



*Application form submitted by the initiatives to participate in the Transformative Cities People's Choice Award (2021-2022)*

GENERAL INFORMATION	
<b>Location:</b>	Gaza, Palestine
<b>Title of the Transformative Initiative:</b>	100% renewable energy for Gaza
<b>Name of organization:</b>	PENGON-FOE Palestine
<b>Type of organization:</b>	The Palestinian Environmental NGOs Network (Friends of Earth Palestine) coordinates joint campaigns and activities between 16 Palestinian environmental organizations.
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="http://www.pengon.org">www.pengon.org</a>
<b>Category and Edition:</b>	ENERGY. Transformative Cities Award 4 <sup>o</sup> edition (2021-2022)
STORYTELLING	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>Finding significant solution for Energy scarcity in Gaza. The scheme eliminates darkness in Gaza by bringing clean energy into community hands, with a special focus on empowering women as Sustainable Energy Leaders brings women together to transform the energy system in Palestine and lead the decision- making processes in clean energy sector.</p>	
<b>Context and problem definition</b>	
<p>In Gaza, <b>One Million</b> peoples who are the most vulnerable people to energy scarcity. Through the initiatives we've targeted 900 families in Gaza, 6 schools of 6000 students (4000 Female:2000 Male) near 20 women CBOs, and 25 Palestinian organizations. In addition to that PENGON leads the planning for just recovery renewable energy for Gaza.</p> <p>PENGON coordinates efforts to resist and highlight Israel's control over natural resources and violations against the environment in Palestine. This means coordinating a group of 16 Palestinian environmental NGOs. In recent years this has included lobbying and advocating</p>	

for clean energy, building the capacity of Palestinian environmental groups and visiting communities affected by energy scarcity.

While implementing these activities, it became understood that there are differentiated impacts of energy scarcity on women, and that women's participation in the renewable energy sector as a whole was not visible nor supported, with women remaining under-represented in decision-making bodies and processes. This project was set up to support women's participation and leadership in the context of low social acceptance and little State support for women taking on such roles. This project gives the women space to build their skills at community level and organisational level, and to be more active in lobbying and advocacy spaces for influencing gender laws and energy policies. Whereas much of the capacity and many resources already existed, they were scattered in different projects across the member organizations. PENGON brought them together for this initiative.

Currently, the political situation in Palestine gave the initiatives an added value, the forced annexation decision and its consequences of increasing the Israeli pressure on Palestinians to cut off the supplied energy to Palestinians, that makes investments in clean energy sector more priority to increase the energy indecency.

In 2016 – 2017, PENGON project coordinators were working with communities most affected by energy scarcity and they realized that the most active organizations in these communities were women's organizations (either women-run or mixed but with a significant role for women). Coordinators learned about the differentiated impacts of energy scarcity on women, and as a result of these findings and this growing understanding, PEN- GON / FoE Palestine realized the importance of a specific focus on women's participation and leadership in the clean energy sector and planned the 2018 project accordingly. In 2018-2020, therefore, they have chosen to continue to work with these women CSO and CBOs, in this way collectively empowering the women within these organizations and also giving them visibility. PENGON/ FoE Palestine works at institutional level to strengthen women role in their institutions and empower them to be active and influence in their positions. The project has been funded by the Dutch programme Fair, Green and Global (FGG). The project is carried out by PEN-GON with assistance and monitoring from Friends of the Earth International.

### **Design and Implementation**

This year Gaza entered 15 years of Blockade which is the main reason for darkness in Gaza. That's why PENGON lead finding solution toward clean energy transformation in Gaza. PENGON planned for renewable energy for Gaza. And targeted the decision makers in order to put the practical steps to implement the plan. Through PENGON work, gender needs and demands always raised, that's why one of the initiates is implementing solar

ovens for 900 families to develop the life quality for Palestinian families mainly women. In addition to developing the water quality for children in schools.

