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GENDER-
RESPONSIVE
CLIMATE
CHANGE
ADAPTATION

LEARNING FROM THE
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CHANGE ADAPTATION
FACILITY



Canada 



CABO VERDE

MALI

NIGER

SUDAN

CAMBODIA

HAITI

FILLING BUCKETS, FUELING CHANGE

ENSURING GENDER-RESPONSIVE CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

LEARNING FROM THE CANADA-UNDP CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION FACILITY

It is important to highlight best practice and available tools for arriving at gender-responsive adaptation, but also to identify enabling conditions both at local level and in the policy context. This study contributes to both of these objectives, drawing on experiences from six national projects implemented under the Canada-UNDP Climate Change Adaptation Facility (CCAF). Under CCAF projects, new approaches for more gender-responsive adaptation have been tested in different contexts, leading to the emergence of a new body of knowledge and experience on how to integrate gender into adaptation practices, both at community and institutional levels.

The Canada-UNDP Climate Change Adaptation Facility (CCAF) was established in 2014. The Facility aims to promote south-south cooperation and enhance the understanding of initiatives that address adaptation to climate change, especially the gender dimensions. This is done by collecting and analyzing experiences and lessons learned emanating from the six national adaptation projects under the Canada-UNDP portfolio. It produces and disseminates knowledge that can be shared among the project countries and usefully applied in other contexts. The CCAF also promotes south-south cooperation through global exchange and engagement among countries and project teams. Overall, it ensures that valuable experiences from the local and national activities are being used to inform climate change adaptation policies and practice at the national, regional and global level.

The focus must shift from vulnerability to empowerment



Adaptation responses have the potential to transform existing gender power imbalances and to enhance both women's and men's adaptive capacities, while simultaneously advancing gender equality and women's rights.

To date, gender has been increasingly integrated into climate change adaptation at the project level, demonstrating that gender equality is a condition for successful adaptation. However, what is now needed is for gender-responsive adaptation to be scaled up. Most actors are still struggling with the question of how to successfully design and implement these approaches and link them to policy frameworks.

The focus must shift from vulnerability to empowerment. Adaptation responses have the potential to transform existing gender power imbalances and to enhance both women's and men's adaptive capacities, while simultaneously advancing gender equality and women's rights.

This research study draws on findings from six countries, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Haiti, Mali, Niger and Sudan, engaged in adaptation efforts supported by the Canada – UNDP Climate Change Adaptation Facility (CCAF). In all six countries, national projects aim to strengthen climate-resilience, particularly in the area of food security and water management. They are specifically demonstrating gender-responsive adaptation strategies, providing insights on the types of resources and partnerships needed at local and national level for success.

Each national team has defined context-specific solutions based on local gender dynamics, institutions and policies. Nonetheless, all six countries aim to enhance the adaptive capacity of both men and women, through several common approaches:

- Targeting and reaching women from resource-poor groups
- Securing livelihood options for both women and men
- Increasing the participation of women in village-level decision-making groups or committees
- Minimising risk exposure for women and girls, especially during prolonged periods of drought, food and water scarcity.

The goal of gender equality is implicit in these efforts, which has led to varying degrees of empowerment for women, and in some cases, to shifts in gender relations at household level.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE CCAF PROJECTS

Conceptual Framework for Presenting Key Findings

A conceptual framework for understanding adaptation strategies in relation to gender equality and justice provide a frame by which to analyze and extract insights emerging from the six CCAF countries.

Specifically, the underlying gender dynamics of a community and household, including **roles and responsibilities, gender-based differences in access to resources (e.g. land, water, finance), and gender power relations** will directly shape vulnerability as well as opportunities for resilience. Further, understanding the enabling (or dis-enabling) factors informed by policies, institutions, interventions, and research will also affect the potential approaches to adaptation.

Six critical areas form the background of this framework, and provide entry points for this research.

These include:

1. gendered strategies for strengthening food and nutritional security;
2. access to water and governance structures for water distribution;
3. time poverty and unpaid care work;
4. control over resources and revenues;
5. participation, decision-making and leadership; and
6. targeting of groups most at risk.

