

Module 1: Introduction

Key message

This Module provides an introduction to gender and why it matters to climate change. It explores the common misconceptions relating to gender and gender equality, and provides a brief overview of key climate change and development priorities from a gender perspective.

- An individual's vulnerability and capacity to adapt to climate change varies according to their age, sex, gender, education, social status, wealth and access to other strategic resources (e.g. information, finance, land, etc.). There is a high degree of diversity between and within groups, making some people more vulnerable, and some more adaptable, than others.
- Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men. Gender equality refers to the equal enjoyment by males and females of all ages of rights, socially valued goods, opportunities, resources and rewards.
- A gender-responsive approach proactively seeks to introduce interventions that take into account the power relations between men and women, and supports positive changes that allow both men and women to enjoy and exercise their rights. Gender-responsive approaches include gender-sensitive, gender-specific and gender-transformative methods.
- There are many misconceptions about gender and gender equality. If these are not examined in detail, they can hinder the effectiveness of a climate change programme or project. Misconceptions need to be debunked by involving gender experts and social scientists early in the project planning process.
- Integrating gender perspectives into climate change and development priorities is vital for addressing underlying inequalities between men and women.
- Engaging both men and women at all levels of the programme and project cycle ensures that they are able to decide on strategies that are appropriate for their local context. Men and women have different abilities, knowledge, skills and talents to contribute to adaptation solutions.

Mainstreaming gender by carrying out gender analyses to inform critical stages in programme, project and policy development will ensure that the needs of all groups are considered, ultimately strengthening community resilience to climate change.

Module Objectives

1. Introduce key concepts and definitions related to gender, climate change, vulnerability and adaptive capacity, and the linkages between these concepts.
2. Explore common misconceptions about gender, gender equality and climate change.
3. Provide a brief overview of key climate change and development priorities from a gender perspective.
4. Explain various gender responsive approaches in relation to climate change initiatives.

Climate change is a growing threat to the people of the Pacific islands. Rising sea levels and extreme climate events – such as floods, droughts and cyclones – are already evident and are affecting livelihoods, food security, water availability, and stability of communities. Climate change is likely to affect all people living in the Pacific islands, however it will affect some individuals more than others because people have different vulnerabilities and capacities to cope with climate change.



Source: SPC, 2013

An individual's vulnerability and resilience to climate change varies according to their age, sex, gender, education, societal status, wealth and access to other strategic resources (e.g. information, finance, land, etc.). Gender and existing social inequalities may affect whether women and men can make the same choices and act upon these choices. A demographic survey conducted in the Solomon Islands (SPC, 2009) found that 40% of women surveyed did not have a say in one or two of the following household decisions: how their family's money is spent in regard to major household purchases, daily needs, their own health care, and visits to their family. A further 6.4% said they have no say in any decisions made for the household. If women are not able to participate in or make decisions about how to invest household income, or how to adjust livelihoods based on climate change impacts or where to go to get assistance to manage these changes, they are less able to adapt and are more vulnerable to climate change impacts. However, gender should be considered in the wider context of other factors that determine vulnerabilities. For instance, a female village chief is more likely to be able to rebuild her home after a cyclone than a single mother living in an urban settlement. However, the mother may be less vulnerable than a girl with a disability living in the same settlement. There are differences between individuals, as well as within the gender groups.

Sex and gender



Sex refers to biological differences between women and men. These differences exist for reproductive purposes and are essentially fixed.

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men. The concept of gender includes expectations about the characteristics, abilities and behaviours of women and men - what people believe women and men can and should do, and what they consider as 'feminine' or 'masculine'.

Gender is learnt through social institutions such as family, church, school, government and community, and varies across different cultures. The roles expected of women in a rural community in the Solomon Islands may be different from those expected of women in a city in Samoa. The responsibilities of a man in Kiribati may be different from those of a man in Palau. Transgender groups and individuals should also be considered, as they may identify their gender role as being different to that expected of their sex.

Gender roles and expectations can change over time and can be affected by changes in economics, politics, technology, education, environment, the influence of other cultures and the mass media, public advocacy, crisis and conflict.

See Annex 1 for a full list of key concepts and definitions.



