

# Experiences from Gender-responsive energy cooperatives in Georgia

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# Gender and cooperatives



**“Shared influence and responsibilities are the key to cooperative excellence”**

*(ICA-resolution on Gender Equality in Cooperatives)*

- Democratic processes require shared decision-making between women and men
- Contribute to gender equality by expanding women's opportunities to participate in local economies
- Strong links between women's cooperative involvement and poverty reduction

**5 GENDER  
EQUALITY**



## **Global obligations for gender equality**

- SDGs: N° 5 and cross-sectional function
- Lima-Work-Programme on Gender

# Cooperatives' principles



- Voluntary and open membership
- Joint ownership and democratic control
- Autonomy and Independence
- Capacity-building, empowerment and information
- Cooperatives are learning organizations
- Cooperation among cooperatives
- Concern for community: active and locally based bottom-up dynamic

**→ Powerful vehicle for social inclusion and political, economic empowerment**

# Cooperatives' contribution to Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment



## Economic Empowerment

- Equal access to paid work
- Transition opportunities to formal economy
- Access to capital, financing, market places
- Gaining skills and knowledge
- Economic development in rural areas

## Improved Work conditions

- Fair and adequate earnings/equal pay for equal value of work
- Decent work in safe conditions
- Collective bargaining power
- Increased levels of participatory democracy in the workplace

## Social Empowerment

- Learning opportunities (e.g. training on technical skills, management)
- Affordable and accessible goods and services
- Improves self-esteem and confidence

# Women and energy

- Unpaid & unappreciated workload
- Lack of awareness on inequalities
- Inadequate structures for women's participation



# Women and energy



- Energy poverty has gender dimensions
  - No access to affordable and safe energy
  - Indoor pollution affects mostly health of women/children
  - Low income households live in less energy efficient houses
- Energy policies and programs need to be gender sensitive
  - Women are most primary **energy managers but not decision makers**
- Energy services and programs can promote women's skills and employment
  - Women are still not represented equally in energy leadership positions

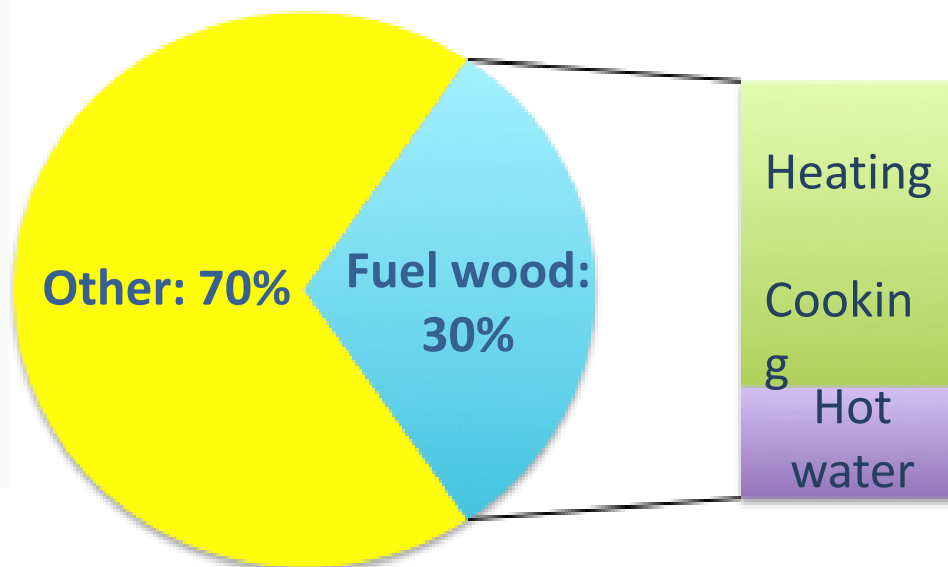
# Baseline situation

Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine



- Widespread **energy poverty** in rural areas
- Dependence on **fuel wood** for heating & cooking
- Inefficient stoves & poor insulation
- **Usage of non-sustainably managed firewood**

Household  
expenditures





# Baseline situation

Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine



- Firewood collection → **unpaid workload**
- Indoor combustion → **respiratory diseases**
- Climate-damaging **emissions**
- Unsustainably managed forest → **deforestation**

