

# Gender Dimensions of Climate Change

By Esther Mwaura-Muiru

## GROOTS

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# Effects of Climate Change

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Rising temperatures on both land and sea (Global Warming) has resulted to

- frequency and intensity of extreme weather : floods, drought, earthquakes, bush fires e.t.c
- Displacement, destruction of built up infrastructure (dams, dykes, buildings, transport systems), increased incidence of diseases.

Effects are more pronounced in developing countries due

- over-reliance on natural environment for basic survival
- poverty and low capacity to mitigate the impacts

According to International Panel of Climate Change (IPCC), over 90% of global warming is caused by human caused emissions.

# Effects of Climate changes on both women and men

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- Subsistence farming is threatened by floods and drought. In developing countries 60-80% is by women.
- Men often migrate to urban centers for alternative employment while women have to double their efforts to provide food in the ever reducing rural farm production.
- Rising incidences of water bornes disease means increased care for families by women.
- In the tropical countries more variety and incidences of diseases have been recorded. Malaria in particular has compounded health problems of pregnant women and children.
- Increased cost of health care put resource pressure on both men and women.
- Scarcity of water and energy increases women's burden that denies them opportunity to engage in other forms of capacity development (e.g education)
- In many urban settlements, women headed household are located closest to areas most prone to flooding. These areas lack adequate Infrastructure (transport, health, sanitation, energy).
- Also investments on infrastructure often favors urban to rural where majority of women lives.
- During floods, girls are more likely than boys to miss classes ( inability to wade/swim)
- During the 1997/1998 Elnino, more than 60% people who died from a collapsed a building in Nairobi city were women some with children strapped children behind their back.
- Reduction of means of production (land, water) in communities has exacerbated wars and clashes caused male deaths leaving women with huge family burdens

# Adapting to Climate Change

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- The Union of Cooperatives “Las Brumas” in Nicaragua organizes over 1200 women farmers working on sustainable and organic farming methods amidst civil war, flooding, environmental degradation
- Construction Resource and Development Center in Jamaica trains women in simple construction techniques that strengthen roofs to be resistant to hurricanes
- The Network of Pintadas in Brazil, working in 30 communities, build resilience to drought through collective strategies such as cisterns for water storage, collecting rainwater, desalinization and collecting food reserves, accessible to all



# Adapting to Climate Change

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- Solar energy and the famous “three stove jiko” in East Africa are examples of alternative source of energy accessible to women.
- Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangsthan in Bangladesh provides “boat” education to over 90,000 families cut off from schools by floods. This has improved the number of girls who attend classes.



# Adapting to Climate Change

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- GROOTS International through a program on disaster to reconstruction production has empowered women to lead in building resilience communities.



# Climate Change Mitigation

## Different roles by women and Men

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- Men and women have equal responsibilities. However, men have more political, education and other decision making powers than women.
- Men own land. Only 5% of women in Kenya are land owners (registered). Men effective decision making in appropriate land management is key.
- As stewards of natural resources, women poses a body of knowledge on key ecosystem managements and threats.
- Women traditional knowledge in subsistence farming is vital which unlike large scale mono crop farm can sustainably withstand harsh climate conditions.
- More women than men are organized in tree planting self help group.

# Proposal to Enhance Gender Equality in the context of Climate Change

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- Although adaptation to climate change measures are essential, they must not replace the need to address mitigation efforts e.g reduction of emissions from fossil fuels and other greenhouse gases.
- Analysis of existing infrastructures particularly in regard to dams, dykes, buildings, roads, drainage system e.t.c to assess their capacity to withstand predicted effects of climate change.
- Policy aimed on climate mitigation and adaptation should integrate precautionary principles. E.g In Brazil biofuel, as alternative source of energy has threatened women and poor people's access to land for household production
- Decisions on infrastructure development must be informed by subsequent threats of climate change and not primarily by economic gains
- Equal representation by women and men in all decision making is vital
- Development of safe public transport for women and men to reduce emission.

# Proposal to Enhance Gender Equality in the context of Climate Change

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- All over the world, community led initiatives e.g school boats, household solar energy, construction, tree planting, traditional farming and land management have shown to be more resilient to external threats. Most of these initiatives are women led. More investment is required to strengthen and scale them up.
- **Capacity** development of grassroots women's networks so they can undertake community research, risk mapping, and propose action plans and collaborate with government to reduce potential damage
- Education on the threats of climate change is key. Creation of community and culturally accessible communication systems that reach out to rural and indigenous groups in their local language (such as community radio).
- Diversification of sharing knowledge and innovative practices - e.g community to community exchanges and learning's.
- Recognize the critical role poor women play in natural resource management and the delicate relationships they are juggling as agricultural workers and family insurers of food security and the need to protect the environment (via organic agriculture, shoring up river beds, crop rotation, etc)
- Promote the demonstrated ability of grassroots women's groups to mobilize the community to respond to emergencies created by climate change
- Acknowledge the need to reward/formalize grassroots women's groups role in short- and long-term planning to anticipate and cope with disasters through recognizing women's (more than men's) labor burdens are growing due to climate change and their reliance on natural environment for economic and household based responsibilities