“When the owner claimed his land back, the group of women [that had been farming this land collectively for over 5 years] decided to fight back. They went to the District-level authority to put their claim, and eventually, the owner backed down, and they were able to keep the land”

Douma Soumana, Project Coordinator, Tondikiwindi Region, Niger.



The Jubraka have greatly contributed to diversifying household food crops, particularly in the dry season, which leads to better food security and nutrition.



Gendered strategies for strengthening food and nutritional security

Summary

A significant implication of climate change and the resulting decline in agricultural production in many parts of the world is that **women are playing an increasingly important role in provisioning food for the family**, especially during periods of food shortage. This is mostly due to the absence of men who are often forced to leave the home, either seasonally or permanently, in search of more reliable incomes. Across all six CCAF countries, context-specific approaches were designed to increase **food production and incomes** focusing on women as food producers. They also supported women to generate additional income and **diversify livelihoods**. However, there may be limitations with regards to sustainability and size of revenues generated, calling for more attention to the barriers women face in accessing financial resource and markets. In several countries, further efforts have been made to **transform social norms** in food production, where, for example, women have earned enough profit from selling their crops that they can then acquire ownership rights over land and other resources.

Findings

For gender-responsive adaptation, interventions on food security must be designed based on:

- Gendered strategies for ensuring food and nutritional security
- Context-specific gender patterns underlying resource rights and responsibilities
- Diversification of livelihood options, especially for landless women-headed households
- Existing women's social networks, which are often informal

Enabling factors for supporting women's roles in food provisioning include:

- Facilitating acquisition of land and other productive assets (e.g. equipment, inputs) by women. Collective arrangements may be more productive, especially when individual land tenure for women is constrained by social norms and customary practices
- Investing in education, given that women/girls with higher levels of education are more likely to access markets and earn better incomes
- Removing barriers for access and management of finance for rural women
- Investing in time-saving technologies so that women of all age groups have more time to devote to productive activities

Example

In Sudan, two specific types of approaches were supported across four target States to help increase access to water and strengthen resilient vegetable and animal production. 1) Technical support was provided to improve individual home gardens; and 2) water access was provided to collective land for vegetable cultivation. These collective plots – Jubraka in the local language – are managed by groups typically made up of ten to twelve women and one man. The Jubraka have greatly contributed to diversifying household food crops, particularly in the dry season, which leads to better food security and nutrition. Crops are also sold on the market, increasing women's earning potential. These additional skills support women's increasing role as leaders of the community in managing and producing food.

Access to water and governance structures for water distribution

Summary

Climate change will further exacerbate water scarcity in most parts of the world, limiting access to water for domestic use and irrigation. Data from time-use studies show that there is a significant burden on women for water collection, particularly in countries facing a shortage of water infrastructure, which is true for all CCAF countries. In each of the CCAF countries, water access has been improved through water tanks and solar pumps, connecting homes to water systems, and rehabilitating water reservoirs and small-scale dams. However, strengthening access to water resources for climate-resilience, in and of itself, does not strengthen gender-responsive adaptation. This also involves putting in place mechanisms that manage and distribute water equitably and effectively, **reducing water-related conflicts during times of water stress**. This must also take into account water affordability, particularly for the most vulnerable. Using these mechanisms as a tool, many projects also promoted **women's participation and leadership on water management**.

Findings:

For gender-responsive adaptation, interventions should be designed to:

- Build strong collaboration with public water resources departments, ensuring that designing and installing water infrastructure and facilities are based on gender-sensitive assessments
- Increase the capacity of local government representatives to ensure the effective participation and leadership of women in water management mechanisms
- Support communities in upholding principles of gender equity when establishing water-user groups
- Support local municipal authorities and communities to develop and maintain social mechanisms for gender-equitable distribution of water resources
- Ensure that partnerships with the private sector include a commitment to gender equality and women receive equal access to technical or management training, peer-to-peer learning, and other resources.