- Negative, multidimensional impacts
- Disproportional effect on women and children





# Baseline situation

Culture and society in former USSR-countries

- **Distrust** in authorities and official institutions
- Fragile social and cooperative structures
- Lack of experience with **civil society participation**



- **Traditional gender roles**
  - Immense workload for women
  - Barriers for women's participation

# Energy cooperatives

Social, economic and environmental benefits



# Energy cooperatives

Social, economic and environmental benefits

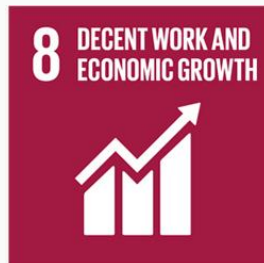
- Empowering women



- Reducing local energy poverty



- Strengthening local economy
- Generating jobs



- Providing clean, renewable and affordable energy



- Reducing GHG emissions
- Meeting national climate protection goals

# Project objectives and actions

- Increasing **energy independence**
  - **Raising awareness** on R.E.
  - **Reducing inequalities** by providing loans on equal terms
  - **Reducing labour burden**, especially for women
  - **Empowering** local citizens
  - **Strengthening** local economy
- Establishment of local **energy co-operatives** and **umbrella cooperative**
  - Founding **workshops**
  - **Trainings** on technologies, management, marketing
  - **Exchange** with local and international experts
  - **Public relations**





# Business model



## Local Energy Cooperatives

- Production, sale, installation and maintenance of RE-technologies
  - Operated by local, trained energy managers and craftsmen
- Every citizen can become a member
  - Bottom-up approach with small shares
  - Dividend from generated profits

## Umbrella Cooperative

- Membership of all local cooperatives
- Operation of production facility  
→ Economies of scale
- Certification mechanism for technologies
- Bundling of know-how
- Marketing and training for energy cooperatives
- Commitment for RE policies

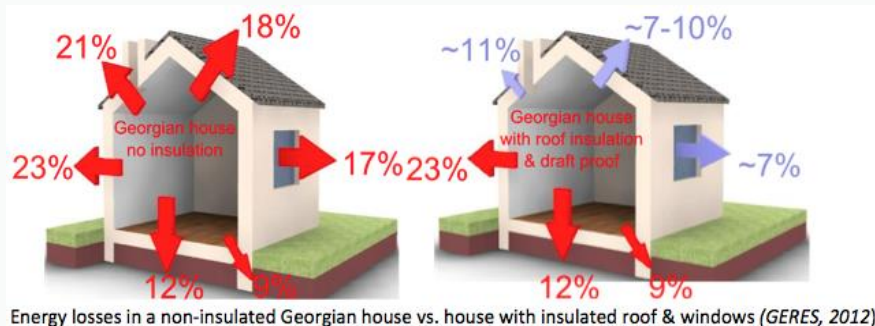
# Technologies



Fuel efficient stoves (FES)



