



**UNDERSTANDING GENDER IN
COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION**

**PRACTITIONER
BRIEF 3**



Acknowledgements

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Cover image: A farmer with her proud husband during a farmers day celebration in Zang community showing her processed dawadawa spice. Credit: Charlotte Klevenfeldt/ CARE Denmark, 2016.

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1. COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION: WHY GENDER MATTERS

Dry season farmers harvesting onions in Tariganga community Ghana. Credit: Nicola Ward/ALP 2015

Integrating gender into community-based adaptation:

- Is essential for practitioners and communities to ground the adaptation process in a good understanding of the context, existing vulnerabilities and capacities.
- Is essential for communities to ensure the processes and actions they choose are relevant to both men and women in different social settings.
- Helps practitioners and communities understand why and how gender groups can be vulnerable to climate change in different ways, and how this changes over time.
- Helps to ensure decision-making power is more equally distributed between different social groups affected by climatic changes.
- Is required for community-based adaptation to contribute to the transformation of long-standing, deeply rooted barriers to development.

Accessing weather forecasts, having control over land, being able to influence decision-making processes, being backed by a community group, or being literate and educated are examples of the human and material resources through which people can act on the consequences of climate change. They are also strongly influenced by what makes up people's social and economic position in society – for example gender, age, ethnicity or religion. In other words, the degree to which a person, family or community suffers from – or thrives in – climatic shocks, weather extremes and uncertainty, or changes in the environment and economy, strongly depend on these and other social factors. People's social and

economic roles and positions in society shift and change over time and for many reasons – media and communication technologies, transportation and urbanisation trends, changing markets, and last but not least shifts in the climate and environment, etc. are all having impacts on them.

Gender is an important part of these shifting social factors, and as such continuously shapes vulnerability to climate change and people’s capacity to adapt. Gender inequality continues to be one of the most persistent and widespread forms of social inequality across the world. And yet, while its importance is increasingly recognised by policy makers and practitioners working to address climate change, its role in adapting to climate change is often poorly understood, or simply misunderstood.

By definition, community-based adaptation is about doing justice to the fact that climate change impacts, as much as poverty and vulnerability, vary by locality. And within any locality, in turn, people’s situations are diverse. So, doing climate change adaptation in a community-based way is about grounding the process in a good understanding of the local social make-up, and putting the decision-making power into the hands of those affected by the climatic changes.¹

These two key principles – attention to context and community empowerment – help to address the underlying causes of vulnerability to climate change, and so provide opportunities for transforming long-standing, deeply rooted barriers to development.

As the Adaptation Learning Programme for Africa (ALP) has learned over the past years, understanding the gender dynamics of any particular community-based adaptation context is not so much about establishing general, broad trends as it is about qualitative information, i.e. understanding the local gender roles and rules from the beginning, and deepening this understanding over time. While broad tendencies in gender relations can be observed across countries² and continents³, planning local adaptation actions based on generalised assumptions about women or men is ineffective at best, and can be damaging at worst.

Good analysis of local gender dynamics to inform community-based adaptation does not have to be a complicated science. This practical brief is not a guide for researchers, nor is it a comprehensive gender analysis tool. Rather, it seeks to unpack why, where and how gender analysis fits into the community-based adaptation process, providing an introduction and pointing to key resources. It seeks to demystify the challenge by breaking the process of “integrating gender” into a set of three key practices and providing guiding principles and useful resources for each one of them. It seeks to motivate and empower local practitioners to make better efforts to understand and respond to gender dynamics when doing local climate change adaptation planning.

The brief is part of a series of practitioner briefs which document ALP learning on community based adaptation approaches in ways that are useful to practitioners and decision-makers, in an effort to create an enabling environment for CBA and to promote good practice by adaptation and development actors. This brief will be of particular value for people who facilitate change with vulnerable people and for project or programme teams, local and national government staff and civil society practitioners who are designing or starting up programmes which aim for resilience to climate change and sustainable outcomes. The brief is useful for a wide range of programmes, for example - adaptation, community economic development, sector based development, climate smart agriculture, disaster risk reduction and social protection.

What is gender?

Gender refers to the social differences between women and men throughout the life cycle that are learned, and though deeply rooted in every culture, are changeable over time, and have wide variations both within and between cultures. “Gender”, along with class, race and other social factors, determines the roles, power and resources for women, men, boys and girls in any culture. Historically, attention to gender relations has been driven by the need to address women’s needs and circumstances, as they are typically more disadvantaged than men. Increasingly, however, the need to know more about the disadvantages men and boys can face due to gender relations is recognised.