Tanna men building fruit dryer Source:SPC-GIZ,2013

Gender and climate change vulnerability

Gender is a critical determinant of climate change vulnerability. Along with other characteristics such as age, education and social status, gender determines a person's vulnerability to climate change, as well as their capacity to adapt. Differences between men and women in terms of their power, rights, relations and roles mean that their vulnerability (and adaptive capacity) to climate change is not the same; men and women are differently affected by climate change. It is generally acknowledged that greater vulnerability is experienced by women because they have less power and rights, and fewer choices and opportunities than men.

To illustrate the relationship between gender, vulnerability and adaptive capacity to climate change, we can use the following examples:

- Opinions on climate change priorities are often sought from community leaders and household heads. In this context, women may be excluded because they are usually not considered as being the head of households. In some cases, they may miss the opportunity to contribute their skills and knowledge because cultural norms assign decision making responsibility to men. This reduces the capacity of women to adapt to climate change because they lack access to information and may not be engaged in decision making and training opportunities.
- Another example is the expectation within a society that a man's role is to provide for his family. If a natural disaster causes major losses in the main cash crop that men produce, they may feel significant stress, burden and social pressure to find another way to make money and support their families.

In both cases, these roles and behaviours are not 'natural'; they are based on the society's expectations of what men and women can and should do and their respective 'place' in the society. Despite these differences, among the many adaptation and mitigation initiatives under way in the Pacific region, few integrate gender dimensions across their design and implementation, and yet overlooking gender can greatly weaken the outcomes of these initiatives for the resilience of the whole community.

Differences between men and women exist at multiple levels, including:

- **Roles and responsibilities** – men and women have different roles and responsibilities assigned to them (or expected of them), which can influence their vulnerability as well as capacity to cope with and adapt to climate change.
- **Access to and management of strategic resources** – the ability to access and manage information, training, land, finance, technologies, social networks and support and other strategic resources necessary for wellbeing and long term resilience varies between men and women.
- **Participation and decision making** – men and women may not have the same opportunities when it comes to economic and social participation and political representation. They also have different decision making powers at the household, community and societal levels. These differences need to be considered to ensure men and women are able to make choices about their safety, livelihood options and adaptation measures.



Gender, inequality and vulnerability

Social norms reinforce the gender power imbalance, impacting on all aspects of women's and men's lives, including:

- their access to education, employment, economic assets, justice;
- their participation in decision making;
- the management of household assets and natural resources;
- their relationships, the spaces they can occupy and their mobility.

As a result women are more likely than men to be vulnerable to poverty, exploitation, oppression, violence and to the adverse impacts of climate change (UNEP, 2011).

Adaptive Capacity



Adaptive capacity refers to attitudes, behaviours, knowledge and skills that enable individuals and communities to anticipate, cope with, resist or recover from, and reduce their susceptibility to climate-related hazards. Adaptive capacity extends beyond the technical knowledge of climate change impacts. It also requires people to be able to make choices, fully exercise their rights, and utilise their knowledge and skills.

Examining gender in the context of climate change helps to identify how men and women will be affected and what interventions are needed to reduce, rather than reinforce, the inequalities between them (as well as reduce vulnerability). Failing to examine gender considerations can greatly weaken the outcomes of climate change initiatives, and may even result in maladaptation or men and women being worse off than before the initiative was introduced. In short, gender does affect a person's vulnerability and adaptive capacity to climate change.



The Solomon Islands National Disaster Risk Management Plan takes note of a lesson learnt from recent disasters: several cases of misappropriation and abuse of power by men were reported in relation to the distribution of relief supplies. It is often the case that men use their power in such situations and deprive women and children of equal access to assistance and aid provision. This led to the recommendation that women should be put in charge of the distribution process.

In Fiji, the gender assessment of the response to flooding in 2012 found that women were more vulnerable to violence when they distributed relief supplies alone without the presence of men. It was therefore recommended that in future men and women should work together in distributing the relief items.

Recognising and responding to these differences will support more effective climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes, projects and policies. This may mean working differently. In the context of disaster risk management the early and meaningful engagement of all stakeholders in deciding how response efforts are planned, managed and how relief supplies should be distributed will ensure better access to support to those who need it most. We need to look carefully at how priorities are set, who is involved in decision-making processes, how resources are managed and allocated and who has access to these. Monitoring this requires the use of gender indicators (refer to case studies in Module 3).

