

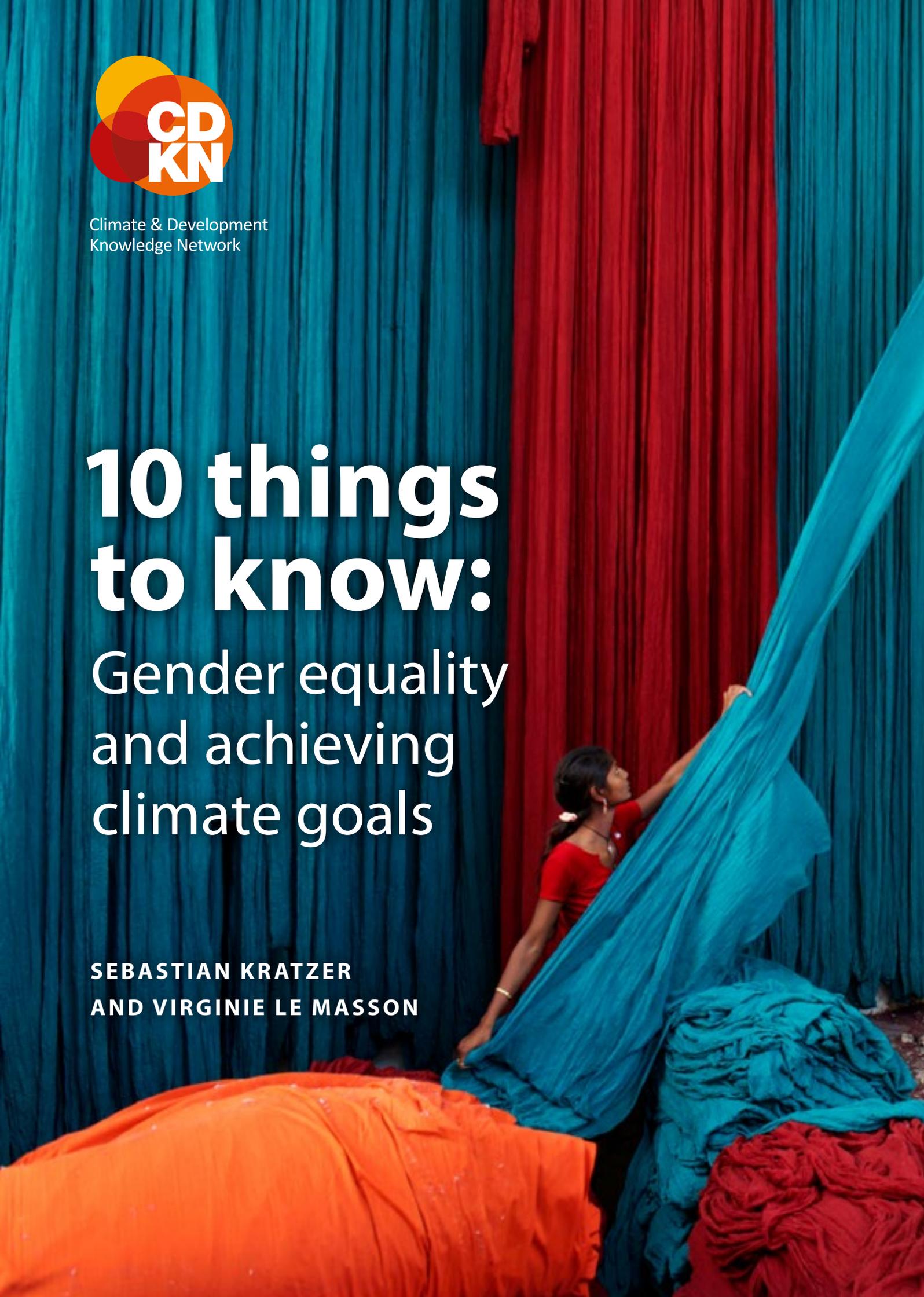


Climate & Development
Knowledge Network

10 things to know:

Gender equality and achieving climate goals

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About this report

This report draws out the headline messages of a research project by Practical Action Consulting (PAC) with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), commissioned by CDKN, to investigate the potential for climate compatible development to empower people.

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List of acronyms

ACCCRN	Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network
CDKN	Climate and Development Knowledge Network
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
GRIDES	Gestión de Riesgos, Desastres y Cambio Climático
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
PAC	Practical Action Consulting
PPP	Peoples' Plans into Practice, a project in Kenya

Introduction

Although climate change and poverty are increasingly recognised as interlinked global problems, responses from governments and development agencies often focus on their scientific and economic dimensions only. This guide highlights the advantages and challenges of pursuing climate compatible development from a gender perspective.

International frameworks are gradually reflecting gender issues better, but all too often wording about gender is simply added to existing policies, while women's views, needs and participation are – in reality – excluded from climate change responses and development initiatives. Moreover, women are frequently perceived as victims, with little consideration for the contribution and leadership they could provide in mitigating and adapting to climate change. This guide summarises the findings and recommendations of a study on the benefits and challenges of pursuing climate compatible development from a gender perspective.

