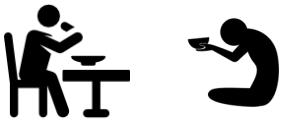
UNDERSTANDING THE GENDER DYNAMICS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE HAVE IMPACTED COMMUNITIES AND INDIVIDUALS AROUND THE GLOBE.

Within communities and households, the different roles and responsibilities assigned to individuals **result in differing vulnerabilities and adaptive strategies** to climate change. This is because roles and responsibilities produce:

Different exposures to shocks and stresses

Different sensitivities to shocks and stresses



Different abilities to adapt to shocks and stresses

GENDER IS A CRITICAL IDENTITY, SHAPING ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND VULNERABILITIES TO CLIMATE VARIABILITY

- Access to land is often marked by significant gendered inequalities.
- Men and women often cultivate different crops for different reasons, in turn creating different challenges and opportunities.
- Women can and do utilize their unique roles within households and communities to create strategies for dealing with situations of drought, flooding, uncertainty, and other climatic change-related stressors.
- There exists a broad, pervasive, and enduring lack of women's inclusion in agricultural decision-making.
- Development and extension programs often fail to identify women's activities as appropriate targets.

AS IMPORTANT AS GENDER IS TO UNDERSTANDING VULNERABILITY, THERE ARE OFTEN DIFFERENT VULNERABILITIES WITHIN GENDERS

To fully understand the gender dimensions of climate change adaptation, **it is critical to consider what other identities shape individual exposure, sensitivity, and adaptive capacity**. Recent literature has found cases where all three were shaped by:

Age/Seniority

Caste

Household Status (monogamous, polygamous, sole-headed, etc)

Religion

Income

Where gender intersects with these identities to produce unique roles and responsibilities, unique vulnerabilities emerge.

MISSING DATA MEANS LOST OPPORTUNITIES

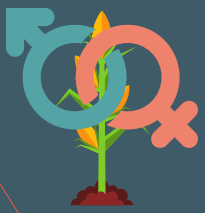
The case below demonstrates how a gender lens alone will often overlook important intra-gender differences in vulnerability, and therefore leave them unaddressed.

MEN AND WOMEN DEMONSTRATE DIFFERENT ADAPTATION STRATEGIES

Dominase and Ponkrum are two small villages in Ghana's Central region. Their residents' livelihoods are organized around rainfed agricultural production, with limited diversification. A gender analysis of livelihoods vulnerability in these communities reveals important differences between men and women.

Men's farm plots contain more tree crops (relatively resilient to precipitation fluctuations).

Women's farm plots contain more vegetables (relatively sensitive to precipitation fluctuations)



Men's farm production tends to be oriented towards sale at market.

Women's productions tends to be oriented toward household subsistence

Thus, men's production and income are more vulnerable to market fluctuations, while women's production and income are more vulnerable to environmental shocks and stresses.

STOPPING AT BINARY GENDER ANALYSIS MISSES IMPORTANT DIFFERENCES AMONG MEN AND WOMEN

Looking beyond the binary gender analysis in Dominase and Ponkrum, there is a **significant amount of variation in livelihood strategies *within* genders**, owing to the different economic and social standings of individuals in these two locales.

Women in **diversified households** (producing a wide variety of crops) are much more subsistence-oriented, and thus susceptible to environmental shocks.

Women in **market-oriented households** are more susceptible to market shocks.

Women-headed households balance their production between the market and the household, distributing their strategy more evenly across crops. However, they tend to hold less land, and are thus more prone to low production.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

To design and implement gender-sensitive adaptation programming with durable results, programs must go beyond the different vulnerabilities of men and women, **to understand the different vulnerabilities that exist among men and among women**.

This infographic was produced by the Humanitarian Response and Development Lab (HURDL) at Clark University, with the support of Integra. The data from the case study was taken from: United States Agency for International Development (USAID). 2013. Gender and Climate Change in Agrarian Settings. The full report is available **here**. For more information, contact: Dr. Ed Carr, Director, HURDL, edcarr@clarku.edu

CLARK UNIVERSITY

Integra