What Works' main web page, <https://www.whatworks.co.za/> (accessed 9 Jan. 2019).

⁸ <https://www.energia.org/>.

⁹ Winther, T., Ulsrud, K. and Saini, A. (2018), 'Solar powered electricity access: Implications for women's empowerment in rural Kenya', *Energy Research & Social Science*, 44: 61–74; De Groot, J., Mohlakoana, N., Knox, A. and Bressers, H. (2017), 'Fuelling women's empowerment? An exploration of the linkages between gender, entrepreneurship and access to energy in the informal sector', *Energy Research & Social Science*, 28: 86–97.

Learning from Gender Mainstreaming Approaches to Energy Programming

Research exploring how to incorporate a gendered perspective into energy projects and programmes argues that such an approach is necessary and has value in terms of improving energy access for and empowering women.¹⁰ Some headway has been made in developing tools to support the mainstreaming of gender in energy programming.

This work has been taken forward by Component One of DFID's SEAG research programme. The current evidence convincingly shows that a gendered approach to planning energy programmes improves women's access and options (for instance, in respect of cooking methods and lighting), which in time improves their well-being. Furthermore, it shows that the impact can go way beyond practical improvements in daily life and contribute to the broader empowerment of women.

Less is known about how and where energy intersects with issues of VAWG; about how programmes might be more sensitive and responsive to the existence of violence; and about how they could seek, where possible, to address violence by adapting energy interventions.

In this 'learning brief', we combine a gendered approach with a focus on how to increase sensitivity to VAWG within energy programmes by adapting and responding to its prevalence through programme design and implementation. However, in making the case that VAWG should form part of the approach in planning and implementing energy programmes, the starting point needs to be a nuanced, realistic understanding of how and where VAWG and energy intersect.

VAWG-specific programmes are underpinned by the need for behavioural change on the part of potential perpetrators. Such programmes understand that unless the behaviour of perpetrators is changed, VAWG will not end. Risk reduction activities will not make any inroads into this process. Perpetrator behaviour is legitimated by certain gender-societal norms that render women and girls socially inferior and vulnerable to violence. VAWG is essentially about what is known as 'power-in-balance'. This means that violence occurs as a result of some people having control over others; violence then is the exercise of power in different forms (e.g. physical, financial etc.).¹¹

Energy programming cannot directly address this need to change behaviours. But awareness and sensitivity to VAWG can feed into adaptations at programme level that can help to build resilience among women and girls, increase feelings of security and reduce some of the risk factors.

¹⁰ Skutsch, M. M. (2005), 'Gender analysis for energy projects and programmes', *Energy for Sustainable Development*, 9 (1), pp. 37–52, doi:10.1016/S0973-0826(08)60481-0 (accessed 23 Feb. 2019); and Oparaocha, S. and Dutta, S. (2011), 'Gender and energy for sustainable development', *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability*, 3 (4): 265–71, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cosust.2011.07.003> (accessed 6 Mar. 2019).

¹¹ Kelly, L. (1988), 'How Women Define Their Experiences of Violence', in Yllo, K. and Bograd, M. (eds) (1998), *Feminist perspectives on wife abuse*, Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications; and Heise, L. L. (2011), *What Works to End Partner Violence? An Evidence Overview*, Working Paper, STRIVE Research Consortium, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, <http://strive.lshtm.ac.uk/resources/what-works-prevent-partner-violence-evidence-overview>.

'The MEI projects contribute to strengthened protection in camp settings. It is important to integrate energy planning as a tool to improve protection.'

UNHCR Field Office Sahel, Burkina Faso and UN Area Security Coordinator

Box 1: Lessons from MEI market development approach planning

The objective of MEI market development activities was to establish a systemic approach around connecting actors, strengthening relationships and testing market development strategies. Market approaches need to ensure that a gender mainstreaming lens is adopted at every stage, including market systems analysis, intervention design, working with market actors, and monitoring and learning.

During the early stages of the market development activities in Burkina Faso, women's focus groups were carried out to identify needs pertaining to women. The project identified that some women were willing and able to pay for energy products, but that they were particularly concerned about quality assurance and how to get access to repair and maintenance services if a product broke down. The project also supported an energy firm, Nafa Naana, to partner with a local research firm to carry out women's focus group discussions on their needs and options for financing to improve access to energy products. Nafa Naana then used this information to design marketing strategies (deciding which products to market, the price points, promotions, etc.). This was particularly relevant for women wanting to buy solar lamps in addition to stoves, both for home use and income-generating activities. At the time of writing this paper, Nafa Naana had undertaken discussions with some women's associations in the Dori region to negotiate financing mechanisms for them to purchase stoves for income-generating activities.