The research looked at four main questions (see box), using case studies from Peru, India and Kenya. All three case studies have climate-related disaster risk management and climate change adaptation goals.¹ As most research into gender and climate change so far has been carried out in rural contexts, this study has put special emphasis on urban settings.

The objective is to contribute new evidence to this arena and provide insights that will help policy-makers and practitioners to foster more inclusive climate and development interventions.

Here are 10 findings to prove that gender-sensitive approaches lead to better climate and development outcomes – and how they do it.

Climate compatible developments

Climate compatible development is about transforming development pathways to face the climate problem in a way that moves beyond the traditional separation of adaptation, mitigation and development strategies. Climate compatible development processes adopt strategies and goals that integrate the threats and opportunities of a changing climate, and so lower greenhouse gas emissions, build resilience and promote development simultaneously.²

Research questions

1. What does a 'gender-sensitive' approach to climate compatible development mean in different urban contexts?
2. What evidence is there that gender-sensitive approaches to climate compatible development can promote and achieve people's empowerment?
3. What socioeconomic, political and cultural factors constrain or favour gender-sensitive approaches to climate compatible development?
4. Does a gender-sensitive approach enable better climate compatible development outcomes and if so, in what way?

Methodology

A qualitative methodology based on case studies

Three country reports

India
Kenya
Peru

Three case studies centred on projects that:

- were already completed or which had been implemented for at least 2–3 years;
- were implemented in urban areas;
- had dealt with climate compatible development (climate change adaptation, mitigation or disaster risk reduction); and
- had addressed issues of gender.

Sources of primary data

89 people were interviewed individually

54 men
35 women

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants including community members, staff at non-governmental organisations (NGOs), decision-makers and donor representatives.

The majority of informants were aged between 19 and 65 years old.

33 focus group discussions were conducted

Three women-only groups
Three men-only groups
27 mixed groups

Focus group discussions were conducted with separate groups of men and women (in India) and mixed groups (in India, Kenya and Peru).

Case studies



Ancash and Cajamarca Peru

Gestión de Riesgos, Desastres y Cambio Climático (GRIDES) Disaster Risk Management Networks

Themes: Disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, advocacy

Kisumu Kenya

Peoples' Plans into Practice (PPP)

Themes: Water and sanitation, livelihoods, informal settlements, local planning

Gorakhpur India

Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network (ACCCRN)

Themes: Urban planning, basic services, housing, health, energy, livelihoods, transport, ecosystems, land use

1

It matters: Gender-sensitive approaches recognise people's different needs



Image: Claudine V. M., iStock

“Had men been aware of our situation and problems, maybe our lives would have been different.”

Local development practitioner,
Gorakhpur, India

When organisations are planning climate vulnerability and capacity assessments, these are enhanced by gender-sensitive analysis. Such analysis not only provides a more in-depth understanding of the effects of climate change. It also reveals the political, physical and socioeconomic reasons why men and women suffer and adapt differently to everyday climate-related challenges, extreme events and longer-term environmental changes.

Climate vulnerability and capacity assessment:

A process (ideally participatory) through which the risks, vulnerabilities, and capacities of people and institutions in a given location are analysed. When the process is participatory and community-based, it combines community knowledge and scientific data to yield greater understanding of the local impacts of climate change.³

The lack of adequate sanitation is a major aspect of urban dwellers' vulnerabilities, to which men and women adopt distinct coping strategies.

The India report shows that most residents of Ma in Gorakhpur district “do not have personal toilets, and community toilets are either lacking or in poor shape. With open defecation being the norm, going to the toilet poses a big problem for women. Finding a private place during the daytime is a huge task in itself as is wading through the water to reach a secure and convenient spot, especially very early in the morning or after dark. During a mixed focus group discussion [...] women shared that, ‘during waterlogged conditions, women have great difficulty going to the toilet. They are really scared while squatting as big worms stick to their feet’. This caused great inconvenience, particularly for women, whereas men could answer the call of nature anywhere, even during the day. As a coping strategy, women explained that they eat and drink less, especially during floods. In fact, they would keep ‘upwas’ (observe fast) for a day which is likely to impact negatively on their health.”

Theories and interventions to address climate change that overlook women's realities will not be able to fully capture how urban dwellers, particularly in slum areas, are affected by poverty and climate change. Urban communities require interventions tailored to their contexts and the needs of both men and women.

In Peru, attention to gender-sensitive approaches allowed for better analysis of the roles of men and women, and the physical, political, and economic factors that make them more or less climate-vulnerable. For example, climate change may cause men to leave their families and migrate to find livelihood alternatives in urban areas. These population movements cause changes in gender roles as women become fully responsible for taking care of the family's basic needs, while the men risk becoming isolated or exploited in their new environments.

2

It works: Gender-sensitive approaches lead to more sustainable outcomes for climate compatible development



Image: Constructing a toilet | water.org, licensed under CC BY 2.0

“Had women not participated actively, the outcomes would have been considerably less, maybe around 10–20% of what was achieved. It is largely because of women, and also men, that the project has been sustainable so far, as well as effective in resilience building.”