Social acceptance of women in leadership roles in Palestinian society is very low – especially in the Bedouin communities – and subject to resistance from male family members and leaders. This could act as an obstacle to the carrying out of activities. To address this, women-only capacity building spaces have been organised, where women feel able to participate freely and to interact with each other. Also, the project organisers are also organising workshops with the communities to discuss the importance of women’s participation, with the aim of strengthening social acceptance for this role and of discussing the kinds of actions that are supportive of this role.

Furthermore, women’s organisations and women are participating from the very beginning of activities – for example, in initial workshops for the ‘Resource Guide’ and ‘Legal Review’, in interviews for the factsheet, in interviews for the video – and therefore women’s experiences, analyses, needs, demands and ideas will input strongly into the processes and discussions that will determine the content of the communications products and the recommendations that will be presented.

Social and legal change takes time in all societies, and the short project period represents a significant challenge to achieving its gender justice objectives.

The lobbying work in order to implement the renewable energy plan for Gaza will be continued by targeting the government, private sector, and different donors.

## **Results achieved and Evaluation**

Ending the darkness of Gaza by transforming energy in Gaza to clean energy is the sustainable solution for the energy scarcity in Gaza that depressed the people life in Gaza. As the beginning steps of implementing the plan of clean energy in Gaza, the implementation of different clean energy initiatives will develop the environmental situation, the quality of life in Gaza. During the last years, In the initiatives of empowering women as sustainable energy leaders is very ambitious in its overall objective of empowering women to be active in the clean energy sector decision making processes. The project aims to build on the capacity and learnings from previous energy scarcity projects in the region and to further support women’s participation and leadership. From a gender justice perspective, the evolution of clean energy projects in the region, from a service-providing initiative to one which places women’s participation and prominence at the center, is one key result.

The project has given visibility to women's CSO and CBOs working on energy scarcity, which have become an institutional reference from a gender justice perspective for other environmental organisations.

Given the collective input of women, the recommendations put forward in the activity outputs are potentially transformative in nature, because the process of developing them recognises and gives strength to women's agency, and the recommendations themselves support and give visibility to women's demands and their knowledge and ideas for solutions and alternatives. The ideas and content of these recommendations are built into the key political messages and demands for PENGON's mobilization and advocacy strategies, and communications materials open up dialogue with society.

Women needs and demands, this network is linked to the decision makers and business incubators to motivate working in this sector. Furthermore, the targeted women CBOs presented clean energy initiatives, mainly these initiatives aim to empower women economically depending on clean energy source, or solving environmental problems depending on clean energy source.

In 2021 PENGON leads the planning for just recovery renewable energy for Gaza. This plan presents sustainable solution for energy scarcity and Gaza. This plan was adopted by Palestinian Energy Authority and presented and discussed with different donors in order to transform energy in Gaza to clean energy. Moreover, PENGON in cooperation with our members in Gaza, implemented 2 impactful projects; The first was "distillation units in 6 schools in Gaza depending on solar energy. The aim of this project is solving the salinity problem in the drinking water. The second project was Solar Oven supplying 900 families (8 capita/ family) with energy for cooking depending on solar energy.

### **Political Strategies**

In 2021, PENGON Lead Clean energy planning and lobbying work toward energy transforming in Gaza to clean energy. Capacity-building advocacy workshops were carried out with all project stakeholders - communities, women's organisations, and environmental organisations / PENGON members. From these workshops a Resource Guide was developed, to act as a reference document for energy practitioners and professionals, with the objective of supporting them to mainstream gender in their programmes, policies and projects, throughout the project cycle, and includes information on gender responsive budgeting and gender planning and tools in the energy sector.

PENGON also organised workshops and community meetings and interviews that focused on energy demands, ways to decrease the impact of energy scarcity on women and how to increase energy accessibility for women. From this, a Clean Energy Factsheet has been produced, focusing on the gender-based dimensions of energy scarcity and clean energy

such as the impacts of energy scarcity on women, women's role in saving energy, the gender perspective in energy planning, etc. Based on the information given in the interviews, the factsheet also includes recommendations for the government that are expected to include financing for women in their communities to support their role as clean energy leaders.

In addition, PENGON hired a consultant to carry out a legal review of energy laws, regulations and policies from a gender perspective, and make recommendations for the Palestinian authorities on how to guarantee this perspective. This has been used as a lobby tool with the government.