Failure to consider existing gender dynamics can undermine sustainable development efforts. Mainstreaming gender in response efforts in Fiji involved changing human resource management practices to take into account women's personal security. This ensured that both men and women could fully contribute to the distribution of relief items. Gender mainstreaming ensures that women and men equally access and benefit from resources and services provided by climate change and disaster risk reduction initiatives and is likely to make a significant difference in building resilience to climate change.

Common Misconceptions

There are many common misconceptions about gender and gender equality. These misconceptions often affect the way programmes are developed, what actions are prioritised, and who is involved in implementation. If these misconceptions are not recognised or dealt with at the start of climate change initiatives, they can play an important limiting role on the project, affecting the ability of men and women to contribute their skills and expertise to strengthening the resilience of all members of society.

Misconception 1: Gender equality is all about women and projects focusing on women.

Gender equality is about women and men. It is important to remember that:

- There are differences as well as similarities between men and women in terms of their roles, responsibilities, access to resources and decision making. Understanding this will help to identify the types of inequalities that can act as barriers and equalities that can be used as opportunities towards developing strategies for adaptation and resilience.
- Some programmes and projects may focus specifically on women because women may already be disadvantaged and require additional support. For example, women subsistence farmers may require targeted training and support because existing agricultural extension services may have targeted only men in the past.

Fact: A gender-responsive program targets both women and men and recognises their different needs, skills and priorities.



A proverb from the Marshall Islands talks about three parts of a canoe which are taken from the structure of the family – both marital relations and the relationship between a mother and her children. Rojak means ‘boom,’ and rojak äaan and rojak kôrâ are the names of the upper and lower booms, respectively, which support the edges of the sail. Literally, rojak äaan means ‘male boom’ and rojak kôrâ means ‘female boom.’ Ejnar Aerök explained the meaning of these names by saying, “Jerbäl ippân doon bwe en maroš äaan wa e,” which means “They work together so the boat can move forward” (Aerök 2009). Just as a husband and wife must work together to have a happy and successful life, so are both booms necessary to support the sail that in turn propels the canoe (Miller 2010; Aerök 2009; Waan Aelöñ in Majel 2004).

Misconception 2: We should not question women’s roles and men’s roles, as this is part of our Pacific culture and traditions.

Cultures change and evolve over time. Women’s and men’s role today are not the same as 50 years ago.

- Cultural change is happening everywhere, including in the Pacific Island countries. For example, as a result of globalisation, urbanisation, and education, many island women are engaged in paid employment and some have moved away from their traditional roles (e.g. child rearing, looking after the elderly, etc.) or have reallocated domestic chores to paid housekeepers.
- Exposure to climate change may alter traditional gender roles. Women may need to venture out on canoes to go fishing instead of staying closer to the shore, and men may need to be involved in processing and selling crops, not just preparing the land for farming. Since culture is always changing in response to broader social, economic and political factors, men’s and women’s roles are also changing.

Fact: Understanding the dynamic context in which culture shapes the roles of men and women can help us identify opportunities to strengthen the engagement of men and women. By doing this, we can strengthen climate change initiatives.



"In Ugi community in Makira Province, Solomon Islands we started with some of the risk assessment tools with the community with regard to awareness and information sharing. The initial DRR [disaster risk reduction] activity involved a fair cross section of representation from men, women and youths. As a result, men in the area now seem to consult with women most especially when it is something to do with disasters... As a follow on to the project activities, further awareness and information dissemination on climate change was conducted with the children as the focus group. It is very fascinating to see the involvement of women in these follow up activities with the children. We therefore realised that the involvement of women in child-focused activities will definitely contribute positively to the sustainability and ownership of project activities. The women are also very helpful in interpreting concepts and ideas in the local language for the children. I personally feel that this might not be the case if women were not involved at the initial stages."

Fred Talo, Disaster Risk Management, Private Practitioner, Solomon Islands. Contribution to Climate Change & Development (CCD) Community of the Pacific Solution Exchange Query: Gender and Climate Change.

Misconception 3: Climate change is a scientific matter, so it has nothing to do with gender issues.

Climate change impacts on people and their well-being and way of life.

- Science allows us to understand and predict the impacts of climate change more accurately. We then need to apply this knowledge to examine how climate change might affect different people, including women, men, girls and boys.
- Even the most technical aspects of climate change – such as scenarios for modelling the impact of climate change on Pacific fisheries – have gender implications. We can identify these when we think about the way this information will be used. For example, men and women use fisheries resources in different ways; women tend to fish closer to the shore, while men tend to fish out in the deeper waters. In order for scientific information to protect livelihoods, it must reach the right people involved in managing these resources.