ACCCRN project staff, India

A lack of women’s active involvement negatively affects the implementation, monitoring and overall sustainability of interventions to enhance people’s resilience. In contrast, when decision-making processes have been opened up to include women, as in Peru, initiatives tend to be better organised, and results to be more transparent and comprehensive. In these cases, initiatives have more detailed information on the day-to-day climate change and poverty challenges families and communities face.

In India, the equal participation and leadership of women improved the sustainability of activities and institutions supposed to maintain services.

“At community level, women outnumbered men in Neighbourhood Committees. Today, 50–60% of these committees still hold regular meetings and of the members still active in these committees, at least 70% are women.

“At city level, where women’s participation was either very low or non-existent, many of the committees have stopped functioning. City Steering Committee meetings with zero women participants are no longer taking place.”

When projects not only support the participation of women but also enable them to be involved meaningfully in decision-making, development outcomes are improved.

This may be linked to the fact that the planning and implementation of activities traditionally associated with women’s roles (including access to water, healthcare, education) are more effective if women are fully involved and their knowledge is recognised.

In Gorakhpur, India, at least 70% of households now have access to potable water, while other households have started using water filters or are storing purified water.

Respondents considered this outcome to be largely due to women’s participation in training, which led to measures being implemented at household and community levels. Follow-on actions included the creation of drainage systems to evacuate floodwater, and the benefits have included improved health for all and reduced time spent collecting water.

The India report also shows that in households where women play a role in deciding what to do with their income, the money is spent on education, health and food, and is reported as bringing happiness and wellbeing to the family. On the other hand, in all focus group discussions, participants considered that men typically spend income on alcohol and/or food.

In Peru, it was the women who demonstrated greater awareness of climate change and appeared to be more affected by the daily realities of it. Women’s participation in decision-making contributed to project sustainability, including invoking more detailed analyses, more effective committee functioning, access to potable water and the uptake of community-based adaptation techniques.

3

Location matters: Urban livelihoods differ and so should gender approaches to urban development