2. INTEGRATING GENDER ANALYSIS IN COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION: HOW DOES IT WORK?

Community wealth ranking in Chaang community, Ghana.
Credit: Charlotte Klevenfeldt/CARE Denmark

What is gender analysis?

Gender analysis⁴ is the systematic attempt to identify key issues contributing to gender inequalities, which in turn also contribute to poor development outcomes. This process explores how gendered power relations, together with class, ethnicity, caste, age, disability status, sexuality, etc. give rise to discrimination, subordination and exclusion of people in society.

Gender analysis is widely used across different sectors and settings, and is essential to:

- Design, innovate and adapt initiatives that aim to transform gender dynamics and power in ways that promote social justice, inclusiveness and equality;
- Remain accountable to those in whose lives we hope to see positive change, and minimise unintended harm;
- Assess how program initiatives and broader trends have contributed to change for groups of people across genders, including monitoring expected and unexpected results; and
- Build an evidence base that facilitates documentation and contributes to broader advocacy and social movements in favour of equal human rights for all genders.

Is integrating gender into community-based adaptation a new discipline?

Many adaptation practitioners ask whether integrating gender into climate change adaptation generates a 'new discipline'. The simple answer is no – in essence, the same processes, principles, questions and tools that are used to understand gender dynamics in, say, a food security or natural resource management initiative, can also be applied to community-based adaptation work.

What changes with adaptation to climate change, however, is how we work, and this holds implications – and opportunities – for doing gender analysis:

- Working on different time scales, with more flexibility and in a more forward-looking way
- A strong interest in change dynamics: not only “what is” but also “what was, what is, what will be and why changes happen”
- Looking beyond one’s own silo or sector, and working with often unusual stakeholder coalitions – often involving institutions that have not considered gender issues to date
- Questioning and transforming longstanding routines and habits, requiring stronger focus on behaviour change and social transformation

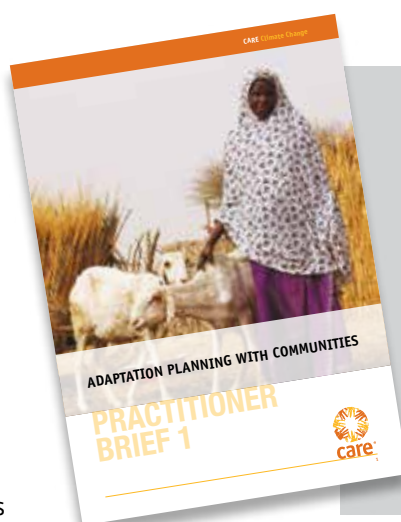
Three key practices for understanding gender in the CBA process

There are gender tools and methods aplenty, but the abundance of options can be disorienting especially when already dealing with the novelty and complexity of climate change.

Community-based adaptation in action is a process that typically entails a set of steps or phases, from initial mobilisation and analysis (including e.g. a Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis or similar), to an action planning process that identifies and prioritises adaptation strategies, and the implementation and adaptive management of these plans. Also, community-based adaptation is not limited to this very local level – its success also depends on linkages between community-level activities and other levels, including local government development processes and broader social and environmental systems and policies.

Many community-based adaptation processes across the world have either ignored gender issues altogether or operated on a generalised assumption that women are more vulnerable to climate change than men, addressing this simply by targeting women with “special”, separate activities. This approach, more often than not, is merely “cosmetic” as it is most likely to fail to resolve the

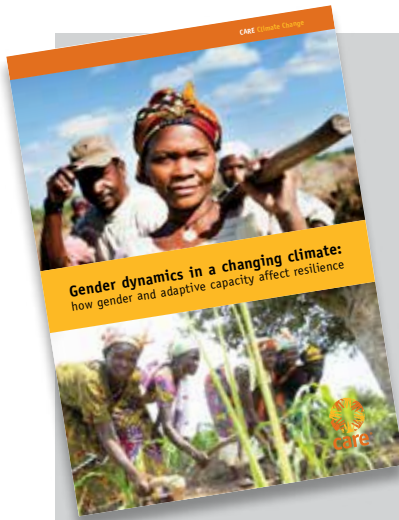
underlying power imbalances, and social or legal rules leading to gender differences in vulnerability. It may prevent, in many cases, that women and girls are left out, but can also cause harm. For example, special “women’s activities” have been seen to multiply the work burden of women whose time is already overstretched, they can trigger backlashes such as conflict at home, or can inadvertently benefit local elites when other social factors such as ethnicity, social status, etc. are ignored. Also, while global trends of gender inequality and discrimination against women persist⁵, the realities and struggles people face in different contexts are not as simple as that. Gender rules and expectations can also complicate the lives of men and boys.