Fact: Scientific information such as climate science needs to be packaged, presented and communicated effectively to different audiences so that they can make informed decisions about how they manage the changes they are facing.



Source: Talo, 2013



A climate change project had the following project objective: To improve the capacity of the community to adapt to climate change through a community based ecosystem approach to fisheries management. Initial assessments found that, aside from climate change impacts, other environmental issues such as unsustainable land practices were also affecting coastal fisheries.

The project officer invited the whole community (men and women) to a meeting to identify possible adaptation options. However, only men attended because in this community fishing is the traditional role of men, while women are tasked with agricultural activities. Consultations for the project continued with only men present and as a result it was decided that the project would focus on supporting fishermen to better access off-shore fisheries, and reduce the pressure on coastal fisheries and provide the men with an alternative source of income.

Given the above case consider the following questions: Were the concerns of the whole community addressed in this case? Who was left out?

Including social scientists can greatly benefit a climate change project. A social assessment of this project could have identified women's roles in agriculture and land management which contributes to impacts on coastal fisheries downstream. A result of this information a more effective approach towards including all members in the community could have been devised and may have led to the introduction of adaptation options that addressed the multiple causes of the project problem, and have benefitted a wider cross section of the community.

Misconception 4: Women are vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change.

In some circumstances, some groups of women are more vulnerable to climate change impacts. Some groups of men, however, are also particularly vulnerable, such as those whose livelihoods depend on agriculture, who are unemployed, have a disability or are elderly and living alone. It is not always the case that women are more vulnerable than men. This means that the skills and knowledge that women possess and the powerful role they can play as agents of change within society are often overlooked.

- We need to understand why and how different groups of people may be vulnerable to climate change. Identifying and assessing the determinants of vulnerability will pinpoint where we need to direct our focus and interventions to reduce vulnerability and increase people's capacity to adapt.
- Women and men have different but complementary abilities, knowledge, skills and talents for adapting to climate change.

Fact: Women play a pivotal role in natural resources management and in other productive activities at the household and community levels. This puts them in a position to contribute to livelihood strategies adapted to changing environmental realities. Their extensive knowledge and expertise – that can also be used in climate change mitigation, disaster reduction and adaptation strategies – make them effective actors and agents of change (UNDP, 2013).



"I remember that during the development of the National Climate Change Policy [in Tuvalu] it was really interesting to learn how both men and women responded as to how we can address the impacts of climate change, including sea level rise. In some cases the men folk seem to be more traditionalists, especially the older men, while women tended to think about the future of their children."

Loia M. Tausi, Project Co-ordinator Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change (PACC), Tuvalu Contribution to the Climate Change & Development (CCD) Community of the Pacific Solution Exchange Query: Gender and Climate Change

Misconception 5: The best way to ensure gender equality is by having women attend meetings when decisions about climate change are being discussed.

Making sure men and women participate equally in decision making requires much more than meeting attendance. Moving away from making women's 'tokenistic' representation in decision-making processes means encouraging them to speak, contribute, and freely express their opinions. By considering the viewpoints and perspectives of both men and women, a climate change initiative will benefit from this holistic understanding of what the community needs are and possible ways of addressing them.



Numerous studies show that women's empowerment leads to gains in productivity, environmental sustainability and in confronting the ill effects of climate change (UNDP, 2011)

Fact: Including women in consultation is a good first step; however it is also necessary to make their participation meaningful. This may mean holding separate discussion groups for men and women, or having a female facilitator with whom women may be more comfortable.



"Initial consultations for the projects were held with both women and men from all the communities in Shefa province, however we saw that only a select few were speaking – mainly men and the community elders. When we looked back at the results of these consultations we saw that information was one sided, that is it was focused mainly on issues concerning men such as crops and impacts of climate change and lack of infrastructure.

Taking note of this we decided to carry out another consultation and with this we brought in a 3D model of the island and ensured that community members were divided into groups of men, women and the youths. This was done to ensure that all were able to voice their opinions. For the first time in this project, women were allowed into the meeting house and this made discussions more lively as the men's group would always look over curiously at the women to see or hear what they were saying and doing." Ian Ierect Project Officer, PACC Vanuatu

Misconception 6: It is sufficient to address gender issues in projects by addressing the differences in the immediate needs of women and men.

