



This background note on the Adaptation Learning Programme's effort to promote learning on gender equality and women's empowerment in community-based adaptation serves as a summary of key points and an introduction to ALP's gender work.

## Addressing the unequal impacts of climate change

Climate change poses the greatest direct threat in history to CARE's vision of a world of hope, tolerance and social justice where poverty has been overcome and people live in dignity and security. The injustice of climate change is that its negative impacts fall disproportionately on poor communities, who have contributed least to its causes. CARE's Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP), implemented in Ghana, Niger, Kenya and Mozambique with the support of DFID, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Austrian Development Cooperation, acknowledges that inequitable distributions of rights, resources and power at all levels constrain many people's abilities to take action on climate change. ALP therefore seeks to improve and promote knowledge on how best to protect the livelihoods of the most vulnerable people through community-based adaptation (CBA) to climate change.

## The significance of a gender perspective in adaptation

This inequitable distribution of rights, resources and power is often strongly influenced by gender. Gender is a critical factor in understanding vulnerability to climate change, and effective adaptation will promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This requires that we reflect on

issues related to women's, men's, boys' and girls' roles, rights, capacities, aspirations and needs throughout the project cycle. That is, during analysis, planning, implementation and monitoring & evaluation of climate change adaptation. It also requires raising critical awareness of gender relationships and structures to work towards equal rights, power, participation and opportunities for women and men, boys and girls.

### What is gender equality?

CARE defines gender equality as "the equal enjoyment by women, girls, boys and men of rights, opportunities, resources and rewards. Equality does not mean that women and men are the same but that their enjoyment of rights, opportunities and life-chances are not governed or limited by whether they were born female or male."

### What is women's empowerment?

It involves "awareness-raising, building of self-confidence, expansion of choices, increased access to and control over resources and actions to transform the structures and institutions which reinforce and perpetuate gender discrimination and inequality. Empowerment comes from within; women empower themselves."

## Addressing the gender gap in community-based adaptation approaches

CBA is increasingly recognised as part of an efficient, sustainable and effective response to climate change, but the tools and methodologies to move CBA forward have various limitations. Gender is a critical factor in shaping the impacts of and responses to climate change at all levels, reaching from the household and community level to national and global institutions engaging with CBA. CARE is committed to working for more equal relations between women and men, and between different social groups, in all of our programmes. Given the absence of practical knowledge on how to integrate this into adaptation to climate change, the integration of gender and women's empowerment is a key component of ALP's learning agenda. To this end, ALP has identified and will promote a set of principles to guide such integration. These include:

- Gender equality as a long-term goal;
- Critical awareness and challenging of both the distribution of and control over assets;
- Gender-sensitive vulnerability analysis; and
- A rights-based approach to building adaptive capacity.

## Improving our knowledge and practice on gender and CBA: Possible steps

To get started on mainstreaming gender in community-based adaptation initiatives within ALP, the programme is conducting analyses to understand the gender dimensions of CBA in its four countries. Further, ALP will undertake targeted steps to improve our knowledge and practice on gender and CBA.

Possible steps to achieve this include:

- Improving our skills and practices to integrate **gender and empowerment analysis** into Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analyses and community-based adaptation planning;
- Integrating **CARE's approaches to gender and women's empowerment** into our CBA Toolkit and developing practical guidance on gender for CBA to complement the Toolkit;
- Taking **gender-responsive approaches** to any new methodologies ALP develops;
- Collecting and sharing examples of **gender-responsive and/or women-empowering CBA activities**;
- Identifying and promoting **gender champions** and their actions at the community-level and beyond;
- Holding a **learning event on gender and CBA** to learn with and from others, exchange best practice and jointly discuss challenges; and
- Seeking **strategic partnerships** with organisations and networks in the position to promote improved gender integration in CBA.

For further reading on CARE International's Gender Policy as well as other CARE resources on gender and women's empowerment, go to <http://gender.care2share.wikispaces.net>, and access CARE's Adaptation, Gender & Women's Empowerment brief at <http://www.careclimatechange.org/publications>.



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