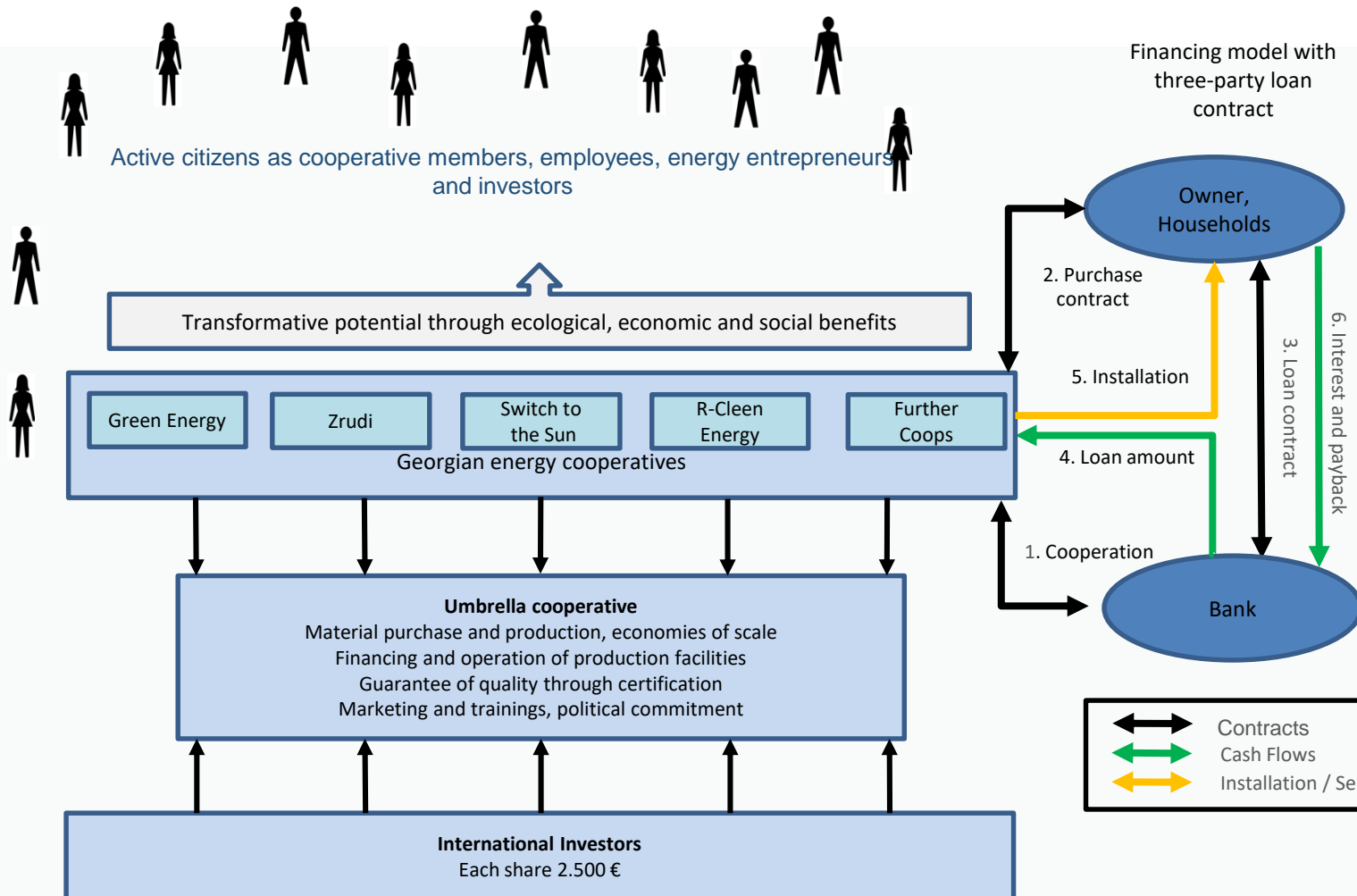
Solar Water Heaters (SWH)



Energy losses in a non-insulated Georgian house vs. house with insulated roof & windows (GERES, 2012)

Thermal Insulation (TI)

# Cooperative Business Model with Financial mechanism



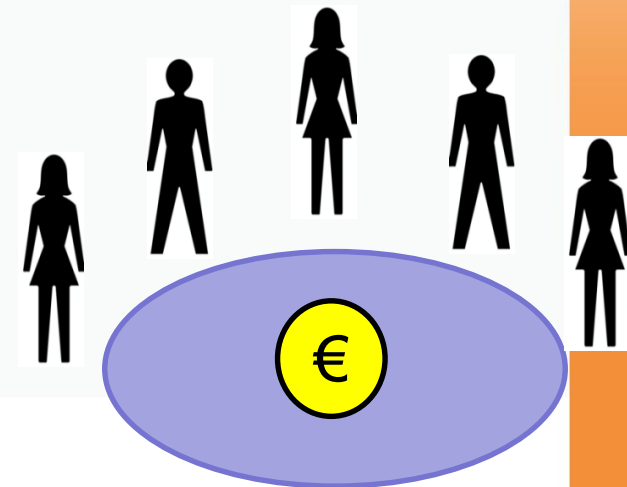


# Gender-just energy cooperatives



- Equal access to women in whole energy value chain: technologies, jobs, funding, dividend
- Reduce workload: save cost and time
- Provides control over energy production and consumption
- Foster women's empowerment & leadership
- Engage for cooperative gender and energy policy