Many climate change programmes and projects consider the practical, more immediate needs of women and men, such as access to food, water and technologies. Whilst this is a good first step towards addressing the needs of communities, to ensure the overall sustainability of a project it is important to also consider longer term or strategic needs. This is because gender inequalities such as differences in men's and women's access to resources and their participation in decision making are deeply embedded in social practices and thus require long-term interventions.



Gender inequalities intersect with climate risks and vulnerabilities. Women's historic disadvantages – their limited access to resources, restricted rights, and a muted voice in shaping decisions – make them highly vulnerable to climate change (UNDP, 2007)

We often shy away from dealing with these issues as they can be sensitive and we would rather leave them to be addressed by the communities themselves. Even though climate change initiatives may not be 'gender equality or empowerment programmes', addressing and consciously integrating gender issues can increase the effectiveness and success of initiatives.



"When we introduced our project we had some challenges in our pilot communities. Firstly, it was acceptance of the project in communities – mostly on the part of the men who had doubts about if the women could do such training. Once we had convinced the communities that allowing the women to participate in the training at the Barefoot College would benefit their community they were more receptive. However upon returning, one of the women faced an issue where a male figure in the family did not give her access to the key to open the venue therefore she could not begin her consultations and training. We realised that though we had provided the women with the necessary training and materials to implement the solar project, social acceptance of the project still hadn't fully been achieved. To deal with these issues we had to carry out gender training and highlight rights and roles of men and women.

Also as the women had to leave their village and their homes to attend the training, their husbands began to notice how much work their wives did around the house and they are now more appreciative of the work that they do. Also seeing the increased confidence in the women after acquiring their new skills has made the community realise just how much women do and can contribute to the community. Not only will this project provide communities with a source of renewable energy that will ease the burden from buying other forms of energy, it also enables women in communities to be better empowered and emphasises their ability in contributing to community development."

Katalaine Duaibe, UN Women

Addressing strategic needs requires a good understanding of the specific gender relations and decision-making processes in a particular country or community. It is recommended to work with gender experts to support this process and to help the programme or project find entry points to address both practical and strategic needs of women and men.



“Often when you go to communities women usually are preparing the refreshments for the consultations and because of this they either are not able to attend the consultations or they missed out on different sections of the consultations. From a ‘community consultation’ perspective, this meant that we really were not involving the community as a whole and because of this we potentially were missing out on vital information and vice versa for these women. So to ensure the active participation of men and women in community consultation our team made an active decision to cater the community consultations ourselves to ensure that women were properly engaging in discussions.”

Alita Goneva, Fiji Red Cross Society, ‘Climate Change Adaptation to Protect Human Health’ Project

Misconception 7: Both men and women will benefit from the interventions so there is no need to differentiate.

Many climate change strategies focus on technological solutions and infrastructure, which are designed based on the assumption that everybody will benefit. However, technology and infrastructure are used by people, and failure to take into account the way they are used and by whom may lead to interventions that are not viable or useful for all.

- Men and women have different roles, responsibilities, access to resources and decision making so they might not benefit from a programme or project in the same way.
- Men and women have different needs and priorities. For example, construction of a wharf benefits the traders (men and women), but it may adversely impact on marine resources, especially in the coastal zones where women collect many sea products for food and for handicraft production. The solution is not necessarily to avoid building the wharf, but to pay greater attention to aspects that might mitigate the gender impacts, for example, the location of the wharf, or finding alternatives for women’s livelihood.
- There is a high degree of diversity within gender groups. An intervention that benefits older women may not benefit girls. Similarly, a project that is beneficial to male workers may be detrimental to unemployed men.

Misconception 8: Gender-based violence has nothing to do with climate change.

Climate change may increase the intensity of disasters such as tropical cyclones, floods and droughts. Both women and men experience higher stress levels immediately before disasters because they need to protect their family members, and after disasters as a result of the loss of their homes and possessions.



Evidence shows that during and after disasters, levels of gender-based violence often increase. After two tropical cyclones hit Tafea Province in Vanuatu in 2011, the Tanna Women’s Counselling Centre reported a 300% increase in new domestic violence cases.

Fact: It may not always be possible to establish a direct cause and effect between gender-based violence and climate change. However, as demonstrated by this example, climate change impacts can intensify levels of emotion and tension among people. If these conditions are not properly managed, or if there is lack of law and order, it can lead to conflict and violence, which in turn increases the vulnerability of women, children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Attention needs to be given to gender relations within the context of climate-related stresses.

