



A civil-society coalition strengthens the enabling environment for clean cooking in Kenya

This case study describes the contribution of the Voice for Change Partnership (V4CP) programme in improving the enabling environment for clean cooking methods in Kenya from 2016 to 2020. The V4CP contributions to systems change are visible in (i) its drive for institutional embedding and in (ii) shifting markets. Institutional embedding resulted from CSOs' strategic advocacy efforts, leading local and national governments to adopt policies and regulations in support of clean cooking. It shifted markets by increasing consumer awareness through a community-based, women-led movement raising the demand for improved cooking solutions.

The V4CP effort has also contributed to a shift in norms on the importance of using clean cooking versus traditional solutions and began to leverage finance by influencing county and national governments to increase budgets for clean cooking. These changes indicate the beginnings of scaling as key developments in one county (Kitui) inspired other counties to follow suit. The V4CP approach is based on empowering civil society organisations (CSOs) as key actors to accelerate systems change. A key lesson learned is the importance of involving and influencing multiple stakeholders to achieve sustainable change.

Clean and healthy cooking solutions hampered by lack of awareness and unsupportive policy framework

In Kenya, biomass - particularly wood - is the primary cooking fuel for 65% of the households, with over 75% of rural households still cooking on traditional three-stone fires¹. This has detrimental impacts on the climate (due to deforestation and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions) and on human health. Women's health is disproportionately impacted, as they are traditionally in charge of cooking for the family. Although improved cookstoves and cleaner fuels can reduce indoor

¹ Kenya Cooking Sector Study, 2019

air pollution and its associated health problems, it is not easy to change the way communities have cooked for generations.

In 2016 at the inception of the V4CP programme, the transition of the cooking sector to cleaner cooking solutions faced multiple structural challenges. Firstly, due to **lack of consumer awareness** of the risks of cooking on open fire and of clean cooking alternatives, there was limited demand for improved and clean cookstoves and fuels. Secondly, **limited market development** as private sector participation in the clean cooking sector was minimal and largely informal, with the charcoal industry playing a dominant role. Consequently, the supply chain was inadequate to reach rural areas. Improved stoves and fuels were also not affordable for everyone. Finally, at the inception of the V4CP programme, there was also a **lack of a clear policy framework** supporting clean cooking in Kenya. County and national-level government policies regarding clean cooking were weak or even non-existent.

The country was and is currently undergoing a power shift from national to county level governance. Increasing government leadership in Kenya and across Africa on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 7 on affordable and clean energy, offered an opportunity for change.

SNV's engagement

The [Voice for Change Partnership \(V4CP\) programme](#) empowers civil society organisations (CSOs) as advocates for the adoption and implementation of policies and practices by governments and business to benefit poor and marginalised communities. In Kenya, the V4CP energy team advocates for improving the enabling environment for the increased adoption of clean cookstoves and fuels, through the inclusion of clean cooking in national and county plans, regulations and budgets.

The **CSO partners** involved are GROOTS Kenya² and the Clean Cooking Association of Kenya (CCAK). GROOTS is a national movement of 3,000 grassroots women-led community-based groups, whose network of women champions offers an opportunity for effective community

engagement on clean cooking. CCAK is a membership organisation representing a variety of stakeholders active in the clean cooking sector. Its role as national sector coordinator/representative provides the opportunity to increase alignment amongst actors in the clean cooking sector. This coordination was also supported by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency's Clean Cooking Sector Support programme (through SNV).

V4CP's work in Kenya, aimed at strengthening civil society to **improve the enabling environment**, complements a range of clean cooking interventions by SNV and other organisations. Key examples are the clean cooking market acceleration work supported by various donors through the Energising Development

Table 1. Overview of the Voice for Change Partnership (V4CP)

Voice for Change Partnership (V4CP)	
Lead	SNV in partnership with International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
Countries	Burkina Faso, Ghana, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Rwanda
Time frame	January 2016 – December 2020
Budget	€34.7M across six countries
Focus areas	Renewable Energy, Food and Nutrition Security (FNS), Resilience, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)
Funding by	Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) Strategic Partnership Framework
CSOs supported	51
V4CP Kenya	
Kenyan CSOs (energy theme)	GROOTS Kenya, Clean Cookstoves Association of Kenya
V4CP Kenya budget	€5M (covers 5 subsectors, among them clean cooking)

² Grassroots Organisations Operating Together in Sisterhood (GROOTS), <https://grootskenya.org/>

programme (from 2005, ongoing) and the cookstove component of the Kenya Off-grid Solar Access Project (2018-2023), financed by the World Bank.