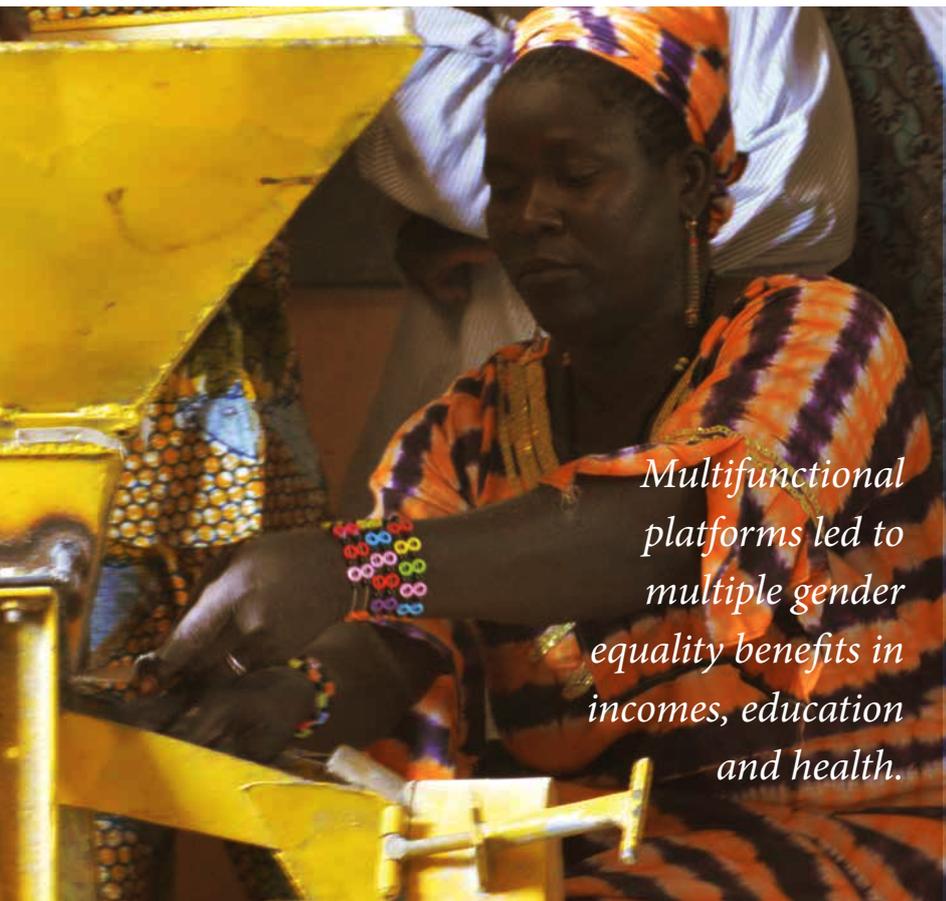


Forming water-user groups to manage the new water resources increased local capacity for management and control over water resources and contributed to gender-responsive outcomes.

Example:

In Cambodia, in addition to increasing access to water through the introduction of new water tanks, solar pumps and small-scale infrastructure, the project emphasized the formation of water-user groups to manage the new water resources. Two categories of groups were formed to perform these regulatory tasks: Farmer Water User Committees to manage water for irrigation purposes, and Water Users Groups to manage domestic water supply. Provincial-level staff oversaw the formation of these groups at village-level, to build their capacity, and to ensure the effective participation of women. This approach increased local capacity for management and control over water resources and contributed to gender-responsive outcomes. Data collected from villages in Kratie Province suggests that the approach led to significant positive changes in gender dynamics at the household level, such as reduced tensions between women and men, more shared decision-making at household level and increased skills in water management for women.





Findings

Creating an enabling environment for reducing domestic workload can be done by:

- Making use of bottom-up gender-sensitive participatory approaches to explore unequal gender patterns of care provisioning, and implications on women's time, health, earning capacity, and ability to engage in the public sphere.
- Collecting baseline data on how much time women, men, girls and boys spend on household chores, to explore options for reducing women's workloads, redistributing chores, and subsequently allocating budget for the provision of services or infrastructures that can reduce time spent on care activities by women and girls
- Encouraging continuous debating and questioning of gender rules and norms that adversely affect women and girls' time and opportunities. This includes openly discussing options for strengthening gender equity with both men and women in the community and project staff.

