IEA Fuel Poverty Workshop #1:
EVALUATING THE CO-BENEFITS OF LOW-INCOME WEATHERISATION PROGRAMMES

27-28 January 2011
Dublin Castle, Ireland
Fuel poverty directly affects IEA Member countries

- Energy efficiency
- Housing quality
- Energy prices
- Income level
- Fuel payments
- Social tariffs
Co-Benefits of Low-Income Energy Efficiency

Reduced emissions

Improved human health

Local employment

Improved community appearance

Local spending

Reduced energy infrastructure costs

Fewer energy subsidies

Higher property values

Reduced unwanted mobility

and more…
Key Workshop Questions

- What co-benefits are most relevant to fuel poverty policy decision-making?
- Do non-participant benefits count in evaluating low-income energy efficiency?
- How can we improve the link between evaluation and decision making?
- What new approaches and methods are most promising to advance co-benefits evaluation?
- How can IEA Member countries collaborate on fuel poverty and low-income energy efficiency policies and evaluation?
Preliminary Workshop Observations

Fuel poverty definitions are important
- Boardman 10% rule; Energy insecurity index; EU twice-the-median; Energy precariousness
- Data availability
- Comparability: do we need a climactic differentiator?
- Policy relevance

However defined fuel poverty is growing
- 1 in 5 households in UK and France
- 44% in Northern Ireland
- More than half in some Transition Economies

Co-benefits are large but largely excluded
- 2-3 times energy benefits
- Certain co-benefits (jobs, children’s health) stand out

Co-benefits evaluation methods are scattered
- Massachusetts regulator
- Wisconsin study of economic development benefits
- ORNL study
Preliminary Observations (Con.)

- Be cautious in developing new methods
  - Potential for double-counting
  - Persistence of benefits
  - Difficulty in measuring multiple benefit streams & beneficiaries

- Nature of evaluation is different
  - Demonstrate causal chains through clinical evidence
    - Cold-related deaths are indoor-cold-related
    - Anxiety depression halved after reducing FP
    - Asthma – mold connection
  - Does survey research even work for FP policy?
  - Developing relationships between previously-unlinked data
    - Housing conditions data
    - Health costs
    - Education

- Be realistic about the potential of EE
  - In N. Ireland, no amount of EE will eliminate FP
  - EE can never replace the need for LIHEAP-type income supplements
Other Take-Aways

- Benefit Entitlement Checks as an FP reduction strategy
- Warmth as medicine
- Smart pre-payment meters
  - Overturns pre-payment stigmata
  - Builds customer-provider rapport
- Extend research on LIHEAP-health outcomes to include WAP-health outcomes?
- The chicken-and-egg evaluation problem
  - Regulators/governments must accept benefits premise before investment in new evaluation methods can take place
Next Steps for the IEA

- Update concept note, compile discussion notes and develop a Workshop Report
- Identify opportunities for collaboration on co-benefits evaluation research
- In parallel, develop additional avenues of low-income energy efficiency policy work
  - Mobilizing private sector investment
  - Regulatory approaches
- Seek out working partners
  - IEA member country governments
  - NGOS
  - Private sector