

A nexus understanding of energy poverty – part 2

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Food and energy interdependencies

- **Energy use (non-use) dictates decisions about urban gardening and making zimmna, from the point of seeding to the point of consumption.**
- The way zimmna is prepared is also closely linked to the use (or non use) of energy at the point of consumption.
- Vulnerable people do prepare zimmna in a way which it does not need to be cooked, heated up or refrigerated.
- What energy and how much energy will be available and used for the making of zimmna and its consumption can shape practices of urban gardening (what to grow, when to plant); and how zimmna is prepared, stored and consumed.
- The way zimmna is made and prepared is shaped by and shapes energy access and use, and can affect how urban gardening is practiced (for example, when produce is picked).

The WEF nexus and fuel poverty

- **This interconnectedness and interdependence of food, water and energy in everyday practices can lead to nexus aggravations and have direct impact on energy affordability.**
- Making zimnina can be more energy and water intensive for vulnerable groups as they tend to wash, sterilize and cook the jars and produce at a high temperature to ensure that the zimnina lasts until the end of the winter (often more than 6 months).
- Thus, making zimnina to address food vulnerability could end up exacerbating energy poverty.
- **Making zimnina and urban gardening should be understood as means of energy redistribution and control across space and seasons, rather than hobbies (which implies choice).**

A nexus approach to tackling fuel poverty

- Currently those assessed to be living in fuel poverty are provided with a cash payment during the winter months (November till March) which in some cases is paid directly to the energy provider. It rarely lifts people out of fuel poverty and provides just another way to pay for energy.
- A nexus approach which recognises the interdependencies between the provisioning and consumption of water, food and energy through everyday practices like zimmna making and urban gardening builds on existing ways for energy consumers (especially vulnerable ones) to practice energy and non-energy interventions for redistributing resources and manage energy use throughout the year.
- **An inclusive approach: redistributing resources and energy through nexus interdependencies enhances the agency of otherwise marginalized users, such as vulnerable consumers, to control their access to and the affordability of energy services.**

A nexus approach to tackling fuel poverty

- Such an approach moves away from economic metrics of fuel poverty (such as percentage of household income) and focuses on the trade offs that access and affordability of energy have on other aspects of people's lives.
- A non-energy fuel poverty intervention in Sofia could involve providing support for urban gardening and making zimnina, which could range from access to land suitable for urban gardening in the city to tools and access to water and zimnina making facilities.
- This would mean that fuel poverty support will not take place only during the winter months but for most of the year (as urban gardening can take place from March until November, and gardens in Sofia can produce vegetables such as broccoli and spinach even during the winter months).

Thank you for watching!

Do get in touch:

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References & further readings

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- **For more details about the case study you can visit the Resnexus project website at: www.renexus.org**