Example

The CCAF project in Mali builds on the national experience of multifunctional platforms to provide access to energy for rural people and promote gender equity. Multifunctional platforms are diesel- or solar-powered mini-grid platforms that provide energy for running a mill, a husker, an oil-press, a welding rig, for example, or for charging batteries. Under the project, four villages were equipped with solar multifunctional platforms maintained and managed by women's associations. The associations manage the milling and husking activities and earn revenues from the services provided. A UNDP study conducted in Mali in 2005 highlights the multiple gender equality benefits of a multifunctional platform, including their impact on time, incomes, education and health. Women save between 1 and 3.3 hours per day for pounding cereals, increasing revenues by US\$68 on average. There was almost a three times increase in the girl to boy ratio of students attending primary school yearly and the dropout rate of both girls and boys decreased. The number of women visiting local health clinics also increased as they had more time and money to take care of themselves and their families.



Time poverty and unpaid care work

Summary

The consideration of care-provisioning patterns at household level is critical when designing gender-responsive adaptation approaches. In most parts of the world, societal norms tend to assign care work to women, such as child-care, caring for the sick and the elderly, domestic tasks, and collection of fuel and water. Climate change exacerbates burdens on unpaid care work, reducing women's ability to adapt. CCAF projects implemented several activities aimed at reducing women's time poverty to help strengthen their adaptive capacity. This included, among other things, reducing women's workload through access to energy services. As women reallocate time from domestic chores to productive roles (i.e. raising animals, growing crops, baking and selling bread), gender roles progressively change. This suggests that addressing gender imbalances around unpaid care work and time poverty in adaptation can lead to unexpected and subtle, yet tangible, transformation of women's and men's roles over time.

Control over resources and revenues

Summary

Effective control over productive resources, incomes and finance is a pre-condition for women to build their adaptive capacity in dynamic ways. This is true especially in countries where women-headed households are increasingly numerous, like Cabo Verde, Haiti and Sudan. In some CCAF projects, the need of women's control over land was addressed by focusing on collective access to land. This builds on positive global experiences that circumvents the numerous constraints individual women face in securing access to productive land (inheritance laws, customary practices, insufficient financial resources to buy land, and other barriers). Taking into account gender-differentiated approaches to management of natural resources is also important, and can make adaptation interventions more sustainable and cost-effective. It is also important to understand the different ways that men and women allocate funds. Measures must be designed to promote women's control over financial resources, which is usually limited in many countries.

Findings

Enabling conditions for achieving more gender equity in control over resources include:

- Understanding how existing gender relations keep women from controlling resources and identify ways to address them. This could include examining which mechanisms, social norms, and institutional arrangements affect gender biases
- Engaging and getting buy-in from local authorities to find solutions, especially for women's access to land
- Designing creative arrangements for increasing women's land ownership, such as supporting women's collectives or associations which can be effective at overcoming barriers individual women face.
- Investing in women's literacy and girls' education (including financial literacy) as a pre-condition to increasing women's control over household, project or community finances



Example

In Haiti, the CCAF project supports reforestation and watershed management in coastal areas to protect coastal communities from climate impacts, including floods, storms and erosion.

Separate focus group discussions with men and women identified which tree varieties to reforest and where. It became clear that men wanted tree species that can be used to produce charcoal and wood for construction, while women expressed their desire for vegetable crops to plant in their home gardens. A compromise was reached whereby four main types of fruit tree saplings are now produced in the nurseries, which have good commercial and nutritional value, alongside saplings of forest trees. These tree nurseries are co-managed by men and women. Revenues from the sale of fruit is especially important to women and women-headed households, who make up 40 percent of all households in Haiti. Acknowledging gender-differentiated preferences have enhanced the long-term sustainability of the project activities.



The CCAF project in Niger made specific efforts to ensure women were part of the design and implementation of project activities



Findings

Designing gender-responsive adaptation interventions that increase participation and leadership of women, require:

- Identification of the barriers to women's participation and leadership
- Understanding and assessment of the nature of these barriers (e.g. time poverty, illiteracy, restrictions on mobility, social norms)
- Working with gender specialists and sociologists to identify these barriers across different categories of women (e.g. women in male-headed households, women in female-headed households, women of different age groups)
- Taking these identified barriers into consideration when designing projects and thinking creatively about options to overcome them and enhance women's participation and leadership.

