

# Addressing Gender and Inclusiveness in Climate, Agriculture, and Resilience Programming

## *A Synthesis Brief for Policymakers*



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### Key areas

- 1) Gender transformative resilience programs can challenge gender norms, power dynamics and social inequalities that lead to vulnerabilities for climate sensitive communities.
- 2) Equal access to assets and resources in a gender transformative approach to resilience programs
- 3) Land Access as the Catalyst for Inclusive Resilience Programs
- 4) Sex disaggregated data: Harnessing data and facts for inclusive resilience programs
- 5) Identifying and involving the most vulnerable and excluded communities and understanding their vulnerabilities will be key to addressing inclusivity of resilience programs.
- 6) The inclusion of marginalized groups in resilience initiatives can increase the effectiveness of the program and make the programs more contextually relevant, sustainable, and equitable.
- 7) Building resilience through social protection

### Introduction

Building socially inclusive, resilient societies lies at the core of the 2030 agenda for action. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) encompass a call to achieve social, economic, and environmental sustainability while ensuring that "no one gets left behind" (UN, 2015).

However, power imbalances and gender disparities often impede progress towards sustainable development,

particularly for vulnerable and marginalized individuals who face limited access to resources and assets. These challenges are further exacerbated by the need to adapt to climate change (Resurrección et al., 2019)

Gender inequalities persist in the agricultural sector of low-income countries, impeding progress towards the SDGs (McDougall et al., 2021)..

Overcoming these disparities requires prioritizing inclusivity and recognizing the interconnected dimensions of social inclusion and gender equality. It is crucial to ensure that previously marginalized segments of society are no longer excluded from development and resilience programs, advancing the agenda to take action to "end extreme poverty, curb inequalities, confront discrimination, and fast track progress for the furthest behind" (UNDP, 2018).

Among the most climate-vulnerable groups are smallholder farmers, who play a crucial role in global food production and rural livelihoods. Regrettably, they have often been overlooked in past development efforts, resulting in persistent poverty, food insecurity, and limited access to resources (Woodhill et al., 2020). These smallholder farmers typically reside in regions characterized by poor soil quality, hillsides, floodplains, arid, and semi-arid areas, heavily relying on deteriorating ecosystem services for their livelihoods (IPBES, 2021). Additionally, climate change and extreme weather events exacerbate their challenges, leading to out-migration and displacement (IPCC, 2022).

In many rural societies, where gender norms prevail, women often bear a significant burden of unpaid care work, along with manual and time-consuming tasks such as collecting water and fuel. Unfortunately, these contributions are rarely statistically measured or understood, limiting women's opportunities for education, paid employment, and the autonomy to build resilient livelihoods (UNWOMEN, 2020). Resilience programs have the potential to drive transformative changes and address gender constraints in agricultural development.

However, addressing social exclusion and gender imbalances requires a fundamental shift in program design and implementation (Anderson, 2018).

It is crucial to eliminate gender constraints in agricultural development as it can lead to increased productivity, improved food security, poverty reduction, and enhanced climate resilience (World Bank & FAO, 2015).

To address gender and inclusivity in resilience programs, this policy brief emphasizes the importance of adopting a gender transformative approach. Such an approach addresses the root causes of gender inequality and reshapes power structures to support low-income smallholder farmers in making sustainable development progress. Additionally, it is necessary to challenge social norms that restrict women's access to productive assets, land, agricultural information, and participation in resilience programs. Empowering women and ensuring their voice in household decision-making are vital aspects of this process (McDougall et al., 2021). Collecting sex-disaggregated data is also essential to close the gender gap in agriculture and inform the design of gender transformative policies (Quisumbing et al., 2015).