Further reading on community-based adaptation planning:

Adaptation Planning with Communities
A practitioner brief by the Adaptation Learning Programme for Africa

See Useful Resources page 22.



Changing environments – changing gender dynamics: ALP’s learning

ALP has learned much about the drivers of change, adaptive capacity and the changing dynamics between and among men and women in the communities where it is working. The differences in the distribution of resources and power, and in the fulfilment of rights, between different social groups in households and communities are highly context-specific and there are similarities and differences between locations.

“As climate change impacts are starting to be felt, men and women are taking on new roles and responsibilities, and working together in new ways to manage change. Changes in livelihoods strategies - with innovations and risks inherent within them - create new spaces for women and men to engage differently, which in turn shifts expectations and perceptions of their roles.”⁶

For a detailed account of ALP’s learning on differential vulnerability to climate change, adaptive capacity and changing gender dynamics in the communities it works with, see Useful Resources page 22.

The most fundamental task for integrating gender into CBA, therefore, is to ensure that those engaged in the community-level process work on the basis of a good understanding of local gender dynamics and inequalities. ALP has identified three key practices for ensuring this happens:

1. **Standalone gender analysis** exercises, which can happen at various stages and to various ends.
2. **Integrating gender into participatory analysis of climate vulnerability**, e.g. Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis (CVCA)¹, a prerequisite for effective local adaptation planning
3. **Integrating gender into adaptive management of community-based adaptation** action, ensuring it informs the design, monitoring, evaluation, reflection and learning accompanying the implementation of Community Adaptation Action Plans (CAAPs).



Men and women work side by side as Community Monitors in Ghana.
Credit: Agnes Otzelberger/ALP, 2014.

1. CARE uses the Climate Vulnerability and Adaptive Capacity Analysis process (see resources), but there are several comparable approaches to conducting participatory analysis of climate vulnerability and adaptive capacity.

TABLE 1. THREE KEY PRACTICES FOR GENDER ANALYSIS IN COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION

| | 1 Standalone gender analysis | 2 Integrating gender into participatory climate vulnerability analysis | 3 Integrating gender into adaptive management |
|------------------|--|--|---|
| CBA process | Context analysis Planning During implementation | | Planning Design M&E Reflection Learning |
| Purpose | a) Informing early context analysis and baseline, or b) Gaining deeper understanding of context specific challenges, assessing specific adaptation strategies | Ensuring that gender is understood as part of other factors influencing climate vulnerability and adaptive capacity; identifying key gender issues | Informing planning, implementation, monitoring and tracking progress on gender issues, ensuring equitable outcomes, opportunity for adjustment of plans |
| Timing | a) Early on, as part of context analysis, and/ or b) Specific studies during adaptation planning or implementation | Early on | On-going, as part of regular monitoring, evaluation, reflection and learning activities |
| Breadth vs depth | Deeper: Generating deeper understanding of gender issues | Broader: Identifies a broad array of gender issues to be addressed | Can be broad or deep: Identifies progress, challenges and learning related to chosen issues |