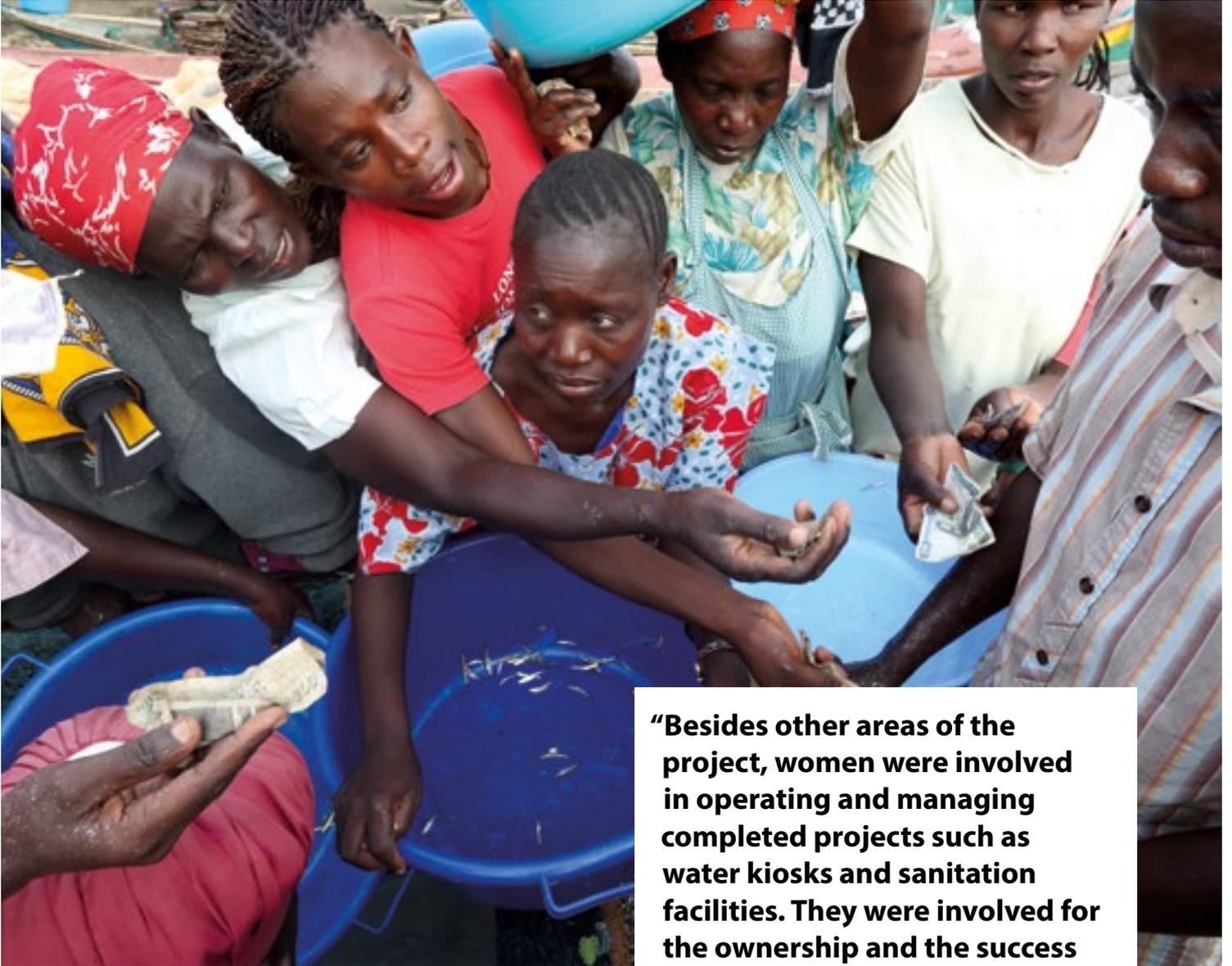


Image: Dietmar Temps, Shutterstock

“Besides other areas of the project, women were involved in operating and managing completed projects such as water kiosks and sanitation facilities. They were involved for the ownership and the success of the project. The inclusion of women was pre-planned because they are the custodians of water issues in community households.”

Officer, Manyatta Residents’ Association, PPP project, Kenya

Cities present different social, economic and political structures to rural areas. This has implications for how climate compatible development programmes should be implemented in order to support women and men's access to resources according to their contexts and priorities.

In Gorakhpur, India, social cohesion seemed significantly lower in urban areas than in rural ones.

Interactions among residents and their sense of belonging to the community were found to be lower in the city. According to development practitioners interviewed in Gorakhpur, identities of class prevail over caste in cities. For example, while it is challenging to bring together women and men of different castes in rural areas, it is easier to do so in Gorakhpur city. However, in the city, practitioners found it challenging to gather together women from low-income backgrounds with those from relatively high- and middle-income families, as the latter were conscious about their class status. Committees were mostly attended by men, who also resisted attending meetings that involved other men and women from low-income neighbourhoods.

Conversely, women in Kisumu, Kenya had better access to community support mechanisms such as self-help groups, *chamas*, which continue to empower them financially and also give them more time to invest in personal activities, compared to women from the rural areas. "In rural areas, there is a lack of openness and people fear to talk. But in the urban context, people are informed, exposed, know their rights and can freely share. This affects the kind of approach we take in project design. The rural woman still fights for her space. We need to sensitise the men," reported the PPP in Kisumu, Kenya.

Since urban communities have different needs and requirements, practitioners shifted the focus of their interventions in the ACCCRN project in India. Whereas their rural agricultural programmes aimed to secure market access for farmers, the ACCCRN project identified that urban farmers needed other kinds of inputs such as information and training on techniques for dealing with water logged conditions, including mixed and multi-tier cropping and organic methods like composting and bio-pesticides. In both urban and rural areas, men were generally more market-oriented while women were more interested in food quality, health and nutrition, and the wellbeing of family and children.

In rural districts of India, where plots of arable land are larger than in urban areas, women grow grains, vegetables, spices and lentils which are all primarily used for household consumption. However in urban areas, limited plot size means women mostly grow vegetables and fruit, the majority of which is sold in markets.

This affects food security for many families since they are highly dependent on markets for selling and buying food while their access to markets is negatively impacted during floods.

In Kenya too, during droughts, urban households are hit by rapid increases in food prices. For example, small fish become scarcer and their price can increase from US\$0.50 to US\$10 per item. The fish factories in Kisumu, Kenya, employ more women than men as casual labourers, and women were therefore affected most when the fish factories closed down as a result of declining fish stocks in Lake Victoria owing to pollution and receding water levels. Due to receding water, men have been forced to go deep water fishing, sometimes without the appropriate equipment, which places them at risk of injury.

4

Vulnerability to urban risks is exacerbated by everyday gender inequalities



Image: Eduardo Martino, Panos

“We do not value women. We are used to seeing them work and to seeing them suffer, but we do not value their work.”

Respondent, Peru

Vulnerabilities of people to environmental hazards are rooted in everyday inequalities and poverty.

These can be uncovered when using a gender approach. Without a gender approach, the realities of the most marginalised members of society and those discriminated against remain ignored and unaddressed by projects which are supposed to enhance people's resilience.

Discriminatory social norms undermine people's resilience to shocks and stresses.

In the Indian case study, patriarchal structures were evident in so-called 'upper class' and 'upper caste' sections of society.

Upper class women are supposed to adhere to strict norms and rules laid down to maintain their perceived higher status. Compared to women in the so-called 'lower class' and 'lower caste' groups, they are not as free to participate in meetings, nor to leave their houses alone, and are required to observe religious rituals and customs (which are stricter for women than men). During waterlogged conditions, women's mobility is restricted because of social norms, according to which women should not go out alone, and they should take care of children and family members who are sick.

In India, men's income-generating possibilities are affected by weather events, which causes tension and anxiety. When waterlogged roads prevent men from getting to work, many stay at home, help with rearing animals, go out to search for work or turn to drinking. In interviews, men shared the view that: "At the time of the floods, we do not get any work and have to survive by selling jewellery." Some female participants in focus groups remarked that "they (men) just drink when they do not go to work".