Example

The CCAF project in Niger made specific efforts to ensure women were part of the design and implementation of project activities. It was recognized that several barriers were hindering women's participation in the project, primarily their illiteracy (female literacy rate in Niger is 11 percent). To address this barrier, the project introduced literacy classes, including financial literacy, for adult women. As a result, in 2015 women represented one-third of members in local management committees responsible for Commune agricultural input banks. In addition, the literacy training was a contributing factor to further empowering these women to stand up for their rights. A group of women jointly cultivating a 2-ha vegetable plot in the same region went to see a district official to contest the land owner's claim who wanted his land back. Subsequently, they appealed to the Préfet (a higher authority) who declared that if they had to return the land to the owner, he would have to pay back all the investments they had made. The land owner backed down on his demand and allowed the women to keep the land. With control over the land and abilities to manage their financial resources, the women are now more resilient to climate change impacts.



Participation, decision-making and leadership

Summary

It is critical to involve women in decision-making and ensure that their knowledge of the immediate environment and to account for their ways of coping and managing economic, social and ecological stresses. This is particularly true given that women are more likely to acknowledge ecological problems and risks, typically express higher levels of concern and usually engage in activities beneficial to the environment because of their roles in society. The CCAF projects show that barriers to women's participation, decision-making and leadership can be removed through pro-active strategies. In particular, addressing underlying causes, such as literacy, can help. Findings across all six countries noted that women's active role in collective action groups can lead to empowerment. There are instances of women, supported by the CCAF projects, who challenge unjust procedures, question wrong-doings of the local elite, and even approach a higher authority to solve a problem or claim their rights.