→ **Beneficiary and people-centred approach**  
pays particular attention to  
small-scale and community-based  
actions, where women are  
over-represented



# Energy cooperatives in Georgia

## Achievements



**2015/2016: founding of 4  
energy cooperatives**



**More than 130 members,  
40% women**



**Trainings on technologies,  
management and marketing**



**Consultation, selling and  
installation of 50 solar  
collectors & increased  
demand**



**Special trainings for women on  
leadership and organization**



**Lobbying for national energy plan**

# Clear gender strategies

for equal participation of women and men



Questions or comments?

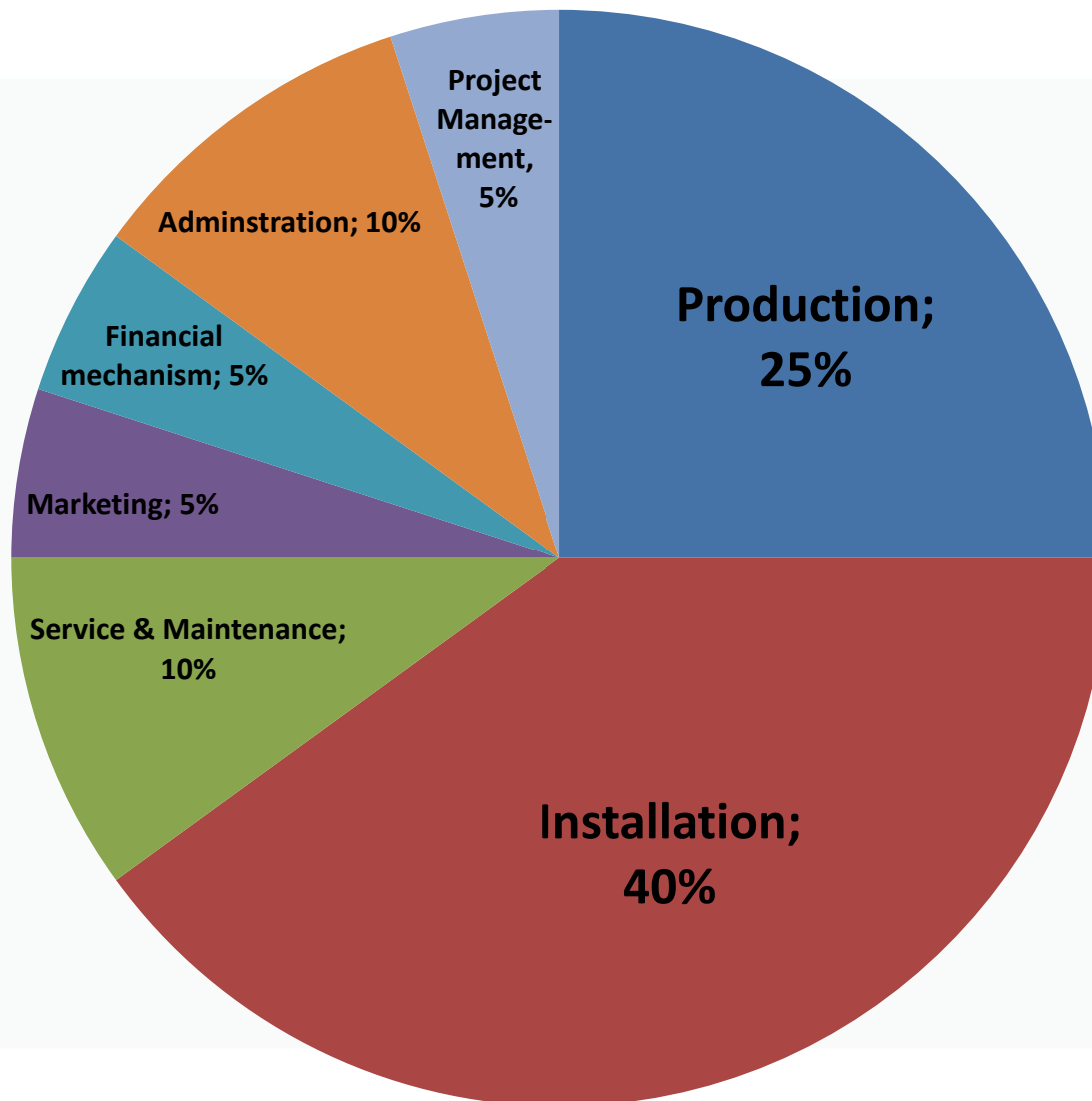
Thank you for your attention!