Alcoholism is a pervasive and widespread social problem, mentioned in both the Indian and Kenyan case studies, that is a major cause of mortality for men inhabiting low-income neighbourhoods. In Gorakhpur, India, this issue is compounded by the fact that local liquor is easily and cheaply available and is also a source of revenue for many residents, particularly women, engaged in producing and selling liquor. While attempting to address alcoholism could disrupt the only source of income of many families, exploring alternative livelihood activities could possibly break this vicious circle.

Gender-based violence is a pervasive manifestation of gender inequality across contexts.

Any form of violence limits the victim's capacity to respond to unexpected events, such as natural disasters, and isolates them from their social networks. National statistics in Peru and Kenya showed the grave extent to which women are affected by gender-based violence.

According to many women consulted for the India case study, men do not hesitate to inflict physical violence on women when they attend meetings and are unable to attend to other responsibilities: "Sometimes our husbands beat us up if we do not work". As a consequence, household care responsibilities inhibit women from participating in governance processes.

In India, the loss of livelihood options, including food and jobs, as well as damage and loss of property, force families to resort to taking out loans to cope with troubled times.

Women generally shoulder the responsibility for taking out and paying loans, borrowing from family, neighbours and friends, or sometimes pawning their jewellery as a last resort. This causes a lot of stress and tension, as well as shame in the event that loan repayments cannot be met. Men are not given financial loans as they are generally not considered responsible or trustworthy enough because they indulge in alcoholism, a statement reaffirmed in all individual interviews with women and mixed group discussions. One woman from Chakra said "when we have to take out a loan and we are not able to return borrowed money, then it builds up tension within the family and tension sometimes results in violence."

5

Beyond just 'needs': Gender approaches address power imbalances and unequal decision-making



Image: Sanjit Das, Panos

“If women go out of the house and participate in meetings then the neighbours would look down upon us.”

Woman living in Gorakhpur, India

For many development practitioners, talking about gender means participation of women at some stage of the project cycle, and compensating for their greater vulnerability to climate change. However, adopting a gender approach does not necessarily mean focusing solely on the needs of women or girls. A gender-sensitive strategy recognises and addresses the different interests and capacities shown by both men and women, as well as the pre-existing power relations between them.

It is exactly those social structures and existing gender relations that shape women's limited access to and control over resources such as land, financial credit, information and knowledge. More than anything else, it is the continued exclusion from decision-making processes that impedes marginalised people's capacities to cope with stresses and better adapt to climate change.

In Kenya, just 3% of the land was owned by women in 2011, and women often lack the collateral required to take out a loan.⁴

Land ownership, which is mainly male-dominated, means that women could not make decisions in interventions, such as improved housing, without consent. In India, nearly all women interviewed reported that they did not have control of household finances. In one focus group in Gorakhpur, men said: "There is no participation or involvement of women in household meetings. If there is a problem, then we (men) decide amongst ourselves and then let other members in the family know who has to do to what."

Economic decision-making remains largely in the hands of men, which prevents women from making investments according to their needs and priorities. Therefore, improving women's access to new livelihood opportunities in urban areas can improve specific aspects of their lives. But this might not help them gain control over assets and decision-making if the intervention does not follow an explicit transformative approach that recognises and challenges women's unpaid workload and responsibilities.

In India, the ACCCRN project contributed hugely to addressing women's immediate need to earn money, and improved the financial condition of many families; however, the absence of a gender-sensitive approach meant that the project did not ensure that money was being used and spent by women. In fact, most of the big household economic decisions continue to be taken by men, as reported by respondents in all focus groups and interviews. Women engaged in guava production mentioned that: "Although men don't stop us from going to the market to sell guavas, they take away 25% to 50% of the money that we earn through selling."

Participation is a first step to addressing people's strategic interests, including decision-making in politics. But by itself, it is not enough to foster empowerment or challenge discriminatory social norms.

In Gorakhpur, India, two women from Mahewa ward stood for Municipal Corporation elections for the first time as a result of confidence and capacity gained through the ACCCRN project – although they did not win.

These women were encouraged by other women in the community who felt that their election would help efforts to improve basic service provision in the ward. According to one man in Chakra: "Earlier, women would wait for us to take them to the bank to open their account, or to go to the dispensary or the immunisation centre or even to get ID cards made. However, now they do it on their own or go with another woman who is informed about these things. Sometimes women go together to the government department dealing with water and sanitation issues when we face problems."

Women's representation and participation in ward level committees was quite high, particularly in training programmes on health and hygiene, with a few women emerging as leaders in their own right. Despite these figures, the higher participation of women in community meetings did not necessarily lead to empowerment or transformation of gender relations. For example, ACCCRN project members noticed that women in New Mahewa still appear to be too shy to speak, while men dominated discussions.

6

Promoting gender equality must be an explicit goal at the start of any project



Image: Sanjit Das, Panos

“What is the need for women to step out and participate when men are there?”