The project included women actors across the market as drivers of energy consumption, and as potential drivers of improved after-sales service and quality assurance. Taking a 'hands-off' approach to promoting the evolution of sustainable solutions, the project helped to bring to the surface instances where women were already involved in the market, albeit hidden and marginalized, rather than artificially engaging women, for instance by setting quotas.

Recommendations

- The feasibility/scoping and design phase of energy programming is the ideal time to apply a gender-sensitive lens. An assessment of gender equality (in respect of access to and preference for different energy services, facilities and products) at an early stage will allow the programme design to incorporate women's needs from the outset. Combining a gender lens with a sensitivity to VAWG will mean that opportunities to empower women and build their resilience to violence should be identified – for example, income opportunities in situations where domestic lighting is poor would enable women to buy lamps and thereby reduce feelings of insecurity.
- A 'do no harm' approach will ensure that programme design does not accidentally exacerbate gender inequalities or violence. Critical ways of ensuring an intervention

does not cause harm would include an awareness of how some income-generating opportunities targeting women may trigger a backlash from men, and understanding how gender power relations may play out.

- Using an approach that thinks through how systems of energy provision can better respond to the needs of women should be a feature of holistic programmes that are not just focused on improving the lives of women. In other words, taking every opportunity to embed the involvement of women at each stage and level of energy programming will ensure maximum impact.

Building the Evidence Base: Why Energy Programming Needs a VAWG-sensitive Framework

Research to date, including that conducted as part of the MEI's activities, highlights various intersections between energy and violence. This section unpacks this nexus, illustrating the issues with examples from MEI Phase II pilot projects.

VAWG and poor lighting

Lack of lighting, poor camp design and the distance to facilities can all affect safety in and around a camp. However, lighting solutions need to be carefully thought through, as some can actually make the situation worse. For example, illuminated communal areas may encourage people to leave their homes at night, which may not be safe, and the lighting provided may only be partial, meaning that the space will still be unsafe.¹² In contrast, lighting combined with other security measures such as more police and/or a collective approach to communal activities is likely to reduce levels of violence. Research by the MEI in Kakuma, Kenya highlights the critical importance of better lighting in homes. Poor lighting in the home and within the camp was mentioned a significant number of times as a trigger for feelings of insecurity and for violence. Although some households have solar lamps given to schoolchildren by UNICEF and other partners, these are insufficient to keep the home lit during the night.

'When there is the light in my area and my block, it will be very safe and reduce violence. When people try to come, it would be easy for them to be identified and people who need to attack in the area could be identified because of the good lighting, so it would be good when we have good lighting.'

Participant, Kakuma camp

¹² Parke, A. and Fraser, E. (2015), *VAWG and Energy in Camp-based Settings*, VAWG Helpdesk Research Report, London: DFID, <http://www.sddirect.org.uk/media/1197/vawg-helpdesk-report-94-camp-based-settings-vawg-and-energy.pdf> (accessed 9 Jan. 2019).

VAWG and firewood collection

The incidence of VAWG when women and girls venture outside camp settings is well documented in a range of literature on gender and energy access. A recent rapid review carried out for DFID's VAWG helpdesk identified some of the key evidence available on the links between access to different sources of energy at the household and community level and VAWG in camp-based settings.¹³ A list of cited incidences of increased VAWG is also included in a Chatham House research paper analysing the current global energy situation for displaced populations,¹⁴ and in the MEI Phase I report, *Heat, Light and Power for Refugees*.¹⁵ Examples of incidence of VAWG outside camps include the following:

- In Chad, 63 per cent of households surveyed by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported that family members have experienced problems when collecting firewood. These problems consist of physical or verbal aggression, theft of property, rape or attempted rape, injury or confiscation of firewood.¹⁶
- The Women's Refugee Commission report, *Finding Trees in the Desert*, states that women must typically walk 5–10 km to find firewood. It cites more than 200 cases of rape in Darfur each month.¹⁷
- Mercy Corps conducted a survey of displaced households in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and found that 90 per cent of the people surveyed reported having experienced some form of harassment, violence or rape while collecting firewood.¹⁸