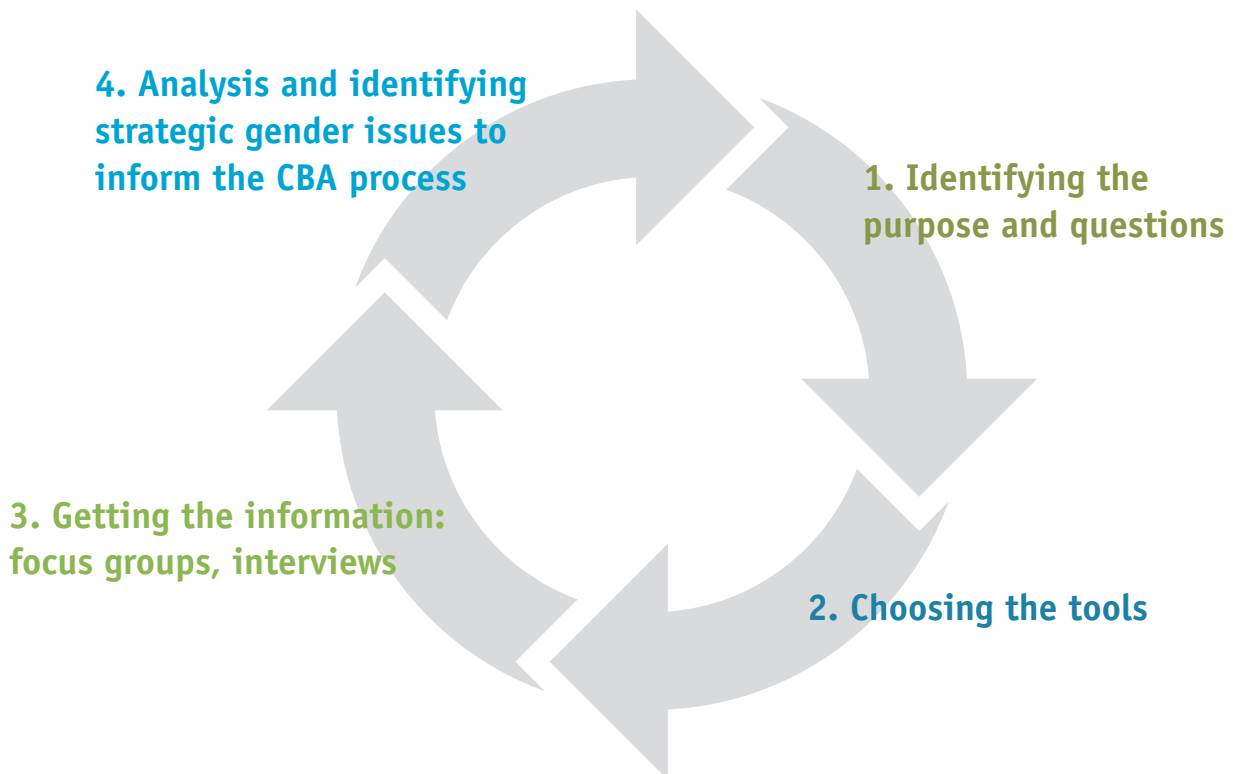
Each of these three practices has its own purpose, timing and scope, and they complement each other in the community-based adaptation process. But giving this a try does not mean having to learn three different things. Whether integrating gender into Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis, conducting a specific gender study, or integrating gender into activities for adaptive management, all of these practices can follow the same basic process and draw from the same pool of guiding questions, practical tools and good practice principles.



3. PRACTICAL STEPS FOR INTEGRATING GENDER ANALYSIS IN CBA

A widow and her son harvesting bambara beans on their farm in Takpo community Ghana. Credit: Shaban Alidu/ALP Ghana, 2015.

FIGURE 1: THE CORE PROCESS FOR GENDER ANALYSIS



Before you start: Practical considerations for gender analysis⁷

A number of practical considerations before you get started:

- **Scope:** Is the analysis intended for long-term programming or specific to a short-term initiative, planning exercise or similar? The scope of the gender analysis should be tailored to the size and complexity of the initiative at hand.
- **Resources:** The depth and breadth of the inquiry will be influenced by other factors, including: time available, budget, as well as human resources. Sometimes, it is suitable to partner with a research institution or university for joint learning and analysis.
- **Timing:** Ideally, gender analysis will inform an initiative from its early stages. In some instances, however, gender analysis will be conducted after the design phase due to time constraints or other factors.

Careful preparation is essential to ensure an appropriate approach. In designing analysis, careful consideration must be given to risk analysis and ethical considerations:

- What are potential risks to participants or community members linked to this exercise? How can you ensure that you do no harm?
- How will you ensure accountability, and promote empowerment and learning of participants throughout the analysis process?
- How will you ensure that you work sensitively and respectfully within communities?

Time and training or coaching must also be dedicated to support teams to build key skills for gender analysis:

- **Sensitivity to gender equality and diversity issues:** Build awareness, sensitivity and tolerance among all those involved around gender, equity and diversity in our own lives and work, to enable critical reflection and analysis of the situations where you work.
- **Facilitation and analysis skills:** Develop skills in empowering approaches that engage participants respectfully, promote and foster learning, center control with community members through participatory approaches, and engage in critical conversations that probe deeper into the topics in question.

Throughout the analysis, you will need to consider that:

- **Gender norms change across time:** How have values, norms and expectations around gender changed over the decades (positively and negatively) and what influences led to these changes?
- **Individuals experience life differently at different ages and life stages** – How do different age groups (younger children, adolescents, adults and elderly) as well as marital status (unmarried, married, widowed, separated, divorced) experience gender and power issues differently?
- **Individuals maintain multiple social roles and relationships** – for example, as partners, household and clan members, citizens of a broader community, economic actors, etc. – which means that their experiences as men and women can change from situation to situation.

