



COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER

Poor communities in developing countries contribute the least to the greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change. Yet, they are the ones most severely affected by the adverse impacts of climate change. Due to a number of factors, such as having a lower adaptive capacity to cope with climate change-driven disasters and relying directly on climate-sensitive natural resources for food, shelter and livelihoods, poor communities are in the front-line of climate change impacts. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) recognizes adaptation as one of the four strategic priority areas to address climate change. Because different regions and communities suffer from different impacts, effective adaptation strategies need to be contextualized to local needs and conditions.

With this recognition, UNDP spearheaded local level adaptation work through the UNDP Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) Project piloted in 10 countries since 2008. The Project is a five-year UNDP global initiative, largely funded by the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) along with other donors. Delivering through the GEF-Small Grants Programme (SGP) and UNDP Country Office, the goal of the Project is to strengthen the resiliency of communities addressing climate change impacts. UNDP partners with the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme to enhance community mobilization, recognize volunteers' contributions and ensure inclusive participation around the project, as well as to facilitate capacity building of partner non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). Testing the Vulnerability Assessment Reduction (VRA) and other community-engagement tools, the Project is generating invaluable knowledge and lessons for replication and upscaling. The Government of Japan, the Government of Switzerland, and AusAID provides additional funding.

Gender Mainstreaming into CBA Projects

Gender mainstreaming is a critical factor to the success of the Project. Just as different communities are distinctively affected by climate change impacts, different groups within a single community have their own unique vulnerabilities.

Women, in particular, can be disproportionately affected by climate change impacts. Limited access to resources, restricted rights, lack of education, limited mobility and limited roles in decision-making increase poor women's vulnerability, which in turn can also reinforce gender inequalities. Given the different roles in households and communities, men and women have different but complementary knowledge that can support long-term adaptation strategies. Ensuring that women are able to contribute their knowledge and skills, strengthens adaptation measures, and at the same time empowers women to participate in decision-making and planning in their communities. Mainstreaming gender into the CBA process is important as part of efforts to understand the multidimensional ways that climate change impacts communities and in turn helps in identifying the best strategies for adaptation.

Cross-Practice Strategy

Applying a cross-practice approach, the UNDP CBA Project Team has partnered with UNDP Gender Team to mainstream gender in CBA small grant projects including the following initiatives.

- Developing knowledge products such as the [Gender, Climate Change and Community-Based Adaptation Guidebook](#) for designing and implementing gender sensitive community-based adaptation programmes and projects for policymakers and development practitioners such as CBOs, NGOs, governments, development agencies and other community-based practitioners;
- Creating awareness and building capacity on gender and CBA through presentations at global CBA meetings such as the recent 5th Global CBA meeting in Bangladesh;
- Building capacity on gender, climate change and CBA for the SGP National Coordinators and UNVs during their annual planning meetings in the field;

Cross-Practice Strategy (continued)

- Identifying gender-specific vulnerabilities in the formulation of CBA projects and integrating gender-inclusive adaptation practices into implementation of CBA projects with regular monitoring and evaluation;
- Collecting gender-disaggregated data on climate change impacts and CBA projects outcomes.

climate change impacts and adaptation strategies. Women also mobilize their families and communities to engage in adaptive capacities enhancing activities.



Siya Self-Help Group members in Namibia celebrate pearl millet harvest. Other CBA groups are hoping to replicate the group's success.

Examples of Gender Mainstreaming in CBA countries:

In **Guatemala**, local communities participating in the CBA project have recognized that climate change challenges increase inequities and hinder sustainable development. As a result, gender inclusion is prioritized in the CBA small-grant project formulation phase and gender considerations are translated into action during project implementation. Before the CBA project, decisions in many cases were taken only by men. Now, 57% of CBA small grants project members are women and 43% are men.



Inclusion of women in CBA projects is essential as they are active agents in addressing climate change.

In **Niger**, migration is the main coping mechanism used in the district of Tamalolo during extended dry seasons that threaten crops and livestock. Men often leave their villages to seek resources and work, but women are generally not allowed to move outside of a village as they must care for children and the elderly. Unable to adapt to climate change impacts in the same ways, women are learning different techniques to reduce their vulnerability. Utilizing women's social networks and organizational skills, CBA projects are supporting goat breeding with common and rotary funds from women's support networks. Goats are better adapted to harsh conditions and produce milk that enables women to supplement family nutritional needs.



Local voices are heard and all community members are a valuable contribution to all CBA projects.

In **Namibia**, subsistence farmers are facing increased water scarcity that threatens their crop production. Female-headed households, which have fewer resources to devote to agriculture, and fewer coping mechanisms to deal with food shortages, are among the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. In addition to teaching coping strategies such as water harvesting, crop rotation, and irrigation techniques, participants in the CBA small grants project are organized into self-help groups (SHGs) that receive training on group saving and lending, problem solving, and planning. Currently 80% of participants are women. As SHGs must work with local leaders and government, women in the groups have increased influence in decision-making by communicating

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