These findings are clearly supported by the research conducted for the MEI in Kakuma in 2017.¹⁹

The research paper, *Prices, Products and Priorities: Meeting Refugees' Energy Needs in Burkina Faso and Kenya*,²⁰ confirmed that women bear the burden of both cooking and firewood collection in the two camp contexts of MEI Phase II. Gathering wood from surrounding areas with scant resources puts female refugees in Kakuma I at risk of sexual and gender-based violence; in Goudoubou, Burkina Faso, refugees have highlighted the collection of firewood as a potential flashpoint with the host community, despite otherwise good relations between the two groups.²¹

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Gunning, R. (2014), *The Current State of Sustainable Energy Provision for Displaced Populations: An Analysis*, Research Paper, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publication/current-state-sustainable-energy-provision-displaced-populations-analysis> (accessed 11 Jan. 2019).

¹⁵ Lahn and Grafham (2015), *Heat, Light and Power for Refugees*.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children (2006), *Finding Trees in the Desert: Firewood collection and alternatives in Darfur*, New York: Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, https://womensrefugeecommission.org/joomlatools-files/docmanfiles/df_fuel.pdf (accessed 23 Feb. 2019).

¹⁸ Mercy Corps (2010), 'In Congo, saving trees and lives', 23 April 2010, <http://www.mercycorps.org/articles/dr-congo/congo-saving-trees-and-lives> (accessed 23 Feb. 2019).

¹⁹ Bradley, T. and Liakos, K. (forthcoming), 'Violence against Women and Girls and Sustainable Energy', in Graham, O. (forthcoming), *Energy and Forced Migration*, London: Routledge.

²⁰ Corbyn, D. and Vianello, M. (2018), *Prices, Products and Priorities: Meeting Refugees' Energy Needs in Burkina Faso and Kenya*, Research Paper for the Moving Energy Initiative, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, <https://mei.chathamhouse.org/prices-products-priorities> (accessed 9 Jan. 2019).

²¹ Ibid.

'Sustainable energy is important in humanitarian contexts because it reduces the pressure on firewood and reduces conflict between IDPs [internally displaced people] and the host population.'

UNHCR Office Ouagadougou

Box 2: Reducing dependency on firewood and the risk of non-partner violence in Kakuma refugee camp complex, Kenya

The Kakuma refugee camp complex²² located in Turkana county in the northwest of Kenya. Typically for base-of-pyramid users of energy products, the residents of Kakuma camp have a high reliance on wood-based fuel that is currently provided in part by the camp authorities, supplemented with wood that is bought or scavenged. Research by the MEI has shown that market conditions exist around these sites that could allow for an economically viable deployment of wood alternatives. This understanding was developed through in-depth, on-the-ground surveys by the MEI in Kakuma. The findings were analysed and consolidated in the research paper *Prices, Products and Priorities*.²³

One of the MEI workstreams aims to create a viable market opportunity for deploying a non-wood-based cooking solution at scale in Kakuma. The MEI proposed that a viable solution would be to implement a fuel concession that would subsidize the price of a cooking solution. This would bring it in line with what camp residents currently pay, incentivize the private sector to view the camp setting as a viable market, and reduce the barriers to market entry. To this end, the MEI ran a competition in which companies were tasked with developing the best design for a non-wood fuel concession in and around the Kakuma complex. The winning organization, National Oil Corporation of Kenya (NOCK), has been awarded a \$50,000 prize.²⁴ It is expected that implementation of NOCK's solution could have significant livelihood, environmental and health impacts, particularly for women.

This workstream aligns with the 2015–18 UNCHR Kenya strategy on Safe Access to Fuel and Energy, which aims to gradually shift from over-reliance on firewood as the main source of energy for cooking, lighting and heating to more affordable, efficient and renewable sources.²⁵

VAWG and poor housing

Studies in non-Western contexts suggest that improved housing is more critically linked to well-being in poor families than in more economically comfortable households. This link between sustainable, clean and secure housing and well-being in many ways is obvious. What is lacking in the literature is how and if a better sense of well-being within a family at

²² Kakuma refugee camp consists of four sub-camps or zones (Kakuma I-IV). In the context of this paper, the term 'Kakuma complex' also includes the nearby Kalobeyi integrated settlement.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Patel and Gross (2019), *Cooking in Displacement Settings*.