Step 1: Identifying the purpose and questions

It is easy to forget this essential step and move straight to applying a set of specific participatory tools, such as those listed in the field guides of the Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis handbook. Also, gender-related inquiries are often limited to separate conversations on gender with a group of women, while a group of men discuss everything else. What “the women said...” then often becomes the only gender-related information available, and that, per se, does not make up a gender analysis. What really makes a difference is being clear on the purpose of the inquiry and the key questions behind the inquiry. Together with the cultural context, they determine the appropriate form of interview or focus group discussion (see steps 2 and 3).

Tip

“Gender-segregated” group discussions

(i.e. discussions whereby men and women have separate exchanges) can be a useful way to create a safe space for discussion especially in contexts where social norms make mixed group conversations uncomfortable or impossible. But that alone does not constitute a gender analysis – it is only one of the methods available for it.

Step 1.1 Identifying the purpose:

A discussion of the purpose will identify which of one of the three key practices mentioned above is the most relevant approach to use.

Extractive research vs. community-based adaptation planning: the difference in approach

It is also important, right from the start, to be clear on the difference between a gender inquiry as a 'research project' and an enquiry that is more action-orientated, in other words an integral part of the participatory community-based adaptation process.

While many gender inquiries in adaptation contexts have been extractive research exercises whereby external researchers study gender dynamics in a local community, the community-based adaptation approach actively engages members of the local community in context analysis, vulnerability and capacity analysis and adaptive management. In other words, members of the local community are not 'studied', but they themselves are involved in driving the process, identifying and reflecting on their situation, and using the insights gained for planning.

This means that:

- Members of the local community need to be part of the process of deciding the purpose and questions
- A great deal of sensitivity and understanding on the part of the facilitators is required throughout the process
- Facilitators need to be aware of power dynamics and whose voices may not be heard, and find ways to sensitively address power imbalances in representation
- Safe spaces need to be created right from the beginning to raise sensitive issues

Step 1.2 Identifying guiding questions:

Gender analysis toolboxes offer several frameworks or sets of guiding questions to work with. These guiding questions, meant to be adapted and narrowed down as needed, usually evolve around the following:

- (1) **Between different social groups, who does, uses, controls, decides, knows, benefits and is included in what? How, where, when and why?** (Social groups include women and men at different stages in their lives, of different social, wealth or education status, etc.)
- (2) **How has this changed in the past, or how is it changing now, and why?** Questions around changes also become particularly important when the purpose of the analysis is to monitor, evaluate, reflect and learn, and so to contribute to adaptive management.

CARE's framework for Gender Analysis¹⁰ (see Useful Resources section) also provides a set of themes and questions, to help plan and check that key issues are covered. These include, for example, household decision-making, division of labour, aspirations for oneself or – an important and sensitive issue in gender relations – control over one's own body.

The Adaptation Learning Programme and CARE Mozambique have worked on integrating these issues into climate vulnerability and capacity analysis.

See the resulting set of guiding questions on the following pages. This is not a definitive or exhaustive list of questions, but can serve as a basis for choosing the focus of an inquiry into gender dynamics in a community-based adaptation context.

To repeat, the aim can be to:

- Get a general overview of gender dynamics at play in a local setting or explore a particular issue in depth,
- Explore the role played by gender in climate vulnerability and adaptive capacity, or
- Support adaptive management by monitoring, evaluating, reflecting on and learning about gender-related changes and outcomes.

Climate information systems and communication – sample guiding questions on gender

Community-based adaptation includes climate information systems and communication to inform decisions for adaptation actions, for example Participatory Scenario Planning⁸ and community early warning systems⁹.

Guiding questions to explore the gender dynamics around climate information could include:

- What are the different climate information needs of different social groups and how are or can their needs be communicated to the producers of the information?
- How are seasonal and weather forecasts communicated and how do different social groups (women and men of different ethnicities, wealth and education status, etc.) access the information? Who cannot access the information? Whom does the information serve and in what ways?
- How do different groups (women and men farming crops, herding or rearing livestock, etc.) track and predict the local weather?
- How do different groups share weather, climate or early warning information among each other? Whose information counts? Who shares information with whom? How have the ways of sharing information changed and how is this affecting different groups?
- Who benefits from the information? In what ways?

