

[← Blog](#)

BLOG

# Why Gender Matters in Climate Change Adaptation

Share this page:

 Twitter Facebook

Effective climate change adaptation recognizes that women, men and children experience impacts differently depending on where they live, how they sustain their livelihoods, and the roles they play in their families and communities.

By [Angie Dazé](#) on June 6, 2019

Climate change is the most critical challenge facing humanity today.

Experts are raising the alarm about this crisis with increasing anxiety. Clearly, urgent action is needed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit the global temperature rise over the coming years.

We use cookies on this site to enhance your user experience

By clicking the Accept button, you agree to us doing so.

Accept

No, thanks



A woman speaks on a cellphone in Bangkok during a 2011 flood.

But what about the people who are experiencing the impacts of climate change now, today? And those who will experience worsening impacts for the foreseeable future?

For the first time, in 2015, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change established a global goal for adaptation to climate change. This was a recognition that we are committed to a certain amount of climate change and that investment in adaptation is both necessary and increasingly urgent.

Climate change is inherently a justice issue—those who have contributed least to its causes will suffer most from its effects. At the global level, such as in the Paris Agreement, this is already recognized.

## Infographic | Addressing Gender Equality in Climate Change Adaptation

This agreement, ratified by 185 countries, makes the links between climate change and human rights, poverty eradication and sustainable development. It also acknowledges the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment, and calls for climate action to be gender-responsive.

So how do these commitments play out in practice? With

We use cookies on this site to enhance your user experience

By clicking the Accept button, you agree to us doing so.

Accept

No, thanks



A fish vendor plies her trade in Seririt, Indonesia in 2015.

At the International Institute for Sustainable Development, we are increasingly focused on the gender implications of sustainable development policies and investments. Among other projects, we work with governments to promote planning for climate change adaptation that is gender-responsive. This comes down to three things:

Who matters?

Who decides?

Who benefits?

The right answer to all of these questions is, of course, everyone. Everyone matters when it comes to managing the impacts of climate change, particularly those who are least able to adapt. Everyone should have a say in how climate action occurs, and everyone should benefit from investments in adaptation in an equitable manner.

But when we are thinking about who matters, we need to recognize that people experience the impacts of climate change in different ways. A livestock herder in the Ethiopian lowlands has a much different experience of climate change than a civil servant in Addis Ababa. A

We use cookies on this site to enhance your user experience

By clicking the Accept button, you agree to us doing so.

Accept

No, thanks



# National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Processes: Reflections from six African countries

People have different adaptation needs, depending on where they live, how they sustain their livelihoods, and the roles they play in their families and communities. There are socially determined differences too—in opportunities, responsibilities and decision-making power—and all of these influence how vulnerable people are to climate change.

Without understanding these dynamics—which are often influenced by gender—there is a risk that the people with the greatest need for adaptation will be left out.



"People have different adaptation needs, depending on where they live, how they sustain their livelihoods and the roles they play in their families and communities."

Effective adaptation considers the differing needs of women and men, as well as marginalized groups, to ensure that investments are targeted where they are needed most.

If women are not involved in decision-making, how likely is it that their interests will be represented?

Effective climate change adaptation brings everyone to the table, recognizing the value of their knowledge and their potential as agents of change. The process of adaptation planning is designed to make it possible to invest in concrete actions that reduce vulnerability to climate change.

However, there is a risk that adaptation investments actually reinforce existing wealth and power structures, rather than benefiting the most vulnerable women and men. Adaptation is effective when it is equitable, providing opportunities and benefits for all people.

The urgency of adapting to climate change has never been clearer. We have an opportunity, through global commitments like the Paris Agreement, to rapidly scale up action in this area. For this to be effective, we need to start from the premise that everyone matters—rich or poor, farmer or civil servant, woman or man.

We need to bring diverse voices, including those that are typically excluded, into decision making to identify the best solutions for adapting to climate change. And we need to ensure that investments in adaptation provide equitable benefits for people of all genders and social groups. This is the only way we can build families, communities and societies that are resilient to the impacts of climate change.



Share this page:



Twitter



Facebook

## Blog details

### Topic

Gender Equality

Climate Change Adaptation

### Project

NAP Global Network

## You might also be interested in

### Advancing Gender-Responsive Climate Action Through National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Processes

This report aims to help countries engaged in NAP processes use a gender-responsive approach, regardless of where they are in the process.

REPORT May 14, 2020

### Toolkit for a Gender-Responsive Process to Formulate and Implement National Adaptation Plans (NAPs)

This toolkit is designed to support country efforts to pursue a gender-responsive national adaptation plan (NAP) process. It offers a flexible approach, recognizing that there are opportunities to integrate gender considerations regardless of where you are in the NAP process.

REPORT December 8, 2019



cus  
eas

[Blog](#)

[Library](#)

[Events](#)

[Newsroom](#)

[Podcast](#)



[Donate](#)

[Follow  
us](#)

This briefing note describes the rationale and approach that we have taken in supporting NAP-focused gender analyses in six African countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea-Conakry, Madagascar and Togo).

**BRIEF** April 1, 2019

**SUCCESS STORY** August 5, 2020

Follow  
us:



[About](#)

[Library](#)

[Contact](#)

[Donate](#)

[Employment](#)

[AODA  
feedback](#)

[Privacy  
policy](#)



International Institute for  
Sustainable Development

Sign up to IISD's newsletter

[Sign up](#)

© IISD International Institute for Sustainable Development. All rights reserved.  
Designed and built by Soapbox.

We use cookies on this site to enhance your user experience

By clicking the Accept button, you agree to us doing so.

[Accept](#)

[No, thanks](#)