



GENDER EQUITY IN OFF-GRID SOLAR ENERGY SECTOR

Women are essential for the off-grid solar (OGS) sector's ability to fully embrace diversity and inclusivity to achieve universal energy access goals. The industry's limited gender inclusion across the customer base, workforce and leadership hinders the sector's full potential for impact and achieving SDG 7 before 2030.

In this vein, GOGLA and the World Bank Group (with support from the Energy Sector Management Assistance Program - ESMAP) set out to better understand the realities and resources that exist across the sector, among consumers, and within the workforce in an effort to promote an inclusive agenda for the

sector. In a recent survey of women working in the OGS sector, we examine the gender gaps that currently exist within the OGS sector and avenues to close the gap.

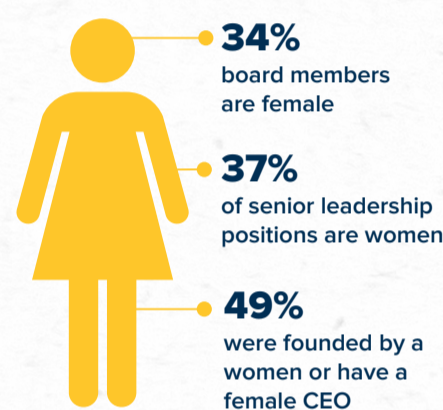
In particular, the questions surveyed

1. initiatives and products supporting gender equality;
2. leadership, workforce, and customer base;
3. professional networks for women with respect to individual and organizational participation.



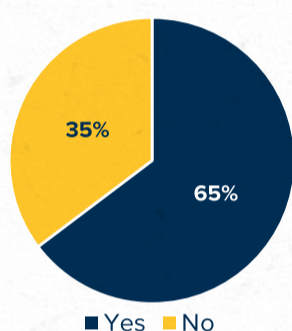
WORKFORCE & LEADERSHIP

Female leadership is on the rise.



But fundraising barriers continue to be limiting.

Almost two thirds of female founders experience additional barriers or biases when fundraising in comparison to their male peers. Reducing these barriers may enhance overall investment flows.



"I found it very difficult to raise funds due to segregation that is in the society of men."



"Investors asked me whether I plan to have children."

40% of the workforce are women

Of the respondent companies, about 40% of the workforce are women - although we believe this to be lower across the wider sector.



More women equals more women

Companies with higher proportion of women in senior positions were more likely to have higher number of women employees overall.



So what's the problem?

Persistent barriers to gender inclusion will prevent us from reaching SDG7. Constraints to increasing women's participation are often financial and/or cultural, which make women feel less secure and dis-empowered.



→ In the off-grid solar sector, **there are barriers to increasing gender inclusion across workforce, leadership and customer base.** These include financial and cultural constraints, fundraising barriers and limited collection of sex-disaggregated data.

→ We are only just starting to understand the sector's performance. **More market insights are needed** to shed more light on gender inclusion across investment, leadership, workforce and consumers; and to evaluate the impact of gender-based initiatives on business performance.

→ **There are currently no standards within the sector related to gender inclusion.** There is therefore a **need to develop standards and guidelines, disseminate (existing) tools, and convene key stakeholders** to further advance gender inclusion within the sector.



CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

Only 40% of respondent companies collecting sex-disaggregated customer data. About 45% of their customers are female.



There are several constraints to increase womens' inclusion in the customer base. We lack the understanding of female consumer behavior and standardized metrics to track their outcomes.

Lack of metrics

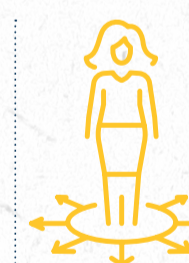


Half of respondents report a "lack of metrics" as the reason why they are not able to track the impact of OGS products on women (25%) and to help understand the needs of women customers (25%).

There is a need to better address female customer needs



To advance women's participation across the sector, **87%** of respondents report the need for gender focused impact metrics and/or the need to better address female customer needs.



When asked about additional activities, respondents listed female centric design — that include customer centered-need workshops for product/ initiative creation, delivery, and review.



Target

Almost two thirds of respondent companies have a formal target in place for new female hires. The target ranges from **33 to 60%** of women employees.



33% noticed an increase in female participation



17% noticed that women perceived a higher sense of ownership and empowerment



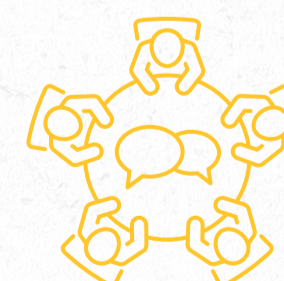
10% have seen an increase in women taking on leadership positions



7% perceived higher business development



5% noticed an increase in investments towards women led business



93% of respondents would like to join an industry-wide working group for gender inclusion.