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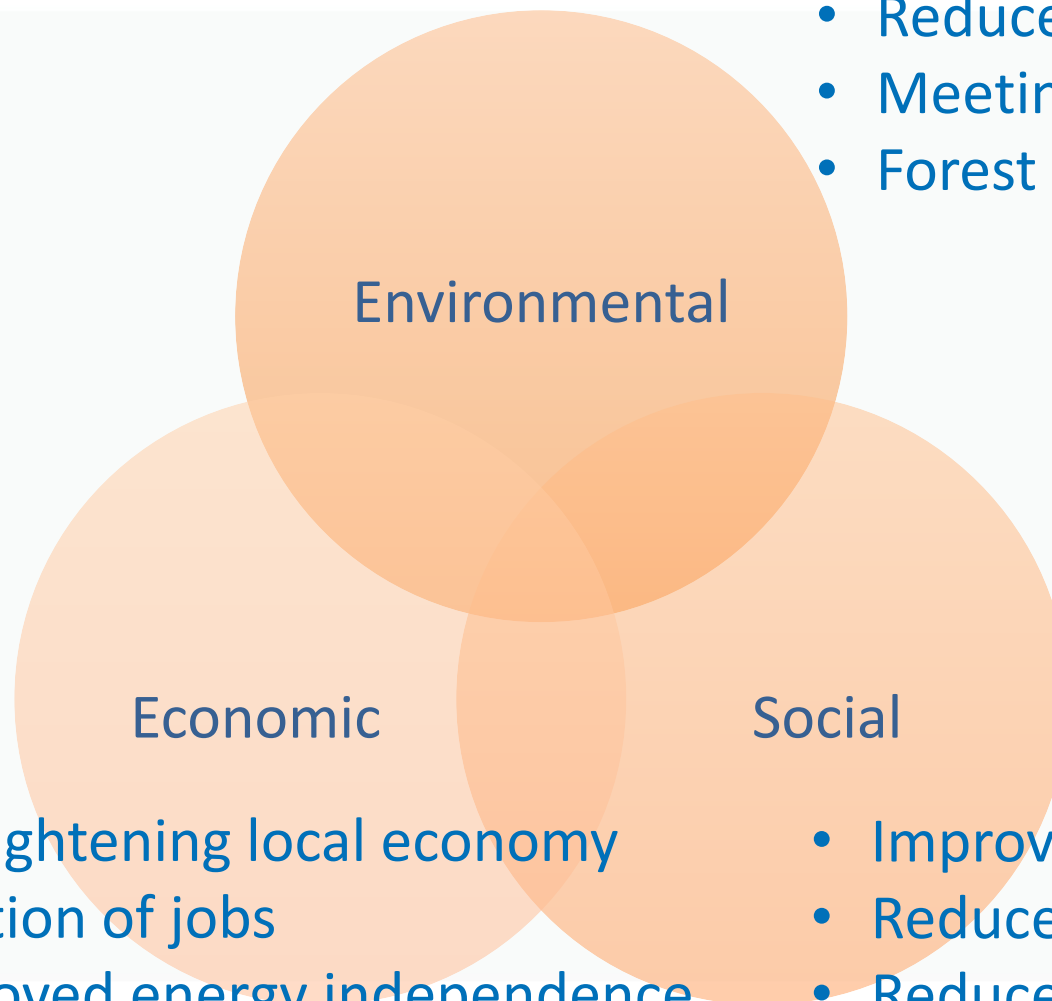
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# Creation of jobs



# Multiple co-benefits



- Reduced emissions
- Meeting SDGs & NDCs
- Forest protection

- Strengthening local economy
- Creation of jobs
- Improved energy independence

- Improved living standards
- Reduced labour burden
- Reduced inequalities

# Energy cooperatives

## Bodies

