# FACILITATOR NOTES SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL THEME: GENDER EQUALITY

### Setting the Context (4 minutes):

Gender inequality is still a major issue in many parts of the world. While equality in primary education has been achieved, this hasn't been the case across all levels of education. In many countries, gender inequality persists and women continue to face discrimination in access to education, work and economic assets, and government participation. In particular, violence against women continues to undermine efforts to achieve equality, even in Australia. This is not an isolated issue.

In the developing world, one interesting piece of technology that contributes to gender equality and women's empowerment is a solar cooker. A solar cooker is a device which harnesses the sun's energy to cook food, and therefore reduces reliance on scarce firewood or other non-renewable fuels. The introduction of solar cookers may positively affect a number of aspects of a woman's life:

- In arid environments where trees are scarce, women and children may walk many kilometres each day to collect wood for cooking. Since solar cookers do not require wood fuel, women would have more productive hours available in each day.
- If there is no need to collect wood for cooking, the potential risk of being attacked in the wilderness is eliminated.
- Solar cookers are smoke-free (as opposed to traditional stoves inside poorly ventilated dwellings), therefore there is a reduced risk of many diseases like acute pulmonary infections, chronic bronchitis and lung cancer. According to the World Health Organisation, smoke inhalation is responsible for nearly 2 million deaths around the world each year, especially amongst women and children.
- Solar cookers can use UV light to pasteurize water and milk, making them safe for consumption.
- By using the sun, money can be saved which would otherwise be spent on cooking fuel (up to 25% of a family's total income in many cases). This money can be used for food, education and healthcare.
- Solar cookers open opportunities to the creation of small restaurants or bakeries which otherwise would not be viable. This can create an empowering opportunity for women.

#### **Pre-activity discussion:**

Ask students to brainstorm as many advantages as you can for using a solar cooker in your group. Use 60 seconds for brainstorming and 60 seconds for group feedback. This is meant to be fast-paced.

#### Activity: Construct a Solar Cooker (15 minutes)

Give groups the 'Build a Solar Cooker' supplement to inspire their design for their solar cooker, then direct students to work in groups of 5 to construct a solar cooker. They must consider cost, durability and availability of materials in their design. Tell groups that they have a budget of \$10 to spend on materials that would not otherwise be free. Free materials are those things that can be acquired at no cost in reality. \$10 is the estimated cost of materials to build a solar cooker in a rural village.



Materials and Usage	COST
<ul> <li>Transparent panel - for trapping heat in a box oven design</li> </ul>	\$5
Umbrella - may be used as a parabolic cooker and lined with aluminium foil	\$3
<ul> <li>Oven roast bag - for trapping heat like an oven</li> </ul>	\$2
<ul> <li>Compact Disc – directionally reflective surface (may or may not be useful)</li> </ul>	\$1
Tape – for construction	\$1
<ul> <li>10 Pegs – for construction</li> </ul>	\$1
Wire coat hanger - for construction	\$1
Aluminium foil – reflective surface	\$1
<ul> <li>Newspaper – for insulation in box oven designs</li> </ul>	FREE
<ul> <li>Cardboard – for the shell of a box or panel cooker</li> </ul>	FREE
Scissors – for construction	[Provided]

## Post Activity Discussion Points (6 minutes):

The work of agencies like UnitingWorld and Anglican Board of Mission aim to empower local communities with the materials and skills they need in order to generate a sustainable income, increasing their access to basic services and empowering them to move themselves out of poverty. Our agencies take the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) as a way to improve our understanding of those people who live in poverty. SLA puts people at the centre and we are strongly guided by several principles when we plan new development activities or assess the contribution that existing activities have made to sustaining livelihoods.

You may like to ask the group these key questions that are related to the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach:

- Being People-Centred: If you were part of a program introducing a community to solar cookers, what would be the best ways to keep things people-centred?
- Build on strengths: How might solar cookers build upon a woman's strengths?
- Encourage broad partnerships What kind of ways could people work together through a solar cooker program?
- Aim for sustainability Would a solar cooker program be sustainable? What things do you see as being sustainable or unsustainable? E.g. are the solar cookers easily maintained using easily accessible natural resources?

For more information on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, visit http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/gender-equality/

#### **Evaluation Questions:**

- 1. Describe two ways that women in rural villages may experience empowerment through using solar cookers.
- 2. Why are strengths and skills important for empowerment?