²⁵ UNHCR Kenya (2016), *Kenya Comprehensive Refugee Programme 2016. Programming for Solutions*, Nairobi, Kenya: UNHCR, www.unhcr.org/ke/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/05/Kenya-Comprehensive-Refugee-Programme-document-KCRP-20161.pdf (accessed 9 Jan. 2019).

home reduces the specific tensions that would normally trigger intimate partner violence (IPV). Research recently conducted by the MEI in Kakuma refugee camp very strongly recorded that women living in poorly constructed and poorly lit homes feel unsafe and vulnerable to violence, including IPV. In that study, participants felt that better lighting and a sturdier housing structure would improve their sense of security, promote well-being and help to build resilience to violence.

A woman interviewed in Kakuma sums up the issue:

'The (walls of) houses are made of this plastic sheet. And of course, we are not also happy enough at night, you feel any time thieves can come. Like now I have noticed in village 3 next to that big road these people; we don't know where they come from and they are dressed in army uniforms and also they come with guns to collect bamba chakula [food rations] from people at night [...]. They demand food, and if you fail they rape you and take everything by force.'

Interviewee, Kakuma

Box 3: Building for energy efficiency – Jordan Green Building Council

The goal of the MEI work with the Jordan Green Building Council is to build sustainable, energy-efficient homes that will promote not just positive environmental impacts but enhanced well-being for families. This pilot project presents an interesting opportunity to capture the positive impact that improved housing may have on reducing VAWG, specifically domestic violence. If the 48 retrofitted and three newly built houses provide better living spaces, this may well contribute to a reduction in household tensions, in turn potentially lessening the likelihood of violence or reducing actual instances in families where it is ongoing. Poor housing is a trigger for VAWG, and improved housing may make a positive contribution to reversing this. Further research into the potential impacts of improved housing would build the evidence base.

VAWG and livelihoods

While economic engagement does not automatically produce an end to violence, it has been shown to increase women's self-confidence through access to their own income, which offers them greater resilience. This enables them to challenge violence and to take measures to increase their and their children's safety (for instance, by providing an income so that women are no longer dependent on wood for cooking and can buy alternatives or can buy lighting for the home).

Various UNHCR staff members have noted that, within the context of reduced resources within UNHCR, there is a trend towards developing more self-sustaining initiatives, aligning approaches with the private sector, providing cash instead of in-kind assistance, creating markets and increasing refugee resilience.

'Sustainable energy when used for productive/livelihood initiatives (income generation) makes refugees less dependent on humanitarian aid, within the context of reduced resources, and facilitates peaceful coexistence between populations of different status.' - UNHCR Ouagadougou

The low-carbon projects and market development activities implemented under the MEI aspire to similar goals, and some features of these projects have a direct impact on women.

Box 4: Income opportunities for women in MEI Phase II projects

In 2017, the MEI selected and awarded grants for the development of several low-carbon projects in the Kakuma complex (Kenya) and Goudoubo (Burkina Faso) refugee camps. The projects were designed to improve the livelihoods of beneficiaries.

In Burkina Faso, two of the low-carbon pilot projects provide opportunities for improving women's livelihoods. The first, involving the construction and set-up of a solar-powered business centre in Goudoubo camp, has created a space available for five (refugee) entrepreneurs to rent; one of these entrepreneurs is a woman running a café, assisted by a waitress she employs. The second project has involved the installation of a solar-powered irrigation pump, enabling one hectare of land to be farmed by 50 farmers from the camp and host community. The implementing partner NGO, HELP,²⁶ worked with UNHCR to select the most vulnerable families to participate in this programme, ensuring a 50:50 balance of men and women farmers. This market gardening project is still in initiation; however, the goal is that farmers will be able to sell their produce to the local community. In these instances, access to reliable and sustainable energy facilitates livelihood activities that may lead to increased household financial and nutritional stability, women's empowerment and self-confidence.

A Framework for VAWG-sensitive Design of Energy Programmes

Bradley and Gruber²⁷ observe that there is no agreed, commonly applied approach to mainstreaming VAWG prevention into development programmes. They urge the need to build on best practice and on the lessons learnt from some of the failures of gender mainstreaming. In addition to learning from gender-mainstreaming efforts, it is critical that an evidence base is developed to inform future action; one such example is the DFID-funded What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls global research initiative. Gathering rigorous evidence that supports a drive to embed a VAWG perspective into energy programmes is a key first step. Below is a proposed framework designed to guide energy programmes in data collection and project design to aid sensitization to VAWG within energy projects. The framework has been adapted, with the permission of the original authors, from a previously published version focused on mainstreaming VAWG within access-to-justice programmes.²⁸

²⁶ Help – Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe, <https://www.help-ev.de/en/>.