Participants of a focus group discussion in Gorakhpur, India

Addressing existing inequalities in society should be an explicit goal from the start of climate compatible development projects. Otherwise, the design and implementation of activities might not only ignore differences between men and women’s vulnerabilities and capacities, but projects might also maintain the status quo and perpetuate gender inequalities. Projects need to adopt gender-based targets for participation and set up objectives that aim to transform gender relations from the beginning, so that they monitor and evaluate performance adequately.

In India, during the implementation of the ACCCRN project, men and women were involved in all city-level consultative meetings, but the representation of women was much lower than that of men.

This is because women’s participation was not explicitly sought and because very few women hold decision-making roles in either public or private institutions or in technical disciplines related to the project. As a result, gender dimensions were neither captured in any project documents nor debated at the city government level.

At the community level, women’s participation appears to have occurred because they were more at home than men, either undertaking their household responsibilities or earning an income close by. In comparison to men, women’s time was generally more flexible and they could adjust their responsibilities to attend meetings during the day. Guaranteeing women’s participation was not a deliberate objective of the ACCCRN project, since the approach was simply to involve the community and there was an absence of sex disaggregated targets for participation. But the greater participation of women ‘by default’ encouraged the ACCCRN team to create space for women to come out and contribute actively to the project with their experiences, views, and by expressing their needs.

Promoting women’s participation can help raise awareness, but might not lead to any changes in imbalanced gender relations. The absence of an explicit goal around gender equality and the lack of attention to power relations means that project activities may address people’s practical needs, but not necessarily their strategic interests.

The ACCCRN project in India addressed women’s practical needs, for example, by raising their awareness and capacities on issues such as immunisation, water quality, techniques to increase agricultural production, and alternative livelihood options.

It focused on supporting women to perform their traditional roles more effectively, with a greater emphasis laid on their reproductive – rather than productive – responsibilities. Yet, this also risks increasing women’s workload if their daily activities and needs are not recognised and valued. Men participating in a focus group discussion in Gorakhpur reported: “This is the tradition. It’s women’s work to carry out household chores and she has to do it all”. According to development practitioners in Gorakhpur, a gender transformative intervention that would have supported women to meet their strategic interests (for example, greater control over decision-making processes) was not discussed or included in the project.

ACCCRN team members say that the involvement of men and women together in the research study has helped raise awareness among men regarding issues relating to women and their increased workload during extreme weather events. Some of the men sympathised with women and their workload and other problems during focus groups, but barring a few examples, men have generally not taken it upon themselves to transform gender relations at the household level. While progress was noted in involving women in project activities, the level of actual participation was still low due to the multitude of other roles and responsibilities women have in the household.

7

When projects do not use gender approaches, participatory processes can still 'save the day'



Image: Sven Torfinn, Panos

“The condition for the PPP project was that the community had to form groups [in order to join]. Women therefore got the opportunity to be involved. In a group you have to contribute time as well as money.”

Officer, Manyatta Residents' Association, PPP project, Kenya

Gender-sensitive needs assessments encourage the meaningful participation of men and women. This is possible when organisations use bottom-up and participatory approaches to give women and men a chance to bring out their diverse needs, priorities and the range of skills through which each can contribute to climate compatible development.

In Kisumu, Kenya, the preparation of community-based Strategic Ward Action Plans relied on a participatory planning process whereby both genders were engaged to identify key stakeholders and priority actions, to form and strengthen community institutions and identify training needs.

During project implementation, the Nyalenda community was involved in the protection of the spring water and laying of water pipes in addition to the tendering process, including sourcing local contractors and suppliers. Furthermore, they participated in training of trainers sessions, particularly in operation and maintenance of facilities, such as water kiosks and toilets. This resulted in women's being able to influence the location, maintenance and design of water points to make them more suitable to their needs.

In the absence of an explicit gender-based approach, the involvement of team members with gender expertise can, even if in an unplanned manner, lead to successful, if limited, outcomes in terms of gender equality.

Facilitating interactions between men and women can also serve to raise men's awareness about and appreciation of the challenges faced by the other sex; a vital element of any initiative that intends to address gender inequality.

In Gorakhpur, India, when the team incorporated staff with good knowledge, understanding and experience of gender aspects of climate change in rural areas, more care was taken to include gender expertise in participatory processes involving women and men carrying out community activities.

Despite the lack of any explicit gender strategy, the ACCCRN team developed information and communications materials by keeping the characteristics and interests of men, women and marginalised groups in mind. This was done using methods including films, posters, demonstrations, puppet shows, mobile exhibitions, songs and rallies, which could be well understood even by illiterate community members. The time of meetings was set up with consideration for both men and women's daily responsibilities. These strategies helped both women and men to get involved, understand and contribute actively to the project.

The Peru report highlights that people entering the development profession, such as civil servants, need better training and education to strengthen their competencies in using gender-sensitive analysis, programming and evaluation in designing climate compatible development policies and strategies.