Misconception 9: “I’m a woman so the gender perspective is covered.”

Although women often have an insight into gender issues, being a woman does not qualify someone to be a ‘gender expert’.



“From my experience, some women belittle other women or they are not supportive of empowering other women. Therefore, being a woman does not mean better outcomes will be achieved for all women.”

Comments from a participant attending the Gender and Climate Change Training of Trainers, Fiji

Fact: Integrating gender perspectives into a project, programme or policy requires skills and training in gender analysis and other gender tools. It is important to do it right by working with gender specialists and social scientists who have this specialised expertise. Gender specialists and social scientists can be women or men.

Taking a gender-responsive approach

To adapt, countries must reduce the causes of climate change vulnerability and build the resilience of all people, and everyone must contribute to the effort. The implication of existing gender inequality when designing and implementing a climate change initiative is that women may face constraints due to their unequal social status. Gender inequality contributes to people’s vulnerability and limits their capacity to adapt. It is important for climate change initiatives to adopt an approach that will empower women and men, and to build in actions that will contribute to the reduction of gender inequality.

A gender-responsive approach proactively seeks to introduce interventions that take into account the power relations between men and women, and to support positive changes that allow both men and women to enjoy and exercise their rights. There are varying degrees to which projects, programmes and policies may address gender, as shown in the box below. Being aware of these approaches can allow us as climate change practitioners to evaluate how gender responsive our programmes are. This information can also help with the adjustment of project approaches to ensure that they are benefiting from the full advantages of integrating gender.

Gender-responsive approaches



A gender-sensitive policy or programme recognises gender inequality as an obstacle that may deprive women of the same opportunities as men and prevent them from getting equal benefits from development initiatives. The focus is on identifying and responding to the different needs of men and women, but not actually challenging the discriminatory attitudes, behaviours, stereotypes and practices that may result in gender inequality in the first place.

A gender-specific policy or programme explicitly focuses on one group – usually women – in order to address inequalities and bring women on to an equal playing field with men. An example is a women’s empowerment policy or a programme on women’s rights.

A gender-transformative policy or programme directly seeks to change – or as the name suggests, transform – conditions and practices that unfairly treat men or women. A strong emphasis is placed on women’s empowerment and men’s engagement to achieve equality between the two sexes.

The table below provides examples of gender-sensitive, gender-specific and gender-transformative approaches, as well as gender blind, within the context of a climate change programme or project.

Table 1. Gender approaches continuum

Gender blind	Gender sensitive	Gender specific	Gender transformative
Description: Projects that create, exacerbate or ignore gender inequalities in pursuit of project goals	Description: Projects that maintain existing gender dynamics and roles in pursuit of project goals	Description: Projects that support and improve outcomes for a specific gender group in pursuit of project goals	Description: Projects that actively reduce gender inequalities to enhance achievement of project goals
Example: A project that consults with only men about the potential impacts of climate change on agriculture (assuming that men are the target group because women stay at home and have nothing to do with agricultural processes).	Example: A project that provides training on climate-resilient farming practices to men, while women receive training in tasks such as cooking and processing of garden food to increase food security.	Example: A project that provides information, training, equipment and finance to women to improve their knowledge and capacity to undertake climate-resilient farming.	Example: A project that trains women and men in climate-resilient farming methods. Consultation activities support the full participation of women in decision-making responsibilities, and alternative livelihood opportunities are established.
Outcome: The project is beneficial to men because they gain knowledge and information. This increases their control over agricultural technologies, and women are excluded from using the technologies, which mean they have to find other sources of livelihood.	Outcome: The project recognises the different roles men and women play in agriculture and food security. However, it maintains the existing gender norms and divisions of labour. The deeper inequalities between men and women are not examined or addressed.	Outcome: The project recognises the disadvantages faced by women and focuses on delivering specific resources so they have the same opportunities as men.	Outcome: The project is effective in challenging gender norms about women's role in decision making, and in transforming relationships between men and women so they can work together in adapting to climate change.

Gender mainstreaming



Climate change mainstreaming is about integrating climate risks into development planning processes and decision making. This means incorporating risk considerations into every aspect of policy and project development processes (PACC, 2014).