Targeting groups most at risk

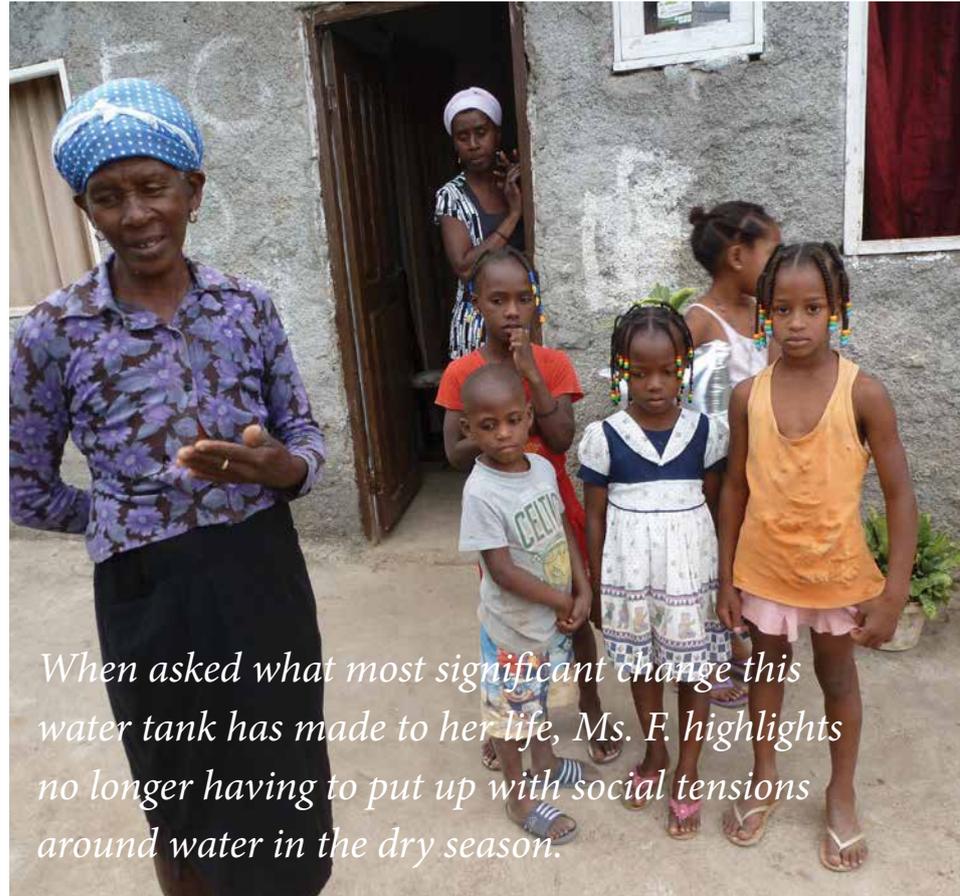
Summary

Targeting of gender groups most vulnerable to climate change is also essential for effective adaptation. This must take into account an analysis of exclusions resulting from age, migration, health and ability. Targeting women, which takes into account an understanding of the local gender power relations, can bring transformational change. In several CCAF countries, labor-demanding activities, such as building small infrastructure, was supported by labor provided by the communities. Women were often given priority, to help increase their cash earning. Several CCAF countries also targeted women-headed households with limited access to land and productive resources, a key barrier to adaptation. Targeting other vulnerable groups of women, such as girls and young women who are more susceptible to sexual harassment in times of stress, is also important.

Findings

Enabling conditions for gender-responsive adaptation that targets groups most at risk, include:

- Good knowledge of the local situation, which include: forces at play, people at risk, factors that make particular groups vulnerable to particular risks
- Bottom-up approaches, participatory methodologies and creative thinking
- Good analysis of community dynamics
- Involvement of multidisciplinary teams who can explore multiple dimensions of women's lives, including sexual practices in the context of poverty and seasonal vulnerabilities
- A concerted attempt to invest in non-traditional roles for women and to look beyond a strict sectoral focus (e.g. agriculture or water) in order to strengthen women's self-esteem and dignity



When asked what most significant change this water tank has made to her life, Ms. F. highlights no longer having to put up with social tensions around water in the dry season.

Example

In Cabo Verde, when project teams had to decide who would benefit from water access and individual water tanks for storing water, they prioritized the most vulnerable households. Criteria for these households included: large number of people, limited livelihood options, and women-headed. This is a good example of gender-informed targeting in the context of access to water for domestic use. Ms. Filomena F., a widow in Orgaões Pequenos, in the San Miguel Municipality of Santiago Island, was one of the targeted households. She is the head of a nine-member household (herself, her daughter, her son, and six grand-children). She received an individual water tank built in front of her house. When asked what most significant change this water tank has made to her life, Ms. F. highlights two changes: i) not having to go down to the well in the middle of the night (located about 200m down the hill) ; and ii) no longer having to put up with social tensions around water in the dry season. During the dry season (May-July), the well dries up at the end of the day and recharges at night. « Whoever gets there first gets the water, » she says. « So I used to go there around midnight and sleep there, in order to be the first to draw water from the well ».





Institutional partnerships for promoting gender-responsive adaptation

Summary

At the institutional level as well, a number of lessons can be learned from the CCAF projects. Each project took a different approach to establishing mechanisms for integrating gender – some more systematic and others more ad hoc. Formal institutional partnerships, as exemplified in Cambodia, can strengthen cross-sectoral learning to help create conditions for gender-responsive outcomes. Other approaches were pursued by other CCAF projects, such as internal capacity-building, the use of appropriate gender-sensitive tools and assessments, as well as external reviews and advice from the CCAF global platform.

Findings

These experiences helped to identify seven enabling factors for ensuring institutions promote gender-responsiveness in adaptation:

1. Highly committed individuals backed by organizational support is a key success factor for bringing gender perspectives into projects and promoting gendered practices in institutions.
2. The involvement of multiple stakeholders representing different disciplines and areas of interventions has proven to promote cross-sectoral learning on gender.
3. Building institutional capacity at local level, by empowering local actors and engaging them in work with local groups can help address gender issues and raise accountability at commune levels.
4. The proper allocation of funds to dedicated gender institutions and for gender-focused activities is important to ensure gender-responsive adaptation.
5. Research partnerships can promote gender equity and inform adaptation outcomes, including both gender experts and sectoral experts who take a gender lens or use gender-disaggregated data.
6. Donor policies can play a role in supporting gender-responsive adaptation, by creating enabling environments for gender mainstreaming and institutionalising existing gender commitments.
7. Technical support and access to tools and resources on gender-responsive adaptation strategies can help guide project teams.

