



Pacific Gender and Climate Change toolkit

Tools for practitioners

(DRAFT)



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About this toolkit

This toolkit is designed to support climate change practitioners in the Pacific islands region to integrate gender into their programmes and projects. It is aimed at climate change professionals working in national governments, non-governmental organisations, regional and international organisations who are involved in managing and implementing climate change programmes¹.

While many of us are aware that gender does matter for sustainable development and climate change adaptation and mitigation, we may not know clearly how it matters, and what tools are available that can help to assess how it matters. Knowing is also not enough: we must apply this knowledge in a practical way when we design and implement activities, and ensure that we are capturing useful and important information through our monitoring and evaluation frameworks. This toolkit provides advice at a practical level, to address these needs. The principles and practices proposed in this toolkit are based on many decades of experience in the integration of a gender perspective in sustainable development, natural resources management and disaster preparedness.

The toolkit is divided into three parts. This introductory module explains why gender is a critical consideration in climate change programmes, projects and strategies, and clarifies some common misconceptions. Module 2 focuses on the links between gender and climate change in specific sectors (e.g. food security, water and energy); and uses sector-relevant case studies to explain how to take gender into consideration. It also includes a module on disaster risk reduction recognising that these interventions should be factored into all climate change adaptation programmes and projects. These sector chapters can also be used as stand-alone documents for practitioners to guide their analysis in a specific sector. Module 3 is the 'how-to' section and will take you through the different phases of a typical climate change programme/project cycle, identifying potential entry-points for integrating gender in each phase and also includes a generic gender checklist that may be applied to programmes and projects.

This toolkit will not make you a gender expert! However, it provides guidance along with links to other resources that can help strengthen your knowledge about gender and climate change.

The toolkit is designed to be a living document which will be revised and added to in future. Its use will also be supported by training and technical assistance to further build capacity in the Pacific islands region to effectively integrate gender in all climate change initiatives.

¹Practitioners working at the community level may also find useful the following "Toolkit to Mainstream Gender into Energy and Climate Change Community Based Adaptation Projects in the Pacific" (SPC, 2013).

Module 1: Introduction

Climate change is a real and 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 not everyone is affected equally, because individuals have differing vulnerability and capacity to cope and adapt to climate change.



Source: SPC, 2013

Societies, communities, and households are not homogeneous groups where everybody is affected in the same way by climate change and has the same capacity to adapt. Different groups of people have different interests, different priorities, different levels of power, and different capacities to access critical resources for adaptation and mitigation. For example, women, men, girls and boys have different roles and responsibilities within their families and communities, and as a result have different levels of access to resources and power. Women and men also have different skills and knowledge to contribute. However, barriers to the full inclusion of women in decision-making processes can limit their ability to contribute and expand their skills and expertise. Women and men are not homogenous groups either. Factors such as age, socio-economic status, or disabilities, also affect vulnerability, access to power, resources and decision-making processes. For instance a female director in public service is likely to have more decision making power than an unemployed male youth. Gender should therefore be considered alongside these issues.

Despite those differences, among the many adaptation and mitigation initiatives under way in the Pacific region, few integrate gender dimensions across the design and implementation, but overlooking gender can greatly weaken the outcomes of these initiatives. Developing strategies to deal with the range of challenges climate change presents will require all available resources and knowledge.

Definition: Sex and gender



Sex refers to biological differences between women and men. These differences exist for reproduction 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. These roles and expectations are learned and vary 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 opposite to their sex. These 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 media, mass advocacy, crisis, and conflict.

An example of how gender can affect vulnerability to climate change is where a woman cannot attend training about climate change impacts because she is expected to cater for the training with other women). This limits the information she can access to help her make decisions on how best to manage climate change impacts. Another example is the expectation within a society that a man's role is to provide for his family. If an event causes major losses in the main cash crop that men produce to make money for their families, they may feel significant stress, burden and social pressure to find another way to make money. In both cases, these roles (preparing meals, and generating family income) are not 'natural'; they are based on the society's expectations of what men and women can and should do.



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

Common Misconceptions

The expectations and stereotypes about the roles of women and men, about their respective capacity and their needs, often influences programme and project design. These can lead to misconceptions about gender and the meaning of gender equality. In this section, we will examine those misconceptions and provide guidance to those involved in programme and project design and implementation.

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

Gender equality is not just about women, it is about the differences between men and women in terms of gender roles, access to resources, and an individual's ability to fully participate. Once we understand these differences, through a gender analysis, and their implications we can see which groups of men and women and girls and boys are disadvantaged; and then develop specific strategies to address these differences. In some cases gender-sensitive projects target men. For example, on Ambae Island, Vanuatu, during drought periods, men are responsible for fetching water from a neighbouring village when their water supply runs dry. If droughts become more severe as a result of climate change, this will add to the workload of the men in the village. A project which improves rainwater harvesting to address water shortages would reduce this added burden.

One of the reasons that gender-responsive programmes often include explicit measures targeting women is the recognition that some issues have a greater impact on women because of their social status and differences in access to decision making processes. Therefore, a gender responsive climate change initiative would pay attention to the causes of differences between women and men and attempt to address those issues, or at least not contribute to reinforcing stereotypes and gender inequalities.

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. There are many examples of cultural change in the Pacific. For example, many women have paid employment and as such have moved away from their traditional roles of fishing and gathering food for the family; domestic chores are in some cases done by paid house helpers. In matrilineal societies as in many Micronesian countries, women still own and have access to land but men in most cases have taken over decision making relating to land. Rural- urban migration

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