
**MAINSTREAMING GENDER INTO
CLIMATE CHANGE AND
DISASTER RISK REDUCTION POLICIES**

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EmPower Women for Climate-Resilient Societies

Gender is an important dynamic in climate change and disaster risk reduction (DRR) efforts. The reasons are essentially two-fold: (1) the agency of women is essential for tackling climate change and disaster risks; (2) despite significant strides that have been made in addressing gender inequalities over the years, women are still among the most marginalized groups of society and are particularly vulnerable to current and future climate change and disaster risk. EmPower: Women for Climate-Resilient Societies is jointly implemented by UN Women and UN Environment with the support of the Government of Sweden to ensure that gender equality is at the heart of climate action and disaster risk reduction efforts in Asia-Pacific.

Women: vulnerable but agents of change

Disaster mortality rates are higher for women than for men. Following the 2004 Asian tsunami, a survey concluded females accounted for over 70 per cent of the dead.

Violence against women is known to rise after disasters.

Women's individual and collective knowledge and experience in natural resource management equip them with unique skills that benefit mitigation, disaster and adaptation efforts.

What is Gender Mainstreaming?

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy that has been widely adopted internationally and is aimed at achieving gender equality. Gender mainstreaming goes beyond increasing women's participation; it means bringing the experience, knowledge, and interests of women and men to bear on the development agenda. It entails identifying the need for changes in that agenda to change goals, strategies, and actions so that both women and men can influence, participate in, and benefit from development processes.

Gender equality means more than just ensuring equal treatment and opportunities; it must be visible in a balanced distribution of power and resources and shared responsibilities between women and men within society. It thus involves the transformation of unequal social and institutional structures into equal and just structures for both men and women.

Gender mainstreaming in international agreements



The **Beijing Platform for Action** calls for a dual strategy – gender mainstreaming complemented with inputs designed to address specific gaps or problems faced in the promotion of gender equality.



Incorporating gender perspectives in all areas of development ensures the effective achievement of other social, economic and environmental goals. In line with this argument, gender equality is interwoven throughout the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.



In March, 2018, the **Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** Committee adopted gender recommendations on State's women's rights obligations in the areas of disaster risk reduction and climate change mitigation and adaptation.



The **UNFCCC** has identified activities to mainstream gender in regards to both the content of the Framework and the representation of women and men in its subsidiary bodies and stakeholders, throughout the entire process of the Convention.



The **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030** does not include a strategy for gender mainstreaming but refers to actions for women's empowerment and leadership development in effectively managing disaster risks.

Tools and Approaches



Gender-responsive content: integrating a gender perspective into the content of different policies



Gender representation: addressing the issue of representation of women and men in the policy area



Enabling environments: institutionalizing gender equality in the structure, processes and cultures of organizations

Gender-responsive content

Sex-, age-, and diversity disaggregated data (SADDD) are data that are collected and analysed separately on males and females. For example, this could involve asking the “who” questions in a household survey. SADDD may be found in existing national or sub-national data databases for various sectors.

Gender Analysis is a method used to understand the roles and relationships of women and men within a given context, such as that of a household, community, region or organisation. The underlying question of ‘why are there differences?’ is mainly probed and requires a participatory process. It leads to the identification of programme objectives and strategies which aim to promote gender equality.

Vulnerability Analysis Frameworks have been used particularly in the context of emergency responses and food security. These identify the vulnerabilities of different socioeconomic groups. Two major models form the basis for how vulnerability is considered and analysed in climate change contexts: (a) the risk-hazard model; and (b) social constructivist models.

Gender representation

Participatory approaches and methods are used throughout the process of gender mainstreaming to gather information on the relationship between women and men for climate action and DRR processes. Methods commonly used include household surveys, expert interviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and vulnerability impact assessments.

Women’s empowerment is an approach used to ensure that women enjoy the same opportunities, outcomes, rights and obligations as men. Empowerment activities can take many forms building on a gender analysis identifying concrete barriers to gender equality and opportunities to address those barriers.

