

## POLICY BRIEF #3

# Advancing Gender Equity in the Renewable Heating and Cooling Sector

To support gender equity in the RHC sector, it is imperative that we recognize the significance of inclusivity, robust data collection, gender quotas, and gender-sensitive communication. We recommend cultivating gender-smart policies that target local governments, energy service companies, and communities. Promoting diversity and inclusivity in the RHC sector stands as a pivotal endeavor in achieving our energy and sustainability objectives, ultimately forging a more gender-equitable sector that propels the green transition.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Inclusivity Training:** Provide inclusivity training for local governments and communities, focusing on gender-sensitive programs and strategies to address structural disparities.
- **Gender-Disaggregated Data:** Implement gender-disaggregated data collection in consultations, surveys, and decision-making processes to underscore divergent perspectives and needs.
- **Gender-Quota Decision Making:** Organize important consultations and negotiations with gender quotas to ensure diverse representation, considering work time schedules.
- **Gender-Inclusive Communication:** Ensure that communication strategies are inherently gender-inclusive, creating a welcoming environment where everyone's perspectives and needs are valued.
- **Management Training:** Mandate higher management tiers to undergo annual sensitivity and awareness training on gender-related issues.
- **Gender-Smart Policies:** Develop gender-smart policies within the RHC industry, general workplaces, and at the community level to address gender disparities.
- **Gender-Ready Energy Cooperatives:** Urge the participation of women in the creation and establishment of energy cooperatives as well as the development of community energy projects.

### Targeted stakeholders:

Local Governments, Energy Service Companies, Local Communities

Meeting the ambitious Energy Roadmap 2050 goals requires a substantial reduction in energy consumption, aiming to cut greenhouse gas emissions by over 70%! Expanding RHC solutions is crucial to achieving these targets. To foster a more sustainable energy sector, it is crucial to prioritize diversity and inclusivity, ensuring women have equal opportunities to drive the green transition. Consequently, the RHC sector must embrace gender-equitable communication, inclusive decision-making, and a workplace that shows gender sensitivity.

Supporting a gender-inclusive RHC sector involves offering inclusivity training, collecting gender-disaggregated data, and conducting consultations with gender quotas in mind. It also entails **adopting gender-inclusive communication practices, providing management training on gender-related issues, and developing policies that address gender disparities**. Additionally, scheduling decision-making activities with consideration for work hours and gender quotas can help advance diversity and inclusion in the sector.

Research underscores the importance of achieving gender parity in the workplace, as it leads to more effective decision-making.<sup>2</sup> However, the burden of care work often falls on women,<sup>3</sup> limiting their participation in crucial decision-making processes, especially those held outside standard business hours. To promote diversity in decision-making, it is imperative to schedule such activities with consideration for work hours and implement gender quotas for significant meetings. Globally, women occupy only 6% of ministerial positions in national energy policies and programs,<sup>4</sup> highlighting the need for change. Women also play a pivotal role as energy managers within their households, wielding significant influence in energy technology decisions.<sup>5</sup> Their unique position offers an opportunity to boost the adoption of RHC technologies.

Promoting gender equity in the RHC sector is essential for achieving our energy and sustainability goals. This requires inclusive training, gender-disaggregated data collection, and gender-sensitive communication to ensure equal opportunities and diversity in decision-making processes. By implementing these measures, we can create a more gender-just RHC sector that drives the green transition effectively.

This, in turn, amplifies the impact of peer-to-peer communication strategies among energy consumers. Additionally, local energy initiatives and cooperatives should increase their inclusion of women, as they have been proved to be very successful where there is an equal participation of women and especially when RHC innovations are led by them.<sup>6</sup>

For energy service companies aiming to expand their customer base and cultivate trust, it is essential to **adopt gender-sensitive language to cater to the growing number of female customers seeking RHC solutions**. To achieve this, employing women within the organization can facilitate the process. Equally important is **providing dedicated training to employees and management to ensure gender-sensitive communication** becomes ingrained within the company or governmental institution, supporting the women already working there.

To genuinely foster gender readiness within an organization, it is advisable to closely monitor gender-disaggregated data. This practice enables pinpointing areas for improvement and helps create an environment where both customers and potential employees feel more secure when engaging with the organization.

2 Allen, E., Lyons H., Stephens, Jennie, 2019. Women's leadership in renewable transformation, energy justice and energy democracy: Redistributing power. Energy Research & Social Science. 57. 101233.

3 SEforALL, 2017. Scaling sustainable access pathways for the most vulnerable and hardest to reach people.

4 EIGE, 2016. Gender and Energy, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

5 SEforALL, 2017. Scaling sustainable access pathways for the most vulnerable and hardest to reach people.

6 OECD, 2020. Policies and Practices to Promote Women in Leadership Roles in the Private Sector.

W4RES is a Horizon 2020 project that aims to scale-up the involvement of women in the market deployment and uptake of RHC solutions via replicable support measures tested and validated across the 8 countries (Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Norway, Slovakia). W4RES will run until October 2023 by an international consortium of 12 partners. A balanced union joining forces and expertise on renewable energy sources research & advocacy, innovative business lines development and women advocacy.