The advocacy efforts of V4CP's partners focused on the interlinked levels of the national policy framework, county policies and communities (women leaders). Doing so ensured the sustainability of changes, as it created local ownership and legitimacy of changes. It also helped to kickstart scaling of key developments from one county or area to another. Contributing to systems change is therefore at the core of the V4CP, which is currently in its fifth year and ongoing until December 2020.

Systems change approach and results

The V4CP collaborative approach consists of three key intervention strategies.

Firstly, it strengthens CSOs' capacities to advocate for change, through training, on the job coaching by SNV advisors, and peer-to-peer learning. Secondly, through its partnership with IFPRI and in collaboration with other research institutes, the programme develops highquality evidence to be used by CSOs for advocacy and influencing efforts.

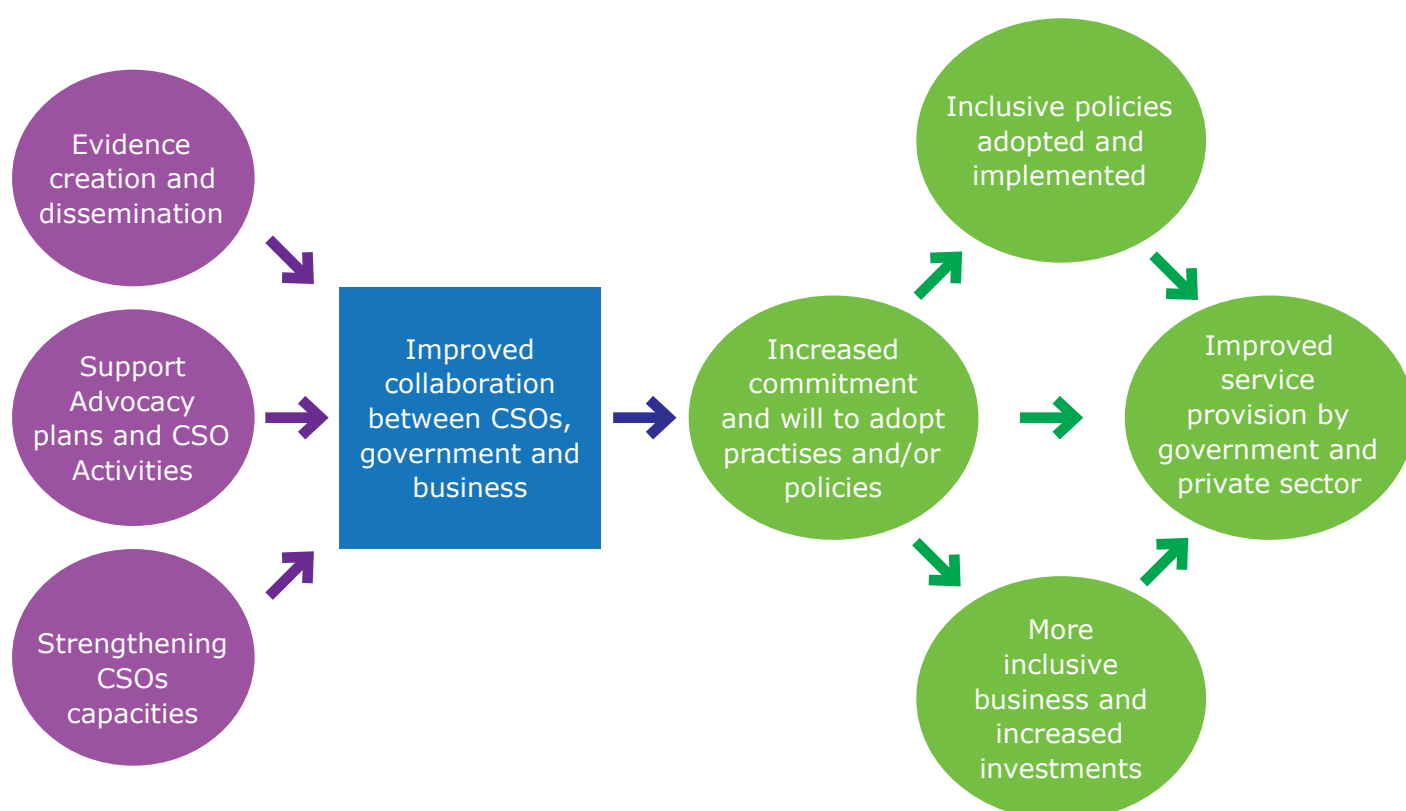
Thirdly, CSOs are supported in the design and implementation of advocacy plans. These are regularly reviewed to adapt to changing contexts, so that advocacy activities stay relevant and can then respond to external opportunities. These strategies have so far led to substantial results on two key systems change parameters: institutional embedding and reinforcing demand and supply.