PENGON has also mobilized women's groups to take part in Friends of the Earth International's Global Week of Action for Climate Justice, in cooperation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs. Slogans and political messages were inspired by the demands of the materials produced during the project. The action included a lobbying activity, with prioritization of women's participation.

PENGON focused on the most marginalized people mainly women in Gaza, who suffers from energy scarcity due to Israeli siege and Palestinian division, so we tried to influence in the national clean energy laws, as the Palestinian division is a limit for influencing the laws in Gaza. so we have targeted the political parties to push the energy file to be included in the Palestinian negotiations.

PENGON works together with its' members to implement the clean energy initiatives on the ground to put the energy between the community hands.

### **Communication and Cultural Strategies**

Different activities were promoted at local level using different media tools. National events were organized in order to widen the network and linking women with decision makers, private sector, and donors.

The best 5 women clean energy initiatives promoted in different ways, a special booklet was published to promote these initiatives. TV interviews were made in order to disseminate the impact of the activities, in addition to media articles that highlight women initiatives.

PENGON worked on a fact sheet that analysed the impact of energy scarcity on women in Gaza. Also worked on a film that reflect the impact of clean energy projects on women mainly how it empowers them and strengthen their participation in decision making process, how they are aware more about gender mainstreaming in policies, programs and how this project developed their lobbying skills.

### **Resources, Financing and Transformative Economy**

Through our initiatives we have targeted poor people with low income and their electricity bills reached to zero cost by depending on clean energy source, so these projects support these families indirectly. Also, PENGON could replace dirty energy and expensive source into clean energy source with free cost for the 900 families.

In addition to that in Gaza, there is a huge problem in energy access so by implementing our initiatives, gives hundreds of families and institutions energy access.

Main part of the initiatives is capacity building for the targeted communities. Technical capacity building was organized, how to operate their projects and maintain them. So we give them the power and train them to operate the power.

Other part is capacity building in lobbying and influencing in the national polices, we have focused on women to raise their voices and be able to raise their needs, by influencing in the national polices, a national network was built, this network included, WCBOs, ENGOs, private sector, and related governmental bodies in addition to interested donors.

### **Related legislations**

Many of the activities have been designed in such a way that they include participation of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Energy and Natural resources. Governmental minis- tries are considered to be a key stakeholder of this project, and through workshops and lobbying efforts trust and understanding has been built. As a result of the lobbying work, in 2020 Ministry of women affairs took an active part in building the capacity of the gender unit in the Energy Authority to be active and influence in the planning and national clean energy strategy to be sensitive to women needs. There are successes in modifying the bylaws in the clean energy law, motivations and some criteria were considered to mainstream gender in the strategic planning. Some changes, ministries will take forward the policy or law changes recommended in the Legal Review.

### **Ecological Transitions**

PENGON and its members brought people powered electricity to more than 900 households in Gaza Strip and replaced the dirty energy source by solar energy. These communities are suffering from energy scarcity in addition to that the source of energy came from Israel which depends on burning coal. by this initiative a clean energy source was created and promoted.

PENGON is also moving towards changing legislatives to save the environment by increasing Palestinian update of clean energy sources, and emphasize the gender dynamics in this field by focusing on the role of women in environmental sustainability and clean energy.

### Lessons learned

1. There is no impossible to change the situation even it is catastrophic situation, in the opposite, the hard situation encourages people to investigate more to find solutions. Always the nature in the destination for solutions.
2. Energy scarcity impacts on women in different ways to men, yet women are very rarely consulted on energy solutions.
3. Tackling this inequity should not be understood as simply promoting improvements to women's lives within their traditional roles, but by also challenging the patriarchal structure of society.
4. Societal change takes time, and the whole community must be involved in order to accelerate the acceptance of women in decision-making processes.

### EXTRA INFO

#### Supporting documents

**People power in Action: Women leading Palestine's energy transformation**

**A Just Recovery Renewable Energy Plan for Gaza: Opportunities and Challenges**

**PENGON map**