



EmpowerMed

Empowering women to take action against energy poverty in the Mediterranean



Content



Photo credit : GERES

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What is energy poverty?

- **Energy poverty** occurs when a household cannot achieve the minimum level of domestic energy consumption required for satisfying basic needs and for an effective participation in society.
- Households affected by energy poverty may experience inadequate levels of essential energy services (e.g., indoor thermal discomfort), disproportionate energy expenses forcing them into undesirable decisions (e.g., the 'heat or eat' dilemma), or precarious access to energy (i.e., depending on unstable, insecure supply) Energy poverty results from structural inequalities in income distribution and access to quality housing, inadequate energy pricing and vulnerable consumer support policies, and diverse household energy needs and practices. It is a distinct form of material deprivation with an explicit gender dimension and demonstrated impacts on physical and mental health.



Photo credit : DOOR



Energy poverty key figures in Europe



57
million

people cannot keep their homes warm during winter



104
million

people cannot keep their homes comfortable during summer



52
million

people face delays in paying their energy bills

Source: EU Energy poverty observatory: energypoverty.eu



People affected by energy poverty



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People who are most affected by energy poverty are:

- Elderly
- Single parent families
- Unemployed
- Students
- Poor workers
- Women



Energy poverty in the Mediterranean

The coastal areas of Mediterranean countries suffer from specific issues that can lead to energy poverty:

- An important proportion of low income households;
- Tensions in real-estate market (due to tourism) that make it difficult for low income households to find adequate dwellings to satisfy their needs;
- Low insulation level of homes and a high level of deteriorated housing stock;
- Hot summers and low thermal comfort in summer, with a vulnerability to climate change as heat waves are becoming increasingly more frequent and intense;
- A lack of pre-installed central heating systems or low efficient and not well appropriated heating systems;
- An important reliance on expensive electricity-based forms of domestic heat.



Consequences of energy poverty

Energy poverty leads to thermal discomfort and affects **health and wellbeing**:

- **Deterioration of the housing conditions**: cold, damp, moisture...;
- **Economic difficulties**: unaffordable bills and debts, choices between food and warmth and the associated stress;
- **Social difficulties**: social isolation, degraded self-esteem...;
- **Health problems**: respiratory and circulatory diseases and conditions such as flu, cold, arthritis and rheumatisms, but also mental health problems.



Energy poverty and gender issues

- Women and women-led households are disproportionately affected by energy poverty.
- Due to labour division, women tend to spend more time working at home and thus are more exposed to energy poverty and its consequences.
- Single parents are the most affected group - in the EU, about 85% of single parents are women, their well-being is severely affected by financial and psychosocial burdens.



Benefits of tackling energy poverty



Photo credit : DOOR

Addressing energy poverty has the potential to bring multiple benefits including:

- less money spent by governments on health,
- reduced air pollution,
- better comfort and wellbeing,
- improved household budgets,
- reactivation of people,
- empowered and motivated households.



EmpowerMed objectives



Photo credit : DOOR

Overall objective of **EmpowerMed** is to contribute to **energy poverty alleviation and health improvement** of people affected by energy poverty in Mediterranean countries, with a particular focus on women, through:

- implementing practical solutions to empower over **10,000** people affected by energy poverty in the Mediterranean
- assessing the impacts of those measures to formulate local, national and EU policy recommendations
- promoting policy solutions for tackling energy poverty at local, national and EU level among **220** decision-makers, **560** social actors, **100** utilities, **180** health experts and **100** energy poverty experts.



Activities

Mobilisation
of key local
actors

Capacity
building of
key actors
and partners

Household
energy
visits

Collective
assemblies

Analysis and
design of
recommendations
for tackling
energy poverty

Advocacy of
gender-just
energy poverty
policy solutions

«Do It
Yourself»
workshops

Health
workshops



Pilot areas

Practical measures are implemented in 6 pilot areas with large partnerships approach



Albania
Croatia
France
Italy
Slovenia
Spain



EmpowerMed in Slovenia

- **Pilot area:** coastal cities **Koper, Piran and Izola** - 86,000 inhabitants
 - Recipients of regular social support: 3%
 - Key local actors: local centres for social work, Caritas and Red Cross, pensioner's associations, local health groups, groups that link local communities
 - Context: the Slovenian government is running a national program for visits for households in energy poverty and facing an insufficient interest for visits
- **EmpowerMed actions:**
 - Household visits with installation of energy saving devices
 - Collective assemblies
 - Health workshops
 - Do-it-yourself workshops
 - Providing support to households to access subsidies for energy efficiency measures, given by the government.