Enabling Environments

Enabling environments are critical for the success of gender mainstreaming efforts. This can be done through advocacy for policy interventions, the translation of guiding principles from international agreements and national policies into operation actions, and the development of national and regional gender strategies for climate change adaptation initiatives.

Gender budgeting is an accountability and management tool to focus on how public budgets are allocated and spent for gender policies. It is a strategic tool to track and measure gender-responsive climate finance at both the national and local levels.

The **Gender Impact Assessment (GIA)** is one of several evidence-based, policy-making tools that may be applied to facilitate the implementation of gender mainstreaming by systematically and objectively assessing the impact of policies, laws, and implementing regulations and establishing a baseline against which subsequent implementation can be measured.

Examples of gender mainstreaming tools and methodologies

- The 9 Box Framework for Organizational Analysis developed by WOCAN can be used for analysing, planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes. It is an effective tool to build awareness of structural and cultural dimensions of values, norms and behaviours in organizations that are mostly taken for granted.
- A SWOT analysis is a useful tool to create a gender action plan, that can be applied to an organizational analysis to determine the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats for gender integration.
- The Gender Responsive Assessment Scale has been developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) for the categorisation of policies and programmes into (i) Gender-unequal (ii) Gender-blind (iii) Gender-sensitive (iv) Gender-specific (v) Gender-transformative.
- Incentivising Gender Mainstreaming through Climate Finance: Increasing the number of options to finance climate investments that factor in the co-benefits for gender equality, women’s empowerment and climate action.
- Gender Mainstreaming in the Project Cycle: Mainstreaming gender in projects can be synthesized into a three-step approach. From the project identification stage, through consultations with men and women analysing their eventual roles and responsibilities so that they will benefit as stakeholders, participants or managers. Secondly, the Gender analysis/assessment stage, understanding relationships between men and women. Thirdly, the Gender Action Plan, translating the findings of gender analysis into a dedicated set of activities to address the gender risks and opportunities identified and maximize gender benefits.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: It is recommended to develop a framework for monitoring gender sensitivity at different stages of the project’s implementation. Without this, there has been limited accountability for gender mainstreaming outcomes within projects, programmes and organizations.

Policy Recommendations

To enhance the application of gender-sensitive strategies and tools in all components of climate change and disaster risk reduction, the following actions are recommended:

Develop and apply frameworks for monitoring the application of gender-sensitive methodologies to climate change and DRR initiatives, from assessments, planning, implementation and evaluation of the outcomes of project activities, and put in place an enabling environment for policymaking and implementation.

Adapt national information systems to the requirements for planning and monitoring the application of gender-sensitive methodologies for climate change initiatives.

Develop platforms that encourage a gender-responsive multi-stakeholder dialogue, including the participation of men and women from indigenous peoples and local communities, on the impacts of climate change and the range of options for action.

Build capacities of government, private sector and civil society stakeholders on tools and approaches to integrate gender into climate change initiatives, across sectors and at all levels.

Support mainstreaming gender and climate change into national development policies, plans, and budgets, with the participation of climate change institutions and funds, and gender equality mechanisms.

Ensure that national climate change programmes and initiatives are aligned with gender commitments embodied in CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action.

Institutionalize the application of existing gender commitments to climate change portfolios, providing gender and climate change tools covering the entire project or programme cycle, addressing institutional disconnects between gender equality and climate change responsibilities.

Promote the active participation of women leaders and groups in decision-making processes on climate change within all organisations by advocating for their membership in steering committees and other oversight bodies.

Engage gender equality advocates, women's organisations and climate change practitioners to better understand women's and men's roles in climate change mitigation and adaptation and how to derive development co-benefits.

Address knowledge and best practice gaps in participatory ways that capture men's and women's ideas and knowledge, particularly in areas where the gender dimensions of climate change impacts and responses are not immediately obvious, such as transport and infrastructure, energy access, housing, and formal or informal employment.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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