²⁷ Bradley, T. and Gruber, J. (2018), 'VAWG mainstreaming in access to justice programmes: a framework for action', *Development in Practice*, 28(1): pp.16–32.

²⁸ Ibid.

Stage 1 – Framing knowledge collection around VAWG to guide programme design

If there are insufficient data related to VAWG within the target beneficiary population, and if VAWG is not the focus of the programme under design, further knowledge should be gathered on the risks of VAWG that may be triggered as a result of energy projects. A specific piece of research may be needed that, for example, investigates traditions and social norms within the target communities or to understand the existing energy infrastructure (e.g. camp design and facilities) and how these factors affect the current risk of VAWG. This might also include data captured on the prevalence of VAWG or feelings of insecurity from the perspective of the target population, which can be used as a baseline to measure the programme’s impact. Not only will this information serve the programme design and implementation; it can add to the body of evidence on the links between energy and VAWG for use in future programme design or funding and policy decisions.

To apply a VAWG lens, actors need to reflect on *how and if* a programme will have a positive or negative impact on VAWG. **A series of critical and reflective questions should be asked** through the design stage that consider if and how interventions may positively or negatively affect levels of VAWG. It may be that modifications and adaptations could be made to programmes to increase the likelihood that they help to reduce VAWG.

Developing an evidence base to inform future energy programmes in humanitarian settings

The first stage of the application of the mainstreaming VAWG approach involves the gathering of in-depth contextual information. The evidence put forward to inform policymakers needs to be rigorous and contextual. It also needs to be presented in a way that is accessible to key stakeholders and in a usable form so that it feeds directly into policy and practice. Once this chain is embedded and accepted, then policy and practice will be focused in such a way that increased attention and resourcing will be given to ways in which VAWG can be addressed through energy programming. The desired end goal, as a result of this sensitization and adaption, is that we will see a reduction in at least some forms of VAWG and a measurable increase in the overall security of women and girls.

Table 1: Questions to consider to guide programme design

Design questions	Programme reflection
<p>Do we understand the types of violence most commonly experienced by women and girls (and other vulnerable groups) in the programme location?</p> <p>To what extent are these types of violence linked, directly or indirectly, to energy needs/issues (e.g. firewood collection)?</p>	<p>Understanding the context in terms of rates and types of violence should involve pinpointing the specific spaces and activities that render women and girls most vulnerable (at home, school, work, on the way to school or work etc.). In what ways could energy programmes respond to this context (e.g. improve lighting on the way to school, improve security at home)?</p>

<p>To what extent is violence occurring in spaces where improved energy access or provision may make a positive difference?</p>	<p>If this is not known, does the data gap present a risk to the overall potential impact of the programme? Should research be commissioned to gather additional knowledge (for example, a baseline study) to mitigate the risk?</p>
<p>Who are the most vulnerable groups? To what extent is their vulnerability linked to poor energy resource and access?</p> <p>To what extent do these groups have access to energy programmes?</p> <p>Would better access build their resilience to violence?</p>	<p>Reflections are necessary on which groups of people are most likely to benefit from an intervention. Can the interventions be widened to ensure access for the most vulnerable, and to support resilience-building (e.g. by offering income-generating opportunities to single mothers)?</p>

Next steps

With this knowledge in place, programme developers and policymakers need to consider the intersections between planned or possible energy interventions and the types of violence experienced by women and girls. The starting point is **understanding the experiences of vulnerable groups** (such as women and girls) and working outwards into the environment and contexts in which they live.

Ask the question: **what can the programme do to end the violence they suffer?**

We can use a theoretical approach known as ‘the ecological model’, developed by Lori Heise,²⁹ to build this knowledge. This model supports an approach that begins with the experiences of individuals and then moves through the different spheres that impact on how the individual experiences (or not) VAWG, e.g. household dynamics, community relations, state and national effectiveness in addressing VAWG. In other words, it is understood that these personal experiences are in fact triggered by dynamics (largely gendered) occurring at the household level, which in turn are shaped by community structures and then by wider sociocultural beliefs and values.