Resilience programs aiming to reach the most marginalized must prioritize the inclusion of smallholder farmers, who represent a significant proportion of the poor and extreme poor. Effective targeting strategies that prioritize the needs, wants, and aspirations of the most vulnerable farmers must be employed in program design. This will enhance the program's effectiveness, longevity, and promote resilience and inclusivity. Moreover, adequate social protection is crucial for these smallholder farmers. When integrated with climate adaptation strategies, social protection programs can play a transformative role in socioecological systems by strengthening individual, household, and community-level absorptive, adaptive, and transformative capacities (Tenzing, 2020).

## **1) Gender transformative resilience programs can challenge gender norms, power dynamics and social inequalities that lead to vulnerabilities for climate sensitive communities.**

- Ignoring power and gender inequalities is counterproductive, and past resilience-building programs have often overlooked gender issues, reinforcing social norms and exacerbating inequalities (Quisumbing et al., 2015).
- While gender-sensitive and gender-responsive resilient programs, which integrate gender needs into policy and program designs, have value in terms of capacity building, they are not sufficient to address the existing gender power structures that contribute to the vulnerabilities of women and marginalized groups (Skakun et al., 2021).
- Addressing these challenges requires rigorous gender analysis that utilizes gender-specific data and indicators. Such analysis helps identify gender roles, dynamics, and inequalities within the agricultural context, leading to the development of effective policies and resilience programs (Resurrección et al., 2019).
- Gender awareness training, grounded in principles of respect derived from local cultures, holds the potential to effectively challenge negative gender norms and stereotypes, facilitating genuine transformation (Skakun et al., 2021).
- Engaging in activities such as group discussions involving both men and women to address topics of gender equity, women's workloads, and family planning can provide a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by women.

Consequently, these discussions have the potential to foster attitude and behavior changes among men, promoting collaborative decision-making, increased empathy, and greater support for their female counterparts (Anderson, 2018).

- Interventions aimed at improving women's status within households, such as the transfer of productive assets like livestock or the establishment of women's forums for self-help and training, can enhance women's decision-making power. These initiatives have the potential to empower women and enable them to exert more influence in household decision-making processes (Singh et al., 2022).
- It is crucial to systematically track, monitor, and evaluate the strategies implemented in resilience programs. This ensures that relevant gender requirements are met and helps identify gaps and opportunities that can drive meaningful change (Resurrección et al., 2019).

## **2) Equal access to assets and resources in a gender transformative approach to resilience programs.**

- Ensuring equal access to assets is a crucial outcome of adopting a gender transformative approach. Implementing inclusive resilience programs necessitates a gender transformative approach towards asset control, accompanied by a comprehensive gender analysis, in order to bridge the gender asset gap in rural communities (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2011)

- Asset use and control display gendered patterns, with men and women often utilizing different types of assets. Additionally, men typically have greater control over productive assets that hold higher value. This power imbalance can limit women's autonomy and voice, leaving them in a more vulnerable position, particularly when combined with the impacts of climate change (Quisumbing et al., 2019; Resurrección et al., 2019; Verzosa et al., 2021).
- The control and utilization of assets can determine who benefits from resilience programs and result in gender-differentiated outcomes. Inequitable access to and control over assets, as well as the lack of rights over these assets, can restrict the benefits and opportunities for both men and women. Assets provide multiple benefits for individuals, particularly vulnerable groups. They can contribute to more positive future prospects, social empowerment, and civic and social engagement, thereby increasing resilience and creating more stable livelihoods in the face of shocks (Quisumbing et al., 2015).
- Smallholder farmers, indigenous groups, rural women, rural youth, and landless rural farmers are increasingly facing land constraints as their land is being encroached upon or taken away entirely to accommodate the interests of corporate agribusiness and distant investors (Abubakar, 2021; Anseeuw & Baldinelli, 2020).
- Land inequalities also contribute to women's vulnerability to climate change (Anseeuw & Baldinelli, 2020). Women experience adverse conditions when household structures change or when they are left behind in vulnerable communities due to the death or migration of their husbands. Their lack of land tenure, resources, and decision-making power on the farm, despite being involved in farm management, can hinder their preparedness for severe weather events, making them more vulnerable (Roy et al., 2018).
- Enhancing land tenure security can bring environmental, social, and economic benefits and help safeguard the livelihoods of the most vulnerable, promote good health and well-being, reduce gender inequality, and address climate change (Flower, 2018). Moreover, higher land tenure security has been linked to improved living standards, including increased food security, higher incomes, and better access to healthcare, clean water, sanitation, and education, positioning vulnerable farmers to be more resilient against climate change. Higher incomes can also facilitate the development of non-agricultural livelihoods (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2019).

