

Gender Aspects of Climate Change:

Reflections from CARE's Experience in Asia

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Key Themes

- The importance of considering gender inequality as a contributing factor to vulnerability when planning for adaptation to climate change
- The need to plan climate change adaptation and mitigation activities with women's priorities and needs in mind
- Climate change interventions as an opportunity for women's empowerment

Bangladesh

Gender inequality as a contributing factor to vulnerability



Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change (RVCC) Project

- 4.5 year initiative, completed in 2006
- Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Canada Climate Change Development Fund (CCCCDF)
- Implemented in 6 districts in the southwest region of Bangladesh
- Goal: to increase capacity of communities in southwest Bangladesh to adapt to the adverse effects of climate change

Gender Context in Bangladesh

- Patriarchal system controls women's mobility, roles and responsibilities and sexuality
- Emphasis on women's reproductive value, therefore less access to higher education for girls
- Majority of rural women workers are involved in the informal sector and subsistence activities
- Women's participation in politics and economic activities is limited



Examining Vulnerability

- Project conducted a participatory vulnerability assessment to determine climate-related vulnerability issues and how climate affects household well-being
- Assessments were conducted separately for groups of men and women
- Clear differences between the results for men's groups and for women's groups
- Women tended to prioritize health, housing and water
- Men focused on income and food security

Gender Aspects of Vulnerability

- Women and children are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters
- Women are primarily responsible for gathering water, fodder and fuel
- They are also responsible for looking after the home and children
- Discriminatory laws and social practices reduce access to resources and increase women's vulnerability



Indonesia

Considering women's needs and priorities in climate change activities



Forest Resource Management for Carbon Sequestration (FORMACS)

- 3.5 year initiative, completed in 2005
- Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Canada Climate Change Development Fund (CCCDF)
- Implemented in 36 villages in Nunukan District in East Kalimantan
- Goal: Forest dwelling communities in Kalimantan achieve a sustainable household livelihood security that maintains carbon stocks and increases carbon sequestration

Gender Context in Indonesia

DAILY ACTIVITIES FOR AGABAG MEN AND WOMEN IN KALIMANTAN, INDONESIA			
Adult Males		Adult Females	
05:00-06:00	Get up, bath, check traps, drink coffee, and chat with friends.	04:00-06:00	Get up, boil water, prepare coffee/tea, make breakfast, wash dishes, clean the house and look after children
06:00-07:30	Eat breakfast, drink tea/coffee, chat	06:00-07:30	Eat breakfast, look for vegetables
07:30-09:00	Drink tea/coffee, chat	07:30-10:00	Work in the garden
09:00-11:00	Set fish traps, work in garden, check traps	10:00-11:00	Wash clothes, bath, clean the house
11:00-13:00	Eat lunch, rest	11:00-13:00	Housework, preparing lunch, eat lunch
13:00-14:00	Check traps, fish, hunt	13:00-14:00	Housework
14:00-15:00	Work in the garden	15:00-16:00	Gather vegetable for supper, gather firewood, clean house, wash dishes.
18:00-19:00	Bath	18:00-19:00	Cook supper, bath, clear house, fetch water.
19:00-20:00	Eat supper	19:00-20:00	Eat supper, wash dishes
20:00-22:00	Watch TV, chat, drink coffee	20:00-22:00	Watch TV, make handicrafts, put children to sleep
22:00-05:00	Sleep	22:00-04:00	Sleep
Source: Ika Francisca, Project Manager for Gender and Equity, FORMACS Project, CARE International Indonesia, East Kalimantan			

Integrating Gender at the Project Level

- Gender equality practiced in staff hiring
- Gender expert included on the Project Advisory Board
- Gender analysis integrated into training for community facilitators
- Baseline surveys defined and quantified gender issues in relation to health, education, agriculture, resource management and community participation
- Women involved in monitoring and evaluating project activities for gender equality effectiveness



Integrating Gender into Activities

- Project worked with progressive elements of communities to overcome barriers to participation
- Literacy to improve access to information
- Separate meetings and training sessions were held for men and for women
- Women's meetings held at convenient times
- Women's leadership in CBOs was encouraged
- Men were encouraged to become involved in activities such as child care and fetching water and fuel

Timor Leste

Climate change interventions as an opportunity for empowerment



Basic Project Information

- 3.5 year initiative, completed in 2005
- Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) through the Canada Climate Change Development Fund (CCCCDF)
- Implemented in 12 villages in two districts in Central Timor Leste
- Goal: to maintain carbon stocks and increase carbon sequestration through the development of community-based natural resource management systems that would simultaneously improve livelihood security

Empowerment Efforts

- Women's participation in training encouraged
- Fifteen women's farmer groups formed
- Women's groups provided with seeds and technical support for home gardens
- Emphasis on joint responsibility of men, women and children in agroforestry activities
- Women involved in community evaluation of project activities (30-35% of participants)



Evidence of Empowerment

- Female staff gained confidence and became more proactive in project team and communities
- % of women directly involved in farm development increased from 16% to 30% by end of project
- Women were active participants in reforestation efforts
- Some women's groups began group marketing of surplus vegetables from home gardens
- Two communities incorporated gender issues into traditional NRM regulations

Final Thoughts

- Vulnerability analysis must consider differential circumstances of women and other marginalized groups
- Need to consider potential negative impact of interventions on women
- Women have a great deal of knowledge regarding environmental change and coping strategies that can inform adaptation initiatives
- Women's participation in natural resource management helps ensure that activities are appropriate and sustainable
- Ensuring this participation remains a challenge