Applying this model helps to reveal the ways in which decisions are made around energy, and to identify who has the power to decide energy priorities. Who has the most access to energy resources? For example, do men choose to light the sitting room and run the TV rather than ensure the kitchen is well lit? The model also guides our reflection on what happens when individuals challenge these power structures. Is violence used to discipline and maintain this status quo? Is it used to remind household members of the hierarchy of power? How are these structures and behaviours shaped by wider beliefs and values that maintain a status quo that marginalizes some individuals, and that in doing so creates vulnerable groups because they have less power?

²⁹ Heise, L. L. (1998), ‘Violence Against Women: An Integrated Ecological Framework’, *Violence Against Women*, 4(3): pp. 262–90, doi:10.1177/1077801298004003002.

Stage 2 – Operationalizing knowledge on VAWG: designing the programme

The ecological model could be used to steer questions specific to the goals of programmes *at design stage*. This is important because decisions made at this point will carry through to implementation. For example, in relation to energy programming, the line of VAWG-related enquiry might look like this:

Table 2: Questions to consider in operationalizing knowledge on VAWG

Social ecology level	Meta-question	Factors relevant to operationalization
Sociocultural	Are there dominant sociocultural views and norms that might make it difficult for women and girls to access energy programmes?	Are there views emerging that need to be captured, challenged and changed by the programme (e.g. the view that women cannot be energy entrepreneurs)?
Community	<p>What community mechanisms exist to mitigate VAWG or offer security and protection to victims?</p> <p>Are there existing community structures or mechanisms that could facilitate an energy programme?</p>	<p>How effective are the community mechanisms perceived to be, and could the programme build on these (e.g. by extending the use of solar learning hubs and/or clinics into safe spaces for survivors of violence)?</p> <p>Existing savings groups could be integrated into the programme design as a financing mechanism for purchasing energy products.</p>
Household	What dynamics or material circumstances related to energy exist at household level that may support or perpetuate VAWG (e.g. poor housing or lack of energy, which can trigger violence or increase the risk of gender-based violence)?	Are there certain intra-/inter-household behaviours that could be eased through improved energy, housing or income opportunities? Is there opportunity to use the programme to tap into pre-existing processes of change?

Individual	What room is there for individuals to challenge and change?	Is there room for the programme to deploy individuals who are active in challenging VAWG? Can it build their capacity to act as a bridge between instances of violence and poor energy resource (e.g. by identifying households where domestic violence is known to occur, and assessing if the situation could be eased by improved energy provision)?
<p>Programme reflection: Are projects reinforcing gendered power relations in a way that may unintentionally maintain levels of VAWG? For example, do projects accept male authority at each level by only consulting men?</p>		

The project does not necessarily need to deliver any services or support directly to women, but instead could support energy system actors to embed this learning into their practices – i.e. in terms of policy, marketing, bundling services with products, and developing new models.

Actors and relationships will be continuously reviewed to check whether these are manifesting negatively or harmfully for women and girls. For example, if women were unable to participate in training or work opportunities, the project would try to identify why this was the case, and support actors to adjust their strategies, practices or policies.

Market systems development and transforming gender norms take time. With enough time and resources, market opportunities with a high potential for transformational change could be identified. For example, improving the way the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) market works to ensure a better supply of gas canisters would be highly transformative for women in the Sahel region in Africa. This would be done by looking at the cross-cutting constraints in the LPG sector and identifying how these could be alleviated for all actors to supply the region with the product, thereby increasing cooking fuel options for women.

Stage 3 – Implementing and monitoring change: embedding a VAWG lens at all stages

The following questions should be considered at each stage of the programme to ensure sensitivity to VAWG is embedded. Questions raised at design stage can be revisited through monitoring activities, or quarterly and mid-term reports.

Design stage

- What is known about the current levels of VAWG in the programme context?
- What is known about the main triggers of VAWG in the context?
- What are the possible intersections between energy and VAWG?

- Can VAWG be addressed in any way through the proposed project activities and focus?
- Who are the main providers of services to support survivors of violence? How do they understand the context? Have recommendations been sought from these stakeholders in terms of how and where energy activities may support effective programming to tackle VAWG? Which programme documents need to include content on gender or VAWG (e.g. results frameworks, theories of change, MEL approaches,³⁰ requests for proposals, value for money).
- Is further research necessary to better understand the context and establish baseline data against which changes can be measured and monitored?