### **3) Land Access as the Catalyst for Inclusive Resilience Programs**

- Insecure land tenure, land shortages, inequitable distribution of land and weak governance expose poorer communities to exclusion, poverty, and vulnerability to climate change.
- Without any formal land title, landless farmers have limited collateral to take out loans to purchase agro-inputs and technologies (IFC, 2019) and are less likely to adopt adaptation practices, putting them in a more vulnerable position in a changing climate.

- Land policies are also a means of promoting sustainable land management which is essential to SDG 15 (life on land) which calls for the sustainable management of forests and the restoration of degraded lands and soils to combat desertification (UN, 2015).
- Ensuring smallholder farmers have access to the three pillars of land tenure security, which are robustness, duration (see figure 1), is vital for promoting inclusive development (Meinzen-Dick et al., 2019).



Figure 1: The dimensions of land tenure security.

#### 4) Sex disaggregated data: Harnessing data and facts for inclusive resilience programs.

- Developing effective and transformative agricultural policies necessitates reliable data on the roles and constraints faced by both men and women. However, many policies are based on stylized facts or myths about women's involvement in agriculture, lacking substantial evidence to support their claims (Christiaensen, 2017; Doss et al., 2018).
- These myths about "women in agriculture," while serving the purpose of emphasizing gender roles, can have detrimental effects on the design, implementation, and evaluation of programs and policies.

This can result in policies that only perpetuate existing gender disparities rather than addressing them effectively. Interventions are often perceived as short-term solutions that fail to address the underlying gender issues.

- Essentialized images of women often depict them solely as beneficiaries or victims, overlooking their potential as agents of change. These images have led to common misconceptions that have influenced policies in the past. Some of these misconceptions include the notions that 1) 70% of the world's poor are women, 2) women produce 60-80% of the food, 3) women own only 1-2% of the land, and 4) women are inherently better stewards of the environment (Doss et al., 2018).

- Men and women have distinct needs, priorities, and preferences in resilience programming due to differences in their access to resources, societal norms, and the gender division of labor. Accurate sex disaggregated data enables policymakers to effectively target their actions and ensure that women and other sectors of society benefit from resilience programs (Huyer & Partey, 2020).
- Inadequate targeting methods can result in two types of errors. The first is exclusion error, where vulnerable groups that are most in need of intervention are overlooked and excluded from the program. The second is inclusion error, which occurs when individuals who do not require immediate intervention are included in the program (Sabates-Wheeler, 2018).

**5) Identifying and involving the most vulnerable and excluded communities and understanding their vulnerabilities will be key to addressing inclusivity of resilience programs.**