Example

In Cambodia, the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) was engaged as a key partner in implementing the CCAF project. They contributed in several ways, including building capacity of provincial-level staff on gender issues and gender-responsive strategies, conducting Rapid Gender Assessments as part of the local Vulnerability Risk Assessments, strengthening the targeting of vulnerable groups primarily women-headed households, and developing a national policy on gender and climate change. The joint involvement of MOWA, along with the two Ministries dealing with agriculture and water resources, created an opportunity for provincial level staff to work together on addressing climate change. This helped stimulate learning across sectors and established a common understanding of gender equity concerns at the local level. Overall, MOWA's involvement in the CCAF project has been a critical factor of success in terms of operationalising gender equity at different levels and strengthening women's adaptive capacities. The strong commitment and leadership from project staff at all levels, including coordination, also helped pave the way for MOWA's work and achieve these results.

The global component of the CCAF also plays an important role in sharing experience and approaches on how to integrate gender into adaptation processes. Raising awareness of gender-related approaches, south-south exchange on successful experiences, and existing guidance and tools was beneficial to several countries. The global component's support in developing knowledge and communications products on successful gender-responsive strategies helped to emphasize and incentivize gender-responsive approaches.



“At the beginning, women would sign in their husband’s name [when they came to attend meetings]. Now, they sign in their own name”

*Mr. Lidy, Provincial Department of Agriculture,
Kratie Province, Cambodia*

Findings from all countries strongly suggest that narrowing the gender gap involves recognizing barriers women face that get compounded by climate change.

With an explicit effort to address gender equality in the context of adaptation, the CCAF projects shifted the paradigm from focusing on women as vulnerable to directly empowering them as agents of change.

WAY FORWARD

Findings from all countries strongly suggest that narrowing the gender gap involves recognizing barriers women face that get compounded by climate change.

Pre-requisites to ensure adaptation projects are effectively gender-responsive include:

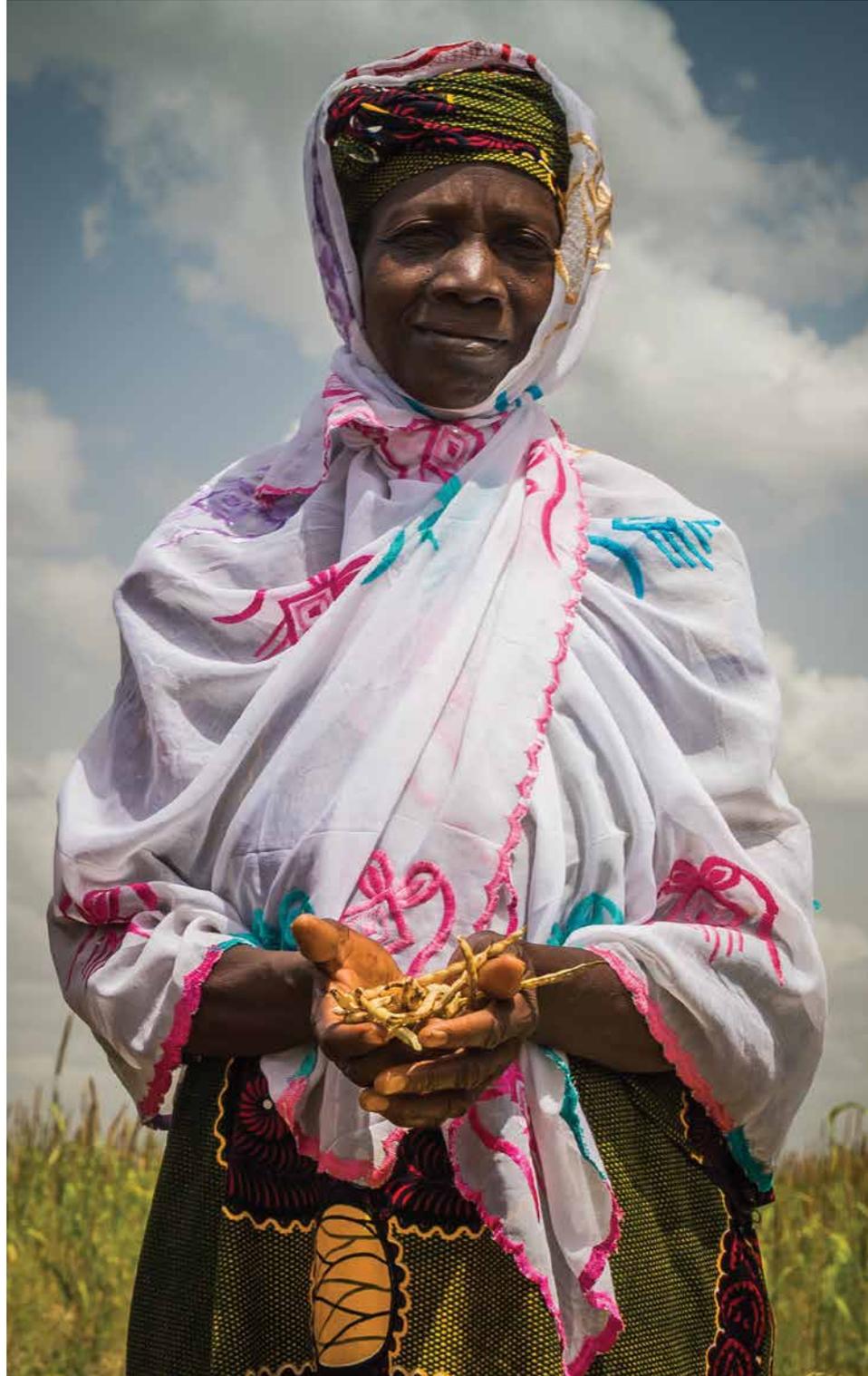
- Gender analysis, which aims to generate evidence about the complexities of gender relations at different levels, to identify concrete ways of integrating gender into all programmes, and identifying barriers to gender equality.
- Participatory approaches : mobilization and involvement of all stakeholder interests, while also promoting mutual learning and appropriate sensitizing and training on gender issues.
- Gender strategies and plans : outline key stakeholders' agreements and commitments on how to achieve gender-sensitive outcomes. They may include: gender assessments of the communities involved, gender guiding principles to shape activities, explicit references to gender in trainings and partnerships, as well as project components (policy development, research projects, pilots projects and communication/outreach), and monitoring and evaluation using sex-disaggregated and gender sensitive indicators.
- The design and use of specific practices for empowering women : Examples include:
 - Developing women's leadership capacities through training and capacity development
 - Facilitating women's physical presence at meetings and events (e.g. by choosing adequate meeting times and places)
 - Strengthening women's productive opportunities and capacities related to food security and income generation, which may involve affirmative action through quota systems to ensure that a certain percentage of women participate in workshops, consultations or demonstration fields.
 - Targeting communication to women, with information addressing their special needs, aspirations and capacities
 - Addressing women's workload, particularly in rural settings, where firewood and water collection activities are becoming increasingly time-consuming because of climate change impacts.