Institutional embedding: empowerment of CSOs and governments

The V4CP programme in Kenya aims to **increase demand and encourage institutional embedding** for clean cooking. To do so, it advocates for fiscal incentives, regulations on quality standards, and governmental budget allocation.

The first step in this change process is to increase the participation and influence of the CSOs and community champions in their interactions with the government and private sector. The **CSOs were trained in advocacy**, using evidence and effective communication. Jointly, key actors were identified and contacted. Through bilateral and multi-stakeholder meetings, the CSOs built relationships with government policy makers and allies in other institutions.

Figure 1. V4CP Theory of Change on advocacy



The issue of clean cooking was raised in media and relevant conferences, moving the issue up on the political agenda. Within a few years, this has resulted in stronger relations between the CSOs and government, both at national and county level. Moreover, there is **improved collaboration between the government, private sector and CSOs, as well as increased political will** to act on clean cooking.

CCAK played a key role in increasing sector coordination, for instance amongst government institutions by **convening the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Clean Cooking**. This Committee includes the Ministries of Energy, Health, Environment and Forestry, and Agriculture, the Kenya Bureau of Standards, the Kenya Industrial Development and Research Institute, and the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority. The Ministry of Energy has subsequently taken ownership of the Inter-Ministerial Committee, and similar initiatives are now taken at county level.

Additionally, CCAK engaged its members and other stakeholders to work with the Kenya Bureau of Standards in the **development of quality standards** for biomass and ethanol stoves. These are essential to ensure improved cookstoves are sufficiently safe and clean. With its members, CCAK has also played (and continues to play) a key role in influencing taxation incentives for clean cookstoves and fuels, which has, amongst others, resulted in lowering the import duty on improved cookstoves.

Moreover, due to efforts of GROOTS and CCAK, **three county governments allocated budget to clean cooking** for the first time: Kitui, Kiambu and Kilifi. In 2018, the County Government of Kitui set a budget of over \$1 million for clean cooking interventions for a period of 5 years in the County's Integrated Development Plan. Aimed at stimulating demand, these funds are allocated to the installation of improved rocket stoves, awareness creation and training for communities on the installation of clean cooking stoves. Kiambu county allocated \$10,000 to the development of their Energy policy, including clean cooking. In 2019, the three counties have allocated \$165,000 for clean cooking interventions in total (so far), where there was previously none. These three larger counties, with a collated population of 5 million, are expected to positively influence other counties³ through the Council of Governors.

Kitui county has included clean cooking in its County Integrated Development Plans, while both Kiambu and Kilifi County are including cooking as a key area in their county Climate and Energy plans. At the national level, clean cooking is now included in the National Climate Change Action Plan and Energy Act. Inclusion of clean cooking in the national and county plans is an important step towards improved service provision. (Growing) government budget allocation supports concrete interventions such as awareness campaigns and incentives for private sector. This increases investor's confidence in the clean cooking market, **contributing to accelerated market development for clean cooking and hence improved service provision**. Already, international stove producers have expanded their business in Kenya, e.g. Burn Manufacturing increased its production capacity and portfolio in Kenya.