Indicators for impact on VAWG/gender

Indicators will vary greatly for each programme, depending on the focus and context of the programme. Indicators for impacts on VAWG and gender could include the following:³¹

- Number of female participants/beneficiaries
- Number of customers of energy products disaggregated by gender
- Inclusion of VAWG-sensitive activities by all programme grantees and implementing partners
- Percentage of women with improved access to energy products
- Percentage of women aged 15–49 who have experienced severe physical violence in the past 12 months
- Number of jobs created for women by the programme activities
- Percentage of target (men/women) with supportive attitudes towards women's economic participation
- Percentage of women who believe that engaging in income-generating activities reduces the risk of IPV
- Percentage of households with improved lighting
- Percentage of improved educational outcomes for girls aged 9–15 over programme period

Implementation stage: monitoring and programme adaptation throughout the programme life cycle

- Is a real-time monitoring system in place to track the impact of the specific aspects of a project that may help to address VAWG? For example, and as suggested by Bradley and Gruber,³² this could include the recruitment of local social mobilizers whose role could be to check in on beneficiaries to capture impact from an energy

³⁰ Monitoring, evaluation and learning.

³¹ Other examples, definitions and guidance on developing and using VAWG and/or gender indicators can be found online – for instance, People in Need (2019), 'Gender Equality', <https://www.indikit.net/sector/78-gender-equality> (accessed 9 Jan. 2019).

³² Bradley and Gruber (2018), 'VAWG mainstreaming in access to justice programmes: a framework for action'.

programme specifically in relation to violence. Importantly in relation to a programme not specifically focused on VAWG, are there any unintended consequences – anything that may spark an increase in VAWG – that may result in an activity having to be stopped?

- If a mid-term review is anticipated, the gender and VAWG-related indicators/targets should also be reviewed at this point.
- Does the programme have referral mechanisms? In instances where VAWG seems to increase as a result of an energy activity, can specialist support be sought?
- Are there linkages between energy interventions and projects focused on ending VAWG? Could these links be strengthened or reinforced? Could these links be used to identify opportunities for energy interventions to support the work of programmes to address VAWG (for example, by providing solar power to a survivor support hub or working with existing women's livelihood programmes)?

Evaluation and learning

- What new evidence has emerged on the type and prevalence of VAWG and how forms of violence may intersect with energy?
- What evidence is there of impact in terms of energy activities that have worked to reduce VAWG? Can examples of good practice be seen, and can they be scaled up? Or are the triggers for violence completely context-driven?
- How is this knowledge being communicated? Can it be used to support the activities of stakeholders working to address VAWG or in the humanitarian energy space?

Resourcing considerations

Programmes with a focus on including vulnerable groups may carry additional costs in order to achieve the desired impact, so the argument in terms of value for money is based on the importance of reaching these target beneficiaries. A decision must be made early in the programme design phase whether to target vulnerable or specific groups, such as victims of VAWG. However, this may not always suit the intervention design, in which case a 'do no harm' approach may be more appropriate.

A one-off study may be required to gain an understanding of the context to inform programme design. Alternatively, it might be necessary to gather baseline data at the outset and consider the follow-up implications at mid-term and end-line data collection points. In either case, it is important to factor in gender- and/or VAWG-specific research into the programme budget and timeline. The budget will depend on the location, programme scope, sample size and whether qualitative and/or quantitative research is required. Careful consideration of research ethics should feature in the study design for any research on VAWG and other sensitive issues. In camp settings, the UNHCR protection officers will need to approve the data collection tools and plans before researchers can then conduct the study, to make sure that the approach is appropriate for the context, that the correct protocols are in place, and that the data collection process will not increase the vulnerability of respondents.

Programmes may need to engage an expert on gender and/or VAWG during the design phase and at various points throughout the programme life cycle. The expert would:

- Ensure the design uses a 'do no harm' approach and that this is maintained throughout;
- Gain maximum impact from opportunities to reduce VAWG;
- Review programme documentation with a gender lens (log-frame, beneficiary or stakeholder mapping, requests for proposals, theory of change); and
- Provide ad hoc guidance throughout implementation, and integrate findings from monitoring data back into the programme.

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Cover image: A woman and two children sitting against the side of a house in Kakuma refugee camp, Kenya

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