EmpowerMed in Spain

- **Pilot area: Metropolitan area of Barcelona** – 5.5 million inhabitants
 - 24 % of the population is at risk of poverty or social exclusion. In the city of Barcelona, from this population at risk, 55% are women. More than 100,000 households are in energy poverty conditions.
 - Key local actors: Barcelona City Council's Energy Advisory Points and equivalent offices or social services in other municipalities of the metropolitan area and incumbent electricity and natural gas suppliers
 - Context: vulnerable households are at risk of electricity or gas disconnection because of their already precarious situations. In most of these households there are women and children.
- **EmpowerMed actions:**
 - Organisation of collective assemblies on energy and health issues to empower households at risk of (or suffering) disconnection from energy supply and other.
 - Energy DIY workshops on how to read and understand energy bills, and to provide advice on how to access funding for energy efficiency, e.g., grants for building retrofits.
 - Counselling sessions for affected households to appropriately address the emotional and mental health dimensions of energy poverty.



EmpowerMed in Croatia

- **Pilot area: Zadar** – 75,000 inhabitants
 - Situated on the Adriatic coast, it's the fifth largest city in Croatia
 - Around 5-6 % of the population receive a form of social support (guaranteed minimal allowance, one-time support, disability support or housing support) and 2% benefit from a support for winter fuel payment
 - Context: 2 previous projects (Fiesta and REACH) highlighted the need for more focus on energy poverty in Mediterranean climate and coastal areas.
 - Households are traditionally mostly women-led, taking care of the energy bills, but with a lack of basic energy literacy and any energy efficiency intervention planning
 - Local key actors: local authority representatives, social actors, health experts and local NGOs
- **EmpowerMed actions:**
 - Energy visits with energy saving devices installation mainly targeting women-led households (single mothers, mothers of multiple members, pensioners, widows) but also households with issues on energy
 - Collective event on energy and health, and do it yourself events for households



EmpowerMed in Italy

- **Pilot area: Municipality of Padova** - 200,000 inhabitants
- Important University center: about 60,000 students
- 8-9% families with arrears on energy bills in Italy. In Padova, large part of the monetary support to families in need is for the payment of energy bills
- The most vulnerable population, which is living in poor energy efficient buildings thereby worsening their energy poverty situation, is composed by the families living in public housing, single-parent families and the elderly.
- Local key actors: Informambiente - the Environmental institutional communication service of the Municipality of Padova, social services, University of Padova, Italian Energy Poverty Observatory (OIPE), religious communities, local NGOs and associations, schools
- **EmpowerMed actions:**
 - Energy visits for public housing households
 - Collective assemblies to support households needs
 - Workshops on energy and health, simple solutions and financial incentives for energy saving



EmpowerMed in France

- **Pilot area: the Metropolitan area of Aix Marseille Provence** – 1.8 million inhabitants
 - 9% of households have energy expenditures above 15% of their disposable income. There is a poverty rate of more than 25% in Marseille, exceeding 50% for one district.
 - The potentially unworthy housing stock is estimated at 40,000, representing 100,000 people.
 - Key local actors: social housing organizations, social centers, local citizens associations (including women organizations), charitable organisations, vocational integration companies for the energy measures implementation
- **EmpowerMed actions:**
 - Training of energy advisors and implementation of energy visits for low income households identified by local partners in regular contact with the population
 - Collective workshops on energy and health issues for vulnerable households
 - Gender approaches will be investigated to better understand observations that remain informal so far (more women in need, women more warmly welcomed as energy advisors than their male counterparts in households...) and to better adapt the solutions
 - Focus on Mediterranean challenges: summer comfort energy affordable measures will be investigated



EmpowerMed in Albania

- **Pilot area: Vlorë** - 117,000 inhabitants
 - It's the third largest municipality in Albania situated on the coast
 - Energy poverty: the poorest households spend more than 35% of their incomes on electricity bills, and houses of vulnerable groups are often damp and cold in winter because it's unaffordable for low income households to heat their homes properly, so risks on health are high.
 - Key local actors: Municipality and Region Council of Vlorë, University of Vlorë, local CSOs, health experts and vocational schools.
- **EmpowerMed actions:**
 - Energy visits will be implemented with a training of energy auditors from vocational schools and consultants by universities
 - Do it yourself workshops on solar photovoltaic installations
 - Awareness raising actions on health and energy