Accelerating markets by increasing demand in communities

At county level, the V4CP programme aims to accelerate the clean cookstove market by engaging people from **local communities in increasing demand and holding county governments to account** to stimulate clean cooking solutions. With its community-based origins, GROOTS plays a key role to ensure local ownership and sustainable embedding of clean cooking solutions. Moreover, as a women's grassroots organisation, GROOTS is well-placed to increase awareness amongst the women who are disproportionately impacted by unclean cooking. As part of its evidence gathering, GROOTS Kenya conducted a study on community awareness and affordability, which formed the basis of a convincing advocacy case.

Starting in Kitui county, GROOTS identified 40 women (one from each district in the county) to become **clean cooking champions**. These women were supported to influence their communities, as well as to participate in meetings with relevant county departments to encourage the prioritisation of the clean cookstoves market in county plans and budgets. Impressed by the initiative, the Kitui County Department of Energy included 15 of the champions in their training on clean cooking technologies in 2017 and 2018. This was later extended to all 40 women champions. The training included tackling issues such as health problems associated with traditional cooking

³ Kenya has a total of 47 counties and a population of close to 50 million people.



Clean cooking champions at a GROOTS Kenya training in Kitui county. (GROOTS)

methods, how to construct and install clean cookstoves, as well as the county government's planning and budgeting cycle. In Kitui and Kiambu counties, women cooking champions were appointed on technical committees working on the development of county Energy & Climate plans.

In addition, GROOTS helped the champions **organise public awareness forums** in their county districts on the health impacts of traditional cooking methods and the benefits of adopting clean cookstoves and fuels. The community champions, with the support of GROOTS, are teaching community members how to apply cleaner cooking technologies such as improved cookstoves, biogas and fireless cookers. They also point women to small scale business opportunities, e.g. in producing their own briquettes from cow dung and ashes. By engaging its 3,000 women-led community-based groups through the promotion of the 40 women champions, GROOTS is **inspiring a broader womenled movement** that is advocating for safer and healthier cooking methods both at household and policy levels.

Conclusions and lessons learned

Overview of results

This case study describes ways in which the V4CP support to CSOs' advocacy efforts has contributed to systems change in the clean cooking sector in Kenya. Results can be captured under four parameters for success as depicted in the table on the next page.

The V4CP approach sought to directly impact institutional embedding and shifting markets by advocating for conducive policies (tax incentives, standards) and by increasing awareness and demand for clean cookstoves. The changes observed in turn contributed to results on leveraging finance and shifting norms. The successes in *italics* are influenced by the improved enabling environment as a result of a multitude of projects and interventions, and can be only partly attributed to the V4CP.

Lessons on systems change

The V4CP shows that civil society has a key role to play in **influencing governments and holding them accountable to provide better services for all**. In addition, by building the evidence-based advocacy expertise of V4CP partner CSOs, the programme has shown that **empowering key local actors** to take ownership of solutions results in sustainable change. Illustrative are the community champions and county government members who, empowered by the CSOs, have now taken ownership to further increase access to clean cooking in their respective counties. Key to the success of advocacy are building relationships with key policy makers, creating and disseminating evidence to back-up and transfer key messages, and organising multi-stakeholder meetings involving representatives from all relevant players. The latter is important (particularly including the private sector) when developing policies aimed at shifting markets.

Table 2. Overview of contributions to systems change

Contributions to development goals	
<p><i>In Kenya, significant contributions were made to SDG 7 on access to affordable and clean energy, by creating a conducive environment for a sustainable clean cooking market, exemplified by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strengthening capacities of CSOs in evidence-based advocacy to influence policies and government budget allocations through a collaborative approach ■ Inspiring a community-based, women-led movement for clean cooking solutions, based on shaping norms and promoting health advantages – which benefit especially women, who are usually responsible for preparing meals ■ Increasing demand for clean cooking solutions that are inherently more healthy and environmentally more sustainable, reducing pressure on climate and forests ■ Making clean cooking solutions increasingly available for low income groups 	
Leveraging structural finance	Institutional embedding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Three Kenya county governments allocated budget for clean cooking for the first time (\$165,000 in 2019, minimum \$1million for a period of 5 years) ■ <i>Government of Kenya included clean cooking in large energy development programs such as KOSAP and Institutional Capacity Building to the RE Sector in Kenya</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Clean cooking explicitly included in national and 3 county energy plans ■ Kenya government adopted tax regulations favourable for clean cooking solutions ■ Quality standards for biomass and ethanol stoves adopted by Kenya Bureau of Standards ■ Improved coordination at national government level through Inter-Ministerial Committee on Clean Cooking ■ Community women champions appointed on energy technical committees in two counties ■ <i>Government of Kenya set target to achieve clean cooking for all by 2028</i>
Kickstarting or transforming markets	Shifting values, norms and mind sets
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 40 community champions scale awareness raising activities through 3,000 women-led community-based groups ■ Private sector involved in development of standards and a voluntary labelling system ■ <i>International stove producers (members of CCAK) expanded their business in Kenya, e.g. Burn Manufacturing increased its production capacity and portfolio in Kenya</i> ■ <i>Increased adoption of clean cooking solutions</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increased awareness (and change in behaviour) on the importance of using clean cooking solutions vs traditional solutions ■ National and county governments see CSOs and community representatives as credible partners in policy development ■ Governments take ownership of the issue of clean cooking