Sample Guiding Questions for Analysing Gender in a Community-based Adaptation Context

Adapted from: CARE Mozambique, Kulima and Poverty, Environment and Climate Change Network, 2014. Gender-Sensitive Climate Vulnerability and Capacity-Analysis (GCVCA). A Practitioners Handbook (see Useful Resources section on page 22).

In CARE's thinking community-based adaptation is effective when the following four components work together: 1) climate-resilient livelihoods, 2) disaster risk reduction, 3) local and community adaptive capacity, and 4) addressing underlying causes of vulnerability. The guiding questions proposed here are therefore structured according to these four components. It is not recommended to try to cover all of these areas in one GCVCA, so they are divided in three sets of essential, recommended and variable areas of focus.

- **Set A (Essentials)** is about establishing or confirming the broader climatic and social context. This is essential information and likely already available unless you have not worked with the community in question before. The GCVCA can help reaffirm and deepen the understanding of the community's climatic and social context.
- **Set B (Recommended areas of focus)** is a set of guiding questions we recommend putting a strong focus on. Understanding the underlying causes of vulnerability to climate and disasters is key for addressing social inequalities and poverty in a context affected by climatic shocks, stresses and disasters. These are also particularly important questions with a view to understanding gender dynamics.
- **Set C (Possible areas of focus)** covers the remaining three components of community-based adaptation and, depending on the circumstances and purpose of the GCVCA, our recommendation is for the inquiry to focus on either one of the other three areas – it is not essential, often impossible and not recommended to cover all of them in one go unless you are looking at a systematic, well-resourced and longer term piece of research.

Important note for the use of these guiding questions: Guiding questions are meant to guide you in identifying the specific set of questions for your particular GCVCA. So they are neither exhaustive, nor final. They are a starting point for identifying what, for your particular purpose and circumstances, and based on consultation of available information, you want to find out through the GCVCA you will be conducting. We therefore recommend that you produce your own table of guiding questions based on the example on the next page. It will then assist you in the planning and analysis steps of the process.

GUIDING QUESTIONS ANALYSING GENDER IN A COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION CONTEXT²

| Broader Context | |
|---|--|
| A. Essentials | <p>A1. Climate and disasters context</p> <p>What weather extremes (temperatures, precipitation, cyclones, floods, droughts, etc.) are considered normal, and has this changed? What changes in the climate and weather have people observed over decades and over recent years? Which hazards occur in the area, when, how often and how strong are they? Have changes been observed in the occurrence of these hazards (frequency, intensity, etc)?</p> |
| | <p>A2. Social context</p> <p>What are the most important livelihood resources to different groups within the community? Who are the better off and worse off in the community? Who are the different wealth groups? Different ethnic and religious groups? What do they do (main livelihood) and own, how do they live?</p> |
| Underlying Causes of Vulnerability | |
| B. Recommended focus | <p>B1. Access to and control over assets and services</p> <p>Which assets (e.g. land, sea, rivers, other natural resources, livestock, etc) and services are key for the ability of men and women to buffer shocks and adapt to changes, and what degree of access to and control (i.e. decision-making power) over these do they have? Which of these assets and services come under most stress from climate variability and disasters? How have gender inequalities in access to and control over these assets and services changed in the past or are currently changing, and why?</p> |
| | <p>B2. Decision-making and participation</p> <p>How do local planning processes work? Who is involved in, or influences decisions at the community level? Whose interests are represented internally and externally, e.g. towards local government? In what ways do women and men participate or make sure their interests are represented in local decision-making? When climate variability and change affect people's lives and livelihoods, who makes decisions over changes in resource distribution and practices? Who tends to benefit from these decisions, and who does not? Who influences and decides how natural resources such as land and water are allocated?</p> |
| | <p>B3. Division of labour, use of time</p> <p>Who (women, men, boys, girls, in what circumstances) is allowed or expected to do certain types of work, complete certain tasks, engage in certain activities? What specific sets of opportunities, constraints and status do these specific types of work and duties mean for individuals of different gender and age groups? How much time do women, men, boys, and girls spend engaging in these different duties? How have labour division and time use changed over time and why? What happens to people's roles and time use under changing climatic circumstances, for example when floods and droughts become more frequent and intense?</p> |
| | <p>B.4 Control over one's body</p> <p>To which degree are women, men, boys and girls in control over their own bodies and sexuality, decisions on marriage, family planning and freedom from abuse and exploitation? What factors affect decisions over marital status, marital partner or family planning? What threats jeopardise women's, men's, boys' or girls' control over their bodies, and what factors drive these risks? Have there been any changes in these dynamics and why? What impacts do climate variability and disasters have on this or how is climate change and disasters influencing women and girls' control over their own bodies?</p> |