EmpowerMed expected results and impacts



Photo credit : GERES

- **10,200** people empowered to tackle energy poverty
- Engaging over **1000** key actors
- **6** pilot areas
- At least **60%** of women participants
- Contributions to policy: **8** policies or measures recommended
- Primary energy savings: **6.5 GWh/year**
- Reduction of CO2 emissions: **1,600 t CO2/year**
- Investments in sustainable energy: **160,000 €**
- Economic savings: **780,000 €**



EmpowerMed Partners

The logo for Focus Association for Sustainable Development. It features the word "focus" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font on a dark green background. Below it, in a smaller white font, is "društvo za sonaraven razvoj".

focus

društvo za sonaraven razvoj

Focus Association for Sustainable Development (*Focus društvo za sonaraven razvoj*, Slovenia) is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit and apolitical association. Focus works on the following areas: climate change, energy, sustainable mobility, global responsibility, ethical consumption and degrowth.

Focus is coordinating EmpowerMed project

DOOR (Društvo za oblikovanje održivog razvoja, Croatia) is a civil society organization of experts devoted to the promotion of sustainable energy development, founded in 2003. DOOR has successfully implemented more than 100 projects with goals ranging from climate change mitigation, encouraging citizens' participation in sustainable energy policy-making, improving education about renewable energy sources and alleviating energy poverty.



DOOR

The logo for SOGESCA. It features a blue circular icon with a white arrow pointing upwards and to the right, followed by the word "SOGESCA" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font.

SOGESCA

SOGESCA (Italy) is a consultancy and engineering company active since 1986, specialized in environmental, work safety and energy efficiency issues. SOGESCA provides highly experienced consulting services to companies and public bodies at local, national and international level. It offers highly professional support in environmental, safety and energy auditing, management systems designing and updating, permit services, due diligence, energy efficiency projects, planning, integrated management of waste, water, energy and other related issues.



EmpowerMed Partners



Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain). The Institute of Environmental Science and Technology of Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (ICTA-UAB) is a multidisciplinary centre that promotes academic research and postgraduate education in the environmental sciences. It aims to improve our understanding of global environmental change, and the nature and causes of environmental problems. In addition, it studies policies, strategies and technologies to foster a transition to a sustainable economy.

Institut de Recerca en Energia de Catalunya (Spain) contributes to the sustainable development of society and increase corporate competitiveness via: Innovation and development of new technological products; Medium and long-term research; and Development of scientific and technological knowledge in the field of energy.



Set up in 1976, Geres (France) is a development NGO working in Europe, Africa and Asia to improve living conditions and fighting against climate change and its impacts. In the interests of ambitious societal change, it encourages the development and rollout of innovative, locally-based solutions, it supports territorial climate and energy policies and mobilize all stakeholders around Climate Solidarity, urging them to take action and stand up for the most vulnerable.



EmpowerMed Partners



The Catalan Association of Engineering Without Borders (Spain) is an Association of development cooperation. It is formed by professionals, teachers and students, mainly volunteers, who work to guarantee universal access to basic services, accompanying social change and strengthening of the populations, always respecting the cultural and technical characteristics. It works to build a fair and united global society and to put technology at the service of human development.

WOMEN IN EUROPE FOR A COMMON FUTURE (Germany) is a nonprofit network dedicated to a gender just and healthy planet for all which consists of over 150 women's and civil society organisation implementing projects in 50 countries. It works on transformative gender equality and women's human rights in interconnection with climate justice, sustainable energy & chemicals, less toxic waste, safe water & sanitation for all.



Milieucontact Albania has 20 years of experience working with civil society on environment, nature and sustainable development as well as with authorities dealing with these issues in Albania. Three elements are leading in its work: building capacities, involving citizens and solving environmental problems. It stimulates and supports the involvement and empowerment of citizens and develops processes of participative strategy and decision making. It connects these processes to concrete solutions for environmental problems.





THANK YOU

To find your local partnership, please visit our website :

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