- Indicators and sex-disaggregated data : used to monitor how gender considerations are integrated into adaptation plans and projects. Indicators can also be used to ensure that donors and governments can establish accountability systems to track compliance with commitments to gender equality.
- Adequate use of gender expertise: identifying existing skills and resources (including existing institutional gender capacity and partnership with specialized agencies and 'tapping into' them).
- Gender-responsive budgeting : This is a valuable tool for ensuring that budgets reflect the resources required for gender-responsive responses, e.g. securing funds for various gender-based activities, hiring gender consultants, or establishing working partnerships with national or local women's organizations.

CONCLUSION

Women are becoming increasingly responsible for provisioning food, fuel, water and shelter for their families, including during the most critical periods of the year. This is further enhanced by recent trends that show a significant, and sometimes growing, proportion of households as women-headed, particularly in regions of the globe most affected by climate change. Yet adaptation continues to overemphasize women's specific vulnerabilities to climate change. This results in a tendency to undermine the roles played by women as instruments of change and decision-makers in their communities. This portrayal of women as 'vulnerable' has favoured approaches that put women at the receiving end of adaptation responses, without sufficient consideration of the roles, preferences, needs, knowledge and capacities of men and women, boys and girls at all levels' (Otzelberger 2011: ix). Adaptation responses have not sufficiently addressed the gender inequalities underlying differences in women's and men's coping strategies.

The CCAF projects have addressed this limitation and taken a pro-active approaches to ensure that their adaptation activities address underlying gender dynamics across the six countries. With an explicit effort to address gender equality in the context to adaptation, they shifted the paradigm from focusing on women as vulnerable to directly empowering them as agents of change.



UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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