Similar to this, gender mainstreaming refers to the process whereby needs and interests of both women and men are taken into account systematically across all programmes, projects and organisational structures. It actively engages men and women in defining goals and priorities that are to be addressed by development interventions.

Mainstreaming gender into climate change initiatives requires linking goals and priorities articulated in the national gender equality policy with those stated in the national climate change policies and strategies. It also requires paying constant attention to gender equality and how this translates into policies, strategies and interventions for sustainable development and climate change adaptation.

In the same way that climate change is a crosscutting issue, gender equality should be embedded in all sector development plans – not just climate change – in order to strategically promote gender equality across the entire spectrum of development needs and issues. For gender mainstreaming to be effective, it requires long-term commitment because it involves both technical and political dimensions of organisational change, institutional capacity building and reflective learning.

Applying a gender lens to key climate change and development priorities

In this section, we extend the concepts, approaches and information presented thus far to identify some of the gender issues that need to be considered as part of the design and implementation of climate change initiatives. The section provides a brief overview of how a gender lens can be applied to key climate change and development priorities in the Pacific islands. More detailed discussions relevant to the specific development sectors are presented in Module 3.

Food production and food security

Climate change will affect food production all along the food chain, from direct impacts on primary production which may lower crop yields, to indirect impacts such as damage to infrastructure (for example roads) from extreme events, making transport of food difficult. Climate change impacts, such as temperature and rainfall changes, more intense flooding and droughts, saltwater intrusion and ocean acidification, will compound existing threats to food security, for example unsustainable fishing and land use practices and declining biodiversity.

Men and women are often involved in different aspects of food production and preparation:

- In some countries men are often involved in commercial forms of agriculture and will face the pressure to cope with damage to crops and reduced productivity due to the impacts of climate change.
- Women are often involved in subsistence agriculture, but in many countries women are playing an increasing role in commercial agriculture and value addition. Despite this, not all agricultural extension services target women.
- Women are often responsible for food preparation and have traditional knowledge that can contribute to identifying successful adaptation strategies.
- Women and men often have differentiated roles in fisheries activities. Women are more likely to carry out near shore activities, whereas offshore fishing is usually undertaken by men.
- While women often make decisions about what crops to plant, men usually make decisions about how much money will be spent on purchasing seeds and materials, or which land will be used for farming. Similarly, women are often responsible for going to the markets to sell their produce but they do not have a say in how the earnings will be spent.

Water

Water is already very scarce in some island countries and territories like Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Tokelau and Tuvalu. Atolls are particularly affected, due to heavy reliance on rainwater and a slender groundwater lens. The causes of water scarcity and reduced water quality are not solely climate related, and include unsustainable use of water, lack of maintenance of equipment, and pollution of underground water from activities like livestock production and poor sanitation and waste management. Climate change impacts such as saltwater intrusion and changes in rainfall patterns will likely add to these problems and further reduce the availability of safe drinking water in most Pacific island countries.

Men and women use and manage water resources in different ways:

- Men are more likely to use and manage water for agriculture and livestock production, while women are often responsible for household water usage and its management.
- Water-borne diseases affect everyone, but children and the elderly are most at risk. When a community experiences an outbreak of disease, women are usually tasked with caring for the sick in addition to their usual day-to-day activities.
- Sanitation programmes tend to target women because of their roles in care and household water management. As men play an important leadership role within their families and communities, it is also vital that they be engaged, so that they understand and actively contribute to ensuring household sanitation practices and appropriate management.
- In some cases, women's traditional knowledge about water resources is critical. During a drought in the Federated States of Micronesia, women's knowledge about the islands' hydrology allowed them to easily find places to dig wells for drinking water. Women are not normally involved with decision making. however the information they provided benefited the entire community (Anderson, 2002).

Energy

Many Pacific island countries and territories are remote, isolated, and scattered over large areas of ocean. Coupled with small populations and markets, this leads to relatively high per unit energy costs. This limits the ability of everyone to access energy.

Men and women both need and use energy, but the main differences include:

- Men and women perform different roles and activities, and therefore they have different energy needs. For example men may prioritise fuel for fishing boats and women may prioritise fuel for cooking.
- In some communities, men are responsible for chopping timber for firewood while women are responsible for carrying it back to the house.