Especially in conservative or patriarchal societies, such strategies and tactics can help women to overcome shyness and gain confidence in dealing with one another and in mixed groups, and to become aware of the challenges men and women face and take decisions jointly. So far, gender issues have not been included in the curricula of relevant academic and professional education: such a change is needed.

8

The drivers for gender-sensitive climate compatible development: Commitment, policy and skills



Image: Giacomo Pirozzi, Panos

“Men now give women more respect, consult us, listen to us and appreciate our help in times of emergency.”

Women in group discussions,
Gorakhpur, India

Climate compatible development does not take place in a vacuum, and this research has identified some of the main drivers for moving towards gender-sensitive policies and practices.

The following are important:

- Existence of a favourable policy environment together with an appropriate institutional and legal framework at the national level.
- Participatory programme design processes at the local level.
- Committed and competent staff or volunteers in organisations to implement gender-sensitive activities and the existence of a dedicated focal point for gender issues, who can ensure that activities are inclusive.

In addition, an entrepreneurship approach can be effective in combining efforts to preserve the environment and reduce the effects of climate change, while contributing to the economic empowerment of urban dwellers, including women and youths.

Donor organisations tend to emphasise the integration of gender issues explicitly into projects, and they are in a good position to ensure integration of a gender perspective from the outset of programme cycles.

Existence of a favourable policy environment

Peru has one of Latin America's most progressive policy environments when it comes to gender equality, climate change and development (2007 Law on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, National Gender Equality Plan 2012–2017 and a National Climate Change Strategy). After the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP20) in Lima, the government developed a National Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (known by its Spanish acronym, PAGCC) that aims to guide mitigation and adaptation to climate change activities and simultaneously contribute to equality between men and women. This strong legal basis will push the state towards adopting more gender-sensitive policies and actions, but is also in favour of NGOs and civil society actors trying to promote gender equality and climate compatible development.

However, the Peru report found that knowledge and implementation of national policies and tools are actually quite low at the local level. In the case of Kenya too, complementary policies that would address both gender inequality and climate change are lacking in Kisumu county where there is no agenda to tackle these issues at the local level. A few respondents felt this was due to the push for gender coming from outside (i.e. donor driven) and not necessarily homegrown.

Working at local level

While existing policies promoting gender equality are necessary to create a legal framework, changes seem to be best influenced by projects when working through participatory approaches at the grassroots level. The Peru report highlights that “you need to start from the bottom, where one has more mobility. People are more open to listen and get involved at the community level, from where you can then go to the local, provincial and regional level”.

Committed and competent staff

The Kenya case study highlighted how the Lake Victoria Basin's gender specialist – a sociologist – consistently ensures that concerns around gender are addressed in projects implemented in the region. Even though the GRIDES in Peru did not have an explicit gender focus at the outset, remarks, documents and activities by its members showed a high degree of gender sensitivity, and helped move the GRIDES system towards a more active position on gender equality and climate compatible development.

Entrepreneurship

While the main aim of an improved waste management system in Kisumu, Kenya was to preserve the environment and reduce the negative effects of climate change, the project's enterprise approach allowed both men and women to adopt alternative and improved livelihood opportunities (men focusing on manual labour and women on finance). However, such approaches must be appropriate to both men's and women's interests and avoid perpetuating the traditional division of roles and labour.

Emphasis on integrating gender issues tends to come from donor organisations.

For example, GRIDES – the projects addressing climate adaptation and risk reduction in Peru – tended to progressively incorporate gender equality each time donors requested activities with an explicit gender focus.

Several initiatives at state level in India have been taken up as a result of the ACCCRN project, with gender integrated at the insistence of the donor (CDKN), such as creation of a Climate Cell within Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation, with two out of nine members being women. In Kenya, gender was integrated into various stages of the PPP project based on a combination of formal and organisational requirements, including insistence from the donor and Practical Action East Africa's institutional gender strategy, and the recognition of the importance of addressing gender concerns to achieve better project outcomes.

9

Still a long way to go: Multiple obstacles prevent initiatives from transforming power relations



Image: Zackary Canepari, Panos

“Gender has just been introduced into structural planning, but there is a long, long way to go still. Lack of understanding, capacity and even inclination, has prevented any planning from this perspective.”

Gorakhpur town planner, India

Just as there are drivers, there are conditions and norms that hinder progress towards gender-sensitive climate compatible development.

Proponents of gender-sensitive climate compatible development – and a more just and sustainable society in general – need to be aware of and include these obstacles in their strategies and interventions. If we know that certain groups will oppose gender equality because it would mean they will lose the monopoly over resources or markets, how can our interventions mitigate these impacts, win them over or succeed despite their resistance? These questions need to be addressed before developing initiatives or policies, and satisfactory answers can only come from engagement with all actors concerned.