The use of a Theory of Change (ToC) has proven valuable to ensure that the interventions lead to systems change, through learning and adaptive management. **Regular reviews of the ToC with respect to the changing contexts**, allowed the V4CP to adapt advocacy efforts and ensure maximum effectiveness. The use of logbooks enabled the recording of changes and outcomes, small steps that jointly show significant progress on the ToC. The V4CP partners, namely SNV, GROOTS and CCAK, play complementary roles in the partnership. This stimulates capacity development of a range of actors, and opens multiple pathways for advocacy at national, county and community level with the use of sound evidence.

The main challenge was, and is, that **policy changes and implementation of policies take a lot of time and sustained effort**, especially as it can be influenced by external uncontrollable factors. For example, the 2017 elections effectively caused a temporary standstill in policy development and rotation of policy makers at different levels of government. This led to significant delays for the V4CP. However, it showed the importance of anchoring changes in policies or institutions, so they are sustained when people change jobs or projects ends.

Overall, **civil society played a key role in accelerating systems change** by ensuring clean cooking solutions are embedded in society, aligning key actors and influencing the enabling environment in Kenya. It influenced the government and others to adopt its approaches, as evidenced by significant policy changes and political commitments. It leveraged finance by securing increased budget allocation for clean cooking from local and national government. This is coupled with the beginnings of scaling as developments in one county (Kitui) have inspired other counties to follow suit. These results will nevertheless require further follow up by other projects and initiatives to ensure the changes result in the deepening of and expansion into all four parameters of systems change.



A meal being prepared using an improved cookstove (SNV)

Links to other information

- Clean Cooking Association of Kenya, [*Kenya Household Cooking Sector Study, Assessment of the Supply and Demand of Cooking Solutions at the Household Level*](#), November 2019
- Voice for Change Partnership, [*Story of Change: Kenya's clean cooking champions*](#), December 2018
- Voice for Change Partnership, [*Kenya's clean cooking champions*](#) [video], November 2018
- Voice for Change Partnership, *Linking Energy, Health and Sustainable Livelihoods: Policy Options for Scaling Up Improved Cooking Solutions in Kitui County of Kenya: V4CP Policy Brief*, September 2019
- Voice for Change Partnership, "Harvested outcomes", 2020, available upon request



SNV, 'A civil-society coalition strengthens the enabling environment for clean cooking in Kenya', *Systems change case study*, The Hague, SNV, 2020.

SNV

SNV Netherlands Development Organisation is a not-for-profit international development organisation that makes a lasting difference in the lives of people living in poverty by helping them raise incomes and access basic services. We focus on three sectors and have a long-term, local presence in over 25 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Our team of more than 1,300 staff is the backbone of SNV.

Systems Change

SNV projects directly benefit millions of people. At the same time, our projects also drive systems change – strengthening institutions and kick-starting markets to help many more people work their way out of poverty, well beyond the scope of projects.

In this series, SNV documents and explores lessons on the way it achieves systems change, with special attention to four key parameters of success:

- leveraging finance,
- kick-starting/shifting markets,
- adoption of improved approaches by government and others,
- shifting values, norms and mind sets.

The growing number of case studies will cover a variety of geographic contexts, (sub-) sectors and development challenges.

Cover photo

Mary Mbole, clean cooking champion lights an improved cookstove (GROOTS)

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