- The decision to purchase solar panels and generators may rest with male heads of households, rather than women. This may also affect how such technologies are used and who uses them.
- National governments often prioritise energy policies that focus on transport and large-scale energy infrastructure to maintain and expand the overall energy supply network. The success of these policies is often measured by the existence of the energy infrastructure. In some cases this fails to recognise other issues that can hinder access such as affordability, social status and governance issues.

Disaster risk reduction

Climate change is likely to lead to an increase in the intensity of disasters such as cyclones, floods, droughts and severe storms. Communities in the Pacific use many diverse strategies to cope with and respond to disasters and extreme weather events.

Both men and women play critical roles in the preparation phase and recovery process but there are some notable differences:

- Men, particularly those with greater levels of power and authority, are usually the ones informed and consulted by response agencies, including governments, and they directly participate in the decision-making and management processes for disaster risk management. This could mean that women's needs and priorities are not properly addressed in early warning systems, preparedness and during the recovery process.
- Men often make decisions about what to do in times of disaster and women may have little influence in decision making.
- Women may not have the same capacity to evacuate or react to disasters as men, as they may have limited mobility because they are looking after children, the elderly, people with disabilities and other vulnerable members of the family.
- Men and women have different knowledge and roles in processing and storing food, which can be useful in times of drought, cyclones and disaster events.
- Women may not have access to or own resources they need to rebuild their homes and recover from a disaster.

Policies and strategies

Many climate change strategies are gender blind and do not take into account the differences in terms of roles, knowledge and priorities of women and men. Greater vulnerability of women is acknowledged in some strategies related to climate change (for example the Samoa National Adaptation Plan of Action, the Solomon Islands National Climate Change Policy, and the Fiji Climate Change Policy) but very few propose strategies to directly address the causes of vulnerability.



“Leaders understand that gender inequality is imposing a high personal, social and economic cost on Pacific people and nations, and that improved gender equality will make a significant contribution to creating a prosperous, stable and secure Pacific for all current and future.”

Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration, 30 August 2012, Rarotonga, Cook Islands

Gender equity is a process that empowers women so they have equivalent rights and opportunities to men. It is paramount to the realisation of sustainable development. This process includes the formulation of policies, strategies and legislation that removes discrimination against women. Gender equality is not a matter confined to the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), nor is it only a matter to be dealt with by the Ministries of Women. It is an important development priority for all national governments and is relevant to all sectoral policies, including climate change.

Gender analysis



Gender analysis is a process of examining the roles, knowledge, capacity and assets of women and men, as the first step in planning efficient development strategies, programmes and projects that address both men's and women's needs, and reduce the inequalities that exist between them.

Gender analysis is used to design, implement, monitor and evaluate programme interventions and policy decisions to make sure the diverse needs of women and men are addressed, that gender inequality is tackled, and that programmes do not exacerbate gender inequality.

In the case of climate change programmes, a gender analysis contributes to a better understanding of the social dimension of climate change impacts, including how men and women differ in their experiences of and vulnerability to climate change. It also contributes to the identification of the diverse capacities and knowledge within communities and households to support adaptation to climate change, and to help develop adaptation strategies that are more responsive to the capacities, needs and priorities of all members of society.



Climate change practitioners often turn to colleagues or staff responsible for the gender portfolio to review and comment on policy or programming documents from a 'gender perspective' without having a clear understanding of what this entails. In addition, comments are often sought in the final hour, giving very little time for a proper assessment to be conducted. To avoid falling into this trap, consider the following questions:

1. Will gender issues be considered at all stages of the policy, programme or project cycle, from planning and design through to implementation and evaluation?
2. Is a gender specialist or a social scientist included in the project management team? Have they been properly briefed about the project?
3. Have you allowed enough time for the gender specialist to review and comment on the project documents?
4. When you ask for comments from a 'gender perspective', consider asking for:
 - (a) How the policy, programme or project could be improved or strengthened to ensure it is gender responsive;
 - (b) Identification of potential issues, gaps, opportunities and risks that may promote or hinder the achievement of gender equality;
 - (c) Recommended strategies for effectively communicating and engaging with a diverse representation of men, women, boys and girls in the consultation activities;
 - (d) Recommended strategies for gathering and analysing age and sex disaggregated data;
 - (e) Development of gender indicators for monitoring and evaluation;
 - (f) How the policy, programme or project aligns with the priorities set in the national gender equality and women's empowerment policies.

What will you do with the comments and information provided through the gender assessment? How will they be integrated into the development and/or finalisation of the project documents? What time have you set aside to do this?

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