



EnGenDER

Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery,
Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean

Gender Inequality of Climate Change and Disaster Risk in the Agriculture (Food Security) Sector

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Gender & Climate Change Resilience Series

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Natural hazards and climate change impact women and men differently due to differences in societal expectations of their roles and responsibilities in families and communities, and the means by which they earn their livelihoods. Women generally have lower

incomes, less access to credit and decision-making authority, and limited control over resources, which increases their vulnerabilities to many natural hazards and climate change impacts. The impacts of climate change and disasters often magnify existing gender inequalities between women and men; thus, the approach to policy development and service delivery by institutions needs to take into consideration gendered differences. In particular, climate change and disaster risk preparation and response demand initiatives that identify and address existing gendered differences to ensure that women and girls, and men and boys have equal access to disaster risk resilience and climate change and environmental solutions.



CLIMATE CHANGE

a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time period.



DISASTER

a serious disruption of the functioning of a community or a society at any scale due to hazardous events interacting with conditions of exposure, vulnerability and capacity, leading to one or more of the following: human, material, economic and environmental losses and impacts.



HAZARD

a process, phenomenon or human activity that may cause loss of life, injury or other health impact, property damage, social and economic disruption or environmental degradation. Hazards maybe natural, anthropogenic or socionatural in origin.

Through a series of comprehensive studies, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN Women) under the Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean (EnGenDER) Project has identified gender

inequality of climate change and disaster risk impacts across the agriculture (food security) sector. The agricultural sector includes establishments that primarily engage in growing crops, animals and harvesting fish and other animals from a farm, ranch or other natural habitat.

Why a Gender Lens (Analysis)?

The agriculture (food security) sector is dominated by men, although women play an incremental role in some areas of this sector and in the informal economy. More women tend to work as street vendors and in agriculture processing, but because women own fewer assets than men, they rely upon men for some aspects of physical labour. Women also experience unequal access to credit and enterprise development, but may access microcredits through microfinancing.

Marginalized groups of women and indigenous people are at high-risk to the hazards from heavy and prolonged rainfall (i.e., flooding) and droughts (i.e., lack of water availability), and other climate-related events; thus, it is important that climate change plans and policies incorporate gender-responsive actions that cover access to services should a disaster occur.



Climate Change and Disaster Risks

Across the Caribbean, an analysis of gender inequality due to the impacts of climate change, natural hazards and disasters on the agriculture (food security) sector revealed:



There is a high risk of small-scale women farmers losing crops and livestock.



Women who have limited resources risk an interruption in their farming livelihood when seeking alternative employment.



Migrant women have the least access to financial support for hazard-proofing their farms; this hinders their ability to establish and build climate-resilient farms.



Farmers experience restricted access to irrigation and household water.



There is a heavy reliance on infrastructure, roads and irrigation systems that are susceptible to hazards.



Lack of insurability causes risks for farmers.



Persons with disabilities experience a loss of assets and food insecurity.



Due to childcare responsibilities, women experience increased stress and workloads when income is lost and children cannot go to school.



Women lack knowledge of adaptive technologies to meet climate change risks and are not included in decision-making processes.



Food insecurity increases at the household level.

Coping Mechanisms Identified

In the Caribbean, women and men, persons with disabilities and members of the LGBTQ+ community who have been impacted by climate change events, hazards and disasters have adapted and coped in one or more of the following ways:



Access relief/distress funds.



Remove children from school to avoid paying fees.



Sell physical assets.



Utilize savings and accessed loans.



Engage in training on climate-smart practices, such as changing farming techniques, agroforestry¹ and resilient crop types.



Explore online marketing.



Utilise greenhouses and harvest rainwater systems.



Rely on remittances.



Migrate to seek other employment opportunities.

¹ Agroforestry is a land use management system in which trees or shrubs are grown around or among crops or pastureland.

Opportunities for Gender-Responsive Disaster Resilience

What can be done to ensure that climate change policies and strategies are gender-responsive? What can be done to reduce the gendered risks for vulnerable populations?



Policymakers can:



Support innovations, development and uptake of information and communications technology.



Prioritize collection of sex-disaggregated data and data on gender issues in the agriculture (food security) sector.



Create national farmers organizations to address the specific needs of women.



Address psychosocial support after a disaster impact.



Promote entrepreneurial programmes and social protection instruments that can help women rebuild their resource base.



Include gender and disaster risk reduction in sectoral plans.



Diversify agricultural livelihoods to strengthen resilience of women, men and other vulnerable groups.

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