- Efforts to reach the most marginalized individuals necessitate a clear understanding of who has been left behind and the factors driving exclusion and disadvantage.
- To gain a deeper understanding of the local context and identify vulnerable communities, decentralized research can enhance program inclusivity by ensuring scientists and researchers are responsive to the specific conditions of poorer communities (Harwood, 2009). Decentralization can provide long-term development benefits by strengthening monitoring and evaluation processes and improving portfolio development (Naidoo et al., 2022).
- As resilience levels vary among and within communities, it is crucial to employ inclusive and pro-poor targeting strategies that reach each household. Prioritizing vulnerable and extremely vulnerable households and ensuring their active participation in resilience initiatives will be pivotal for achieving sustainable resilience throughout the entire community (Anderson, 2018).
- Pro-poor targeting is a crucial aspect of socially inclusive resilience programs. A robust pro-poor targeting policy guides interventions towards those who have been left behind. Targeting methods such as geographic targeting, direct targeting, self-targeting, and community-based targeting are some of the techniques used by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to target victims of social exclusion, marginalization, and those with limited access to assets.
- Given the diversity in the needs, wants, and aspirations of smallholder farmers in rural communities, classification frameworks can be a useful tool to aid pro-poor targeting. These frameworks identify different groups based on their socioeconomic status and prioritize effective strategies and social protection tailored to the specific needs of each group of farmers.
- The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) distinguishes five rural categories: 1) large-scale commercial farming, 2) traditional landholders and enterprises, 3) subsistence agricultural households and enterprises, 4) landless rural households and micro-enterprises, and 5) chronically poor households (Brüntrup, 2016).

Dorward (2009) presents the 'hanging in', 'stepping up', and 'stepping out' schema, which describes three levels of smallholder development (see Table 1 below). Improving the stratification and analysis of farmers' assets, endowments, competitiveness, growth opportunities, and needs can enhance our understanding of the evolving aspirations of smallholder farmers.

This information enables the development of more targeted resilience interventions and facilitates better resource allocation. Moreover, such analysis can help identify individuals for whom agriculture may not fulfill all of their desired outcomes, thereby highlighting the need for off-farm interventions to build resilience (Woodhill et al., 2022; Zeng et al., 2021).

<b>Dorward et al (2009) typology</b>	<b>OECD Rural Worlds (2006) typology (1-5)</b>	<b>Description</b>
Stepping up	Subsistence agricultural households and enterprises (3) Traditional landholders and enterprises (2) Large scale commercial farming (1)	Farmers with commercial potential and are starting to become market oriented. Commercial potential who are well connected to the markets and are investing in their assets.
Hanging in	Landless farm labourers (4) Subsistence agricultural households and enterprises (3)	Marginalized farmers, landless labourers and female headed households who rely on subsistence and do not have ability to invest in their production. Often living below the poverty line. Farmers with market potential but need agricultural intervention to step up.
Stepping out	Traditional landholders and enterprises (4) Large scale commercial farming (5)	Well-endowed farmers who have built up their assets and have the opportunity to pursue non-agricultural livelihoods.
		Extremely poor farmers and marginalised groups who are food insecure and well below the poverty line at risk of falling into destitute zones.

*Table 1: Description of the different livelihood trajectories with the corresponding rural worlds from the OECD.*

## **6) The inclusion of marginalized groups in resilience initiatives can increase the effectiveness of the program, making them more contextually relevant, sustainable, and equitable.**

- Inclusive climate resilience programs should actively involve all stakeholders in decision-making processes. This involves engaging marginalized groups, including women, youth, indigenous communities, and local organizations, in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of resilience initiatives. Their perspectives and knowledge are invaluable for developing contextually appropriate strategies. This ensures that resilience initiatives do not pose additional risks for vulnerable groups and can drive transformative change by addressing underlying structures that contribute to vulnerability (Matin et al., 2018).
- Community engagement, ownership, and local/indigenous knowledge are crucial for the success of resilience programs. Community members should have the opportunity to assess and address their own vulnerabilities to climate change since they will ultimately bear the brunt of its impacts (Bahadur et al., 2013).
- The significance of indigenous knowledge has been recognized in the IPCC's "Special Report on Land and Climate Change." The report strongly emphasizes that integrating indigenous and local knowledge into agricultural practices can effectively tackle the interconnected challenges of climate change, food security, biodiversity conservation, and combatting desertification and land degradation (IPCC, 2019).