2. Based on CARE areas of inquiry for gender analysis: Gender Analysis framework by the Adaptation Learning Programme for Africa, and ACCCA Local Adaptive Capacity Framework and CVCA Handbook.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| C. Possible area of focus | Climate resilient livelihoods | |
| | C.1 Livelihoods | Which livelihoods are most vulnerable to climate variability and disasters? How are they affected by them? Whose livelihoods are they (women or men, young or older, married, unmarried etc.)? Which livelihoods are least affected and why? Whose livelihoods are they? How are the livelihood strategies of women and men at different stages in their lives (adolescent / adult/ elderly, unmarried/ married/ divorced/ widowed etc.) evolving? Who is changing them and why? Do households (male headed and female headed) have diversified livelihood strategies? Does this include non-natural resource based of non-farm strategies? Do livelihoods strategies involve working away from the community? If so, who does that and when, for how long and with what effect, on whom? |
| | C.2 Coping and adaptive strategies | What strategies are currently employed to deal with shocks and stresses to the livelihoods of women and men? How are women and men in different social situations managing risk, planning for and investing in the future? Who generates and who makes use of climate information for planning? Are households employing climate-resilient agricultural practices and if so, which households do so (socio-economic situation, male or female headed households etc.)? |
| C. Possible area of focus for GCVCA | Disaster Risk Reduction | |
| | C.3 Hazards and changes | What are the most important climate related hazards and other hazards the region and/or ecological zone faces? How have these hazards changed in recent decades and years, and how are they currently changing? How do they affect different groups within the community, which groups are most vulnerable to which hazards and why? Within each group, how are women affected these hazards and how are men affected? Why? |
| | C.4 Disaster risk information | What disaster risk information do local institutions, men, women, boys and girls have access to and how useful is it? What early warning systems in place and how well are they working? Who (among women, men, boys and girls in different social situations) has access to them and makes use of these and who does not? |
| | C.5 Response and risk management strategies | How do women, men, boys, girls protect themselves and their assets in the event of a disaster? Who has protected reserves of food and agricultural inputs, secure shelter, and mobility to escape danger, and who does not? Who can seek support? |
| C. Possible area of focus for GCVCA | Local and community capacity | |
| | C.6 Aspirations for oneself and strategic interest | What are the aspirations that men, women, boys and girls articulate for themselves, or for future generations? What are the changes that they are hoping to see around themselves to make these aspirations possible – in terms of services and resources available, social rules, the natural environment or security issues? To which degree do women, men, boys and girls feel in control over their fate and future, make plans and set priorities? To which degree do they feel able to face the changes in the context of broader trends they are seeing? |
| | C.7 Knowledge, information and innovation | What distinct knowledge do women and men hold in their livelihood activities? What knowledge do they hold of expected future changes? Who has the knowledge, skills and resources to employ innovative strategies to support adaptation? What innovative strategies are available to women and men to adapt to changes in the climate and disasters context? Who can take advantage of them and who receives institutional support to do so – and who does not? Who makes decisions on innovations? |
| | C.8 Flexible and forward-looking decision-making | How are predictions made about the future when, for example, deciding which crops to plant or when to sell seeds, yields, animals or other assets? Among women and men in the community, who makes these predictions and whose opinions are considered in these decisions? What weather and climate forecasting information is available and how are they disseminated to women, men, girls and boys in different social settings? Among them, who has best access to it, who makes use of it and who does not? |

Step 1.3 Refining the guiding questions:

With the first set of identified questions in mind, it is time to conduct a preliminary analysis, by reviewing reports, interviewing key informants with relevant experience and insights, and examining relevant policies and laws.

This will help to:

- Refine the questions already identified
- Deepen the questions or make them more specific
- Identify any gaps
- Clarify which questions may need to be prioritised in the ensuing focus group discussions and key informant interviews

Step 2: Choosing the tools

Once the questions are clear, and available information (relevant reports, studies, datasets) have been consulted, it is time to decide on the strategy for getting the conversations in motion. “Tools” can mean a lot of things, but in this case, we mean the range of qualitative, participatory exercises that can be undertaken with focus groups in the community to discuss different issues. One distinct advantage they bring is that they can facilitate reflection and learning among participants in ways that surveys, for example, don’t.