Cultural

“Culture denies women many rights and privileges. Women were never allowed to plant trees at home or voice their opinions, and also women would work a lot more than men.” – Focus group discussion in Kisumu, Kenya

- Cultural norms and attitudes that treat women as second class citizens, restrict their mobility and autonomy, and go as far as the threat of physical violence for overstepping their perceived responsibilities, remain a main obstacle to gender equality and social development.
- In societies where patriarchal structures are strong, it is more difficult to explore gender issues. It is a challenge to convince local stakeholders and communities of the importance and relevance of gender, especially on a relatively new issue like climate change.
- Cultural stereotypes prevent men from contributing to household chores and engaging in the care economy, but also expect them to provide for their family and earn incomes. Yet, power imbalances within the home combined with mismanagement of family finances create social problems, such as drinking and violence, which exacerbate household vulnerabilities to disaster risks.
- Effective climate compatible development decision-making requires the participation of both men and women, but cultural norms and gender division of roles and daily activities may restrict opportunities for certain categories of people to engage in projects or attend meetings (i.e. when men are busy working outside, when women do not have time to leave aside their domestic responsibilities, and vice versa).

Political and institutional

“Governments do not call on us, and we face economic limitations to attend capacity-building events.” – Peru report

- Lack of political will to address gender inequalities or allocate resources to develop capacities of marginalised groups to become more self-reliant and resilient.
- Lack of equal participation in the political arena and lack of understanding of political and decision-making processes among marginalised groups.
- Lack of awareness, understanding and competencies among authorities to address inequalities or develop gender-sensitive climate compatible development policies and plans.
- A continued lack of policies at the local or national levels that address both climate compatible development and gender.
- If a general national policy exists, the necessary agenda, strategy or staff are often lacking to implement climate compatible development and gender policy at lower levels.
- Lack of strategic programming in and across institutions to include a focus on gender equality.

Economic

“Some women have been forced into prostitution, while some men have resorted to crime to fend for their families.” – A woman leader in Manyatta settlement, Kisumu, Kenya

- Land and economic assets tend to belong to men and, as such, it is a challenge to implement projects aimed at the economic empowerment of women and youths.
- Decision-making with regard to disasters is often done by both men and women together on a household level, but the large percentage of the households do not make any relevant plans.
- Cities that receive high numbers of rural migrants, such as the capitals of states or provinces, lack the resources to address climate compatible development and gender problems.

10

Monitoring and evaluation of gender outcomes is vital to promote gender equality



Image: Community meeting | water.org, licensed under CC BY 2.0

“Participatory planning and monitoring can provide a space for women to contribute to decision-making processes and are crucial to improve the effectiveness and accountability of climate compatible development actions.”

India report

Development initiatives in urban areas often involve working with scarce resources and how to (re)distribute them more justly among members of society. To achieve this, we have to understand what works, what doesn't, and why.⁵

So far, there are mostly inadequate tools for monitoring and evaluating gender and climate compatible development interventions. Moreover, the lack of explicit objectives, outcomes and indicators on gender equality means that most current standard monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems do not reflect social changes. This not only reduces the availability of information on what initiatives achieved (or did not), but also makes it impossible to follow up on any potential positive climate compatible development gender equality outcomes, address negatives ones and limits any efforts to advocate for greater equality.

Effective M&E processes should assess the value of activities and objectives. Gender-based outcomes and indicators should be factored in from design through to implementation of any initiative. In addition, including M&E work at different stages and levels of intervention will help determine if interventions or policies have equally positive impacts for both men and women, or if anyone is left out in development.

Creative methods beyond collecting sex-disaggregated data, such as gathering life stories, can be effective monitoring and advocacy tools. Findings from the Kenya case study demonstrated how sharing stories of women's leadership in sectors that have traditionally been male-dominated can be a good way to champion gender-sensitive approaches to climate change.

Government departments would benefit from having a monitoring officer, and promoting women's and men's continued equal participation in monitoring processes and follow-up initiatives will make it more likely that these committees, institutions and systems keep on functioning.

Conclusion – the way forward

This research has gathered empirical evidence from urban settings on the gender dimension of people's vulnerabilities and capacities to face climate change. It revealed how climate compatible interventions have (or have not) used gender-sensitive approaches to implement their activities and what impacts such approaches had on development outcomes in urban contexts.

Existing gender inequalities, patriarchal culture and asymmetrical power structures are key barriers to integrating gender considerations into climate compatible development. The lack of analysis of these components within climate-related research, policy and project design means that the major factors underpinning differentiated vulnerabilities faced by men and women in urban areas are ignored, thereby augmenting marginalisation and accentuating conditions of poverty among those hardest hit by climate change and disaster events.⁶

Greater resilience to climate change will come about when all members of society are given equal opportunity to participate as agents rather than mere recipients in the decisions that affect their lives. For gender-sensitive projects, this requires a shift away from only focusing on women's practical needs, moving towards addressing power and gender relations in families, communities, and institutions as well as political and economic decision-making processes. Strategies to tackle climate change need to be inclusive and participatory, and pay special attention to the principle of do no harm, tackle inequalities instead of maintaining them.

The crises brought about by a changing climate can, at times, be an opportunity to challenge the unjust status quo and promote gender equality. But this requires simultaneous action on all levels, and for those working in favour of gender-sensitive climate compatible development to link up efforts on the private, local, national, and global levels.

Endnotes

- 1 For more on the research methodology, please visit www.cdkn.org/gender-matters
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