## **7) Building resilience through social protection**

- There are various social protection programs aimed at promoting inclusive climate adaptation and resilience. These programs offer employment opportunities, subsidized education and healthcare, school feeding programs, conditional and unconditional cash transfers, and infrastructure development (Agrawal et al., 2020). However, despite the documented benefits of these programs in rural areas, social protection services in many developing countries remain fragmented, leading to a significant coverage gap worldwide.
- The absence of adequate social protection exposes individuals to poverty and social exclusion, highlighting the urgent need for investment in social protection to align with the goals of the 2030 Agenda and achieve universal social protection (ILO, 2017).
- The adverse impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise, saltwater intrusion, desertification, and land degradation, will exacerbate multidimensional poverty and amplify the demand for effective social protection interventions, particularly in developing countries (Aleksandrova & Costella, 2021).
- Integrating social protection programs with climate resilience initiatives can play a transformative role in strengthening resilience and promoting inclusivity at the individual, household, and community levels.
- To ensure equitable access and inclusivity, social protection programs should be tailored to the specific needs, desires, and aspirations of vulnerable men and women.

Different classes of farmers, as depicted in Table 1 above, have varying social protection needs. For chronically poor farmers, cash transfers can provide immediate assistance, stabilize consumption, and safeguard their assets (Ulrichs et al., 2019).

- Cash transfers and public works programs can also enhance the absorptive capacity of smallholder farmers in the 'hanging in' category, helping them avoid negative coping strategies, additional debt, and displacement (Agrawal et al., 2020). Moreover, targeted cash transfer programs can effectively reduce social exclusion, increase incomes, improve food security, and enhance access to healthcare and education, while leveraging the social capital of the recipients (Trivelli et al., 2017).
- For farmers in a more favorable agricultural position, access to credit and microloans can overcome capital constraints and enable investment in agriculture. This allows them to adopt improved practices and technologies like drought-resistant varieties and irrigation infrastructure, enabling them to bounce back after experiencing stress or shocks (Agrawal et al., 2020; Tirivayi et al., 2016).
- Classification frameworks can play a crucial role in effectively targeting social protection programs and preventing issues such as targeting leakages. Additionally, investing in gender-sensitive data collection to monitor the impact of social protection programs on gender equality outcomes can inform the design of future social protection initiatives, ensuring they address gender disparities effectively.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, promoting gender equality and inclusivity in agricultural programs is not only a matter of social justice but also essential for fostering sustainable and resilient communities. Adopting a gender transformative approach within resilience programs, which actively challenges and changes gender norms and power dynamics, is crucial for their success and for closing the gender gap in agriculture. This approach necessitates investment in gender-responsive data collection and analysis to inform evidence-based policymaking. Conducting gender awareness training, facilitating group discussions, and enhancing women's status within households are key strategies for implementing a gender transformative approach. These measures empower rural women, address the gender asset gap, provide women with access to agricultural information and training, and ensure women's autonomy and influence in household decision-making. Additionally, policymakers should prioritize land tenure security and tackle land inequalities to promote inclusive development and enhance resilience.

It is essential to identify and engage the most vulnerable and marginalized communities to achieve inclusivity in resilience programs. Pro-poor targeting strategies should be employed to reach those who are the most disadvantaged and ensure their active participation in the program. Establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation system is critical to avoid the risks of excessive coverage, elite capture, social exclusion, and conflict, while also informing future projects with best practices and lessons learned (IFAD, 2019).

Furthermore, involving all stakeholders in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the program is necessary to ensure its relevance, inclusivity, and long-term resilience promotion.

Finally, policymakers should recognize the importance of social protection and strive for the rapid scaling up and scaling out of social protection measures, considering them integral components of national development agendas. This approach enhances the inclusivity and effectiveness of social protection interventions, guaranteeing equitable access for those who face the greatest disadvantages.

In conclusion, promoting gender equality and inclusivity in agricultural programs has far-reaching benefits, including increased productivity, improved food security, poverty reduction, and enhanced climate resilience. By addressing gender constraints and fostering social inclusion, we can cultivate a more equitable and resilient society, aligning with the 2030 agenda for action and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

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