Two fundamental ways to discuss different issues are via simple focus group discussions as well as key informant interviews with people at different levels, both guided by a range of open questions. But there are several participatory tools that facilitate deeper engagement and, perhaps, more revealing discoveries than a simple group discussion. The participatory tools used for CVCA¹¹ and similar inquiries, such as seasonal calendars, Venn diagrams, hazard maps, or vulnerability matrices, tend to be very versatile and can be facilitated in ways that draw out gender-specific issues (see for example the tools section in CARE’s GCVCA in the useful resources section on page 22). The same versatility applies to gender-specific tools – such as time use mapping, power mapping, or community social and resource mapping – as they can be used in ways that facilitate conversations about different processes, resources and strategies involved in community-based adaptation.

Useful selections of tools are available in:

- The CARE Gender Toolkit
- The World Food Programme’s Gender Guidance Note on Vulnerability Assessments and Mapping
- The Research Modules in the CCAFS/ CARE Gender and Inclusion Toolbox for participatory research in climate and agriculture

Please see the Useful Resources section for links to these documents.

Tip

Gender-specific tools accelerate learning

It is helpful to ensure that the popular participatory tools commonly used for vulnerability and capacity assessments, such as seasonal calendars, hazard maps, etc., are facilitated in a gender-sensitive way, but it is recommended not to stop there. Making the effort to add some gender-specific tools helps accelerate learning and create a deeper understanding of gender dynamics. A couple of years into the programme, ALP integrated a few exercises from CARE’s Gender Toolkit in its set of Annual Evaluative Exercises – a process of reflection on changes and learning together with communities.

The insights gained from this helped to understand gender differences in vulnerability that were common or unique to the different places ALP works in. The insights also helped to identify strengths and gaps in the approaches taken so far – for example, it became clearer that Village Savings and Loans Associations – a pro-poor credit and savings approach used by CARE in many countries – were a powerful vehicle for women’s empowerment in ALP’s CBA work, whereas more work was required with other approaches such as Participatory Scenario Planning to better respond to gender imbalances.

Finding suitable tools starts with identifying what your questions deal with. Is this about power, decision-making processes and local institutions? Is it about the distribution of, or control over, resources between different gender groups? Is it about the distribution of roles and labour between different gender groups? Is it about knowledge and influence? Is it about the use of land, infrastructure and mobility? The tools available in the above guides allow for emphasis on different aspects.

Other relevant considerations that will help select tools include: how much time there is for the inquiry, who will participate, what their literacy levels are, or whether translation is required. Some tools are more visual and intuitive and therefore easier to use with low-literacy groups or in contexts where translation is necessary.

Step 3: Getting the information

Detailed guidance on how to prepare, facilitate and wrap up inquiries into gender dynamics is available in the above resources. Many of these equate to general good practices for participatory learning and reflection with community groups. They include, for example, the early engagement of local power holders, active listening, respect for people's time and customs, avoiding jargon, paraphrasing questions to avoid misunderstandings, the use of open-ended questions, flexibility, and validation of key conclusions by the respondents.

The following are a few key points that are particularly important from a gender perspective.

- **When acquiring background information before working with the community, consult available resources on gender dynamics amongst your target groups**
 - o What can people who have worked here, as well as reports of previous activities done on this area, tell you about livelihoods resources, cultural norms, values and practices within the community?
 - o Have previous projects in the village considered gender dynamics?
 - o What successes and challenges did they experience?
 - o Are there existing community groups encouraging collective action by women, men, youth?
 - o What about the legal and policy environment, and the strategies and practices of relevant actors?
- **Appropriate timing is essential.**
 - o In preparing the agenda for the visit, consider what you know about, or can find out about, people's time use throughout the day, throughout the year:
 - o At what time of the year, and what time of the day will you be able to speak with young, adult and elderly men and women?
 - o How can you coordinate and plan your work in such a way that different groups get their say?
- **Ensure the facilitation team includes both men and women who are sensitive to local cultural norms and practices.**
 - o In many contexts, especially where gender norms strongly regulate men's and women's presence in public spaces, a better conversation climate and more trust can emerge when the facilitator is of the same sex as the respondents.

Tip

Possible tools for exploring gender dimensions of climate information systems and communication

In the example on page 13 some guiding questions to explore the gender dimensions of climate information use and communication were outlined. Aside from a focus group, there are many possible tools that could enrich discussions around these issues.

Many questions deal with decision-making processes, levels of influence, and access to services. The Decision-making matrix¹² could be useful here, and it can also be the basis for discussing other issues, such as household responses to climatic or economic shocks, or decisions on the use of new technologies or changes in livelihood strategies. Questions around influence, services, and communication processes can also be explored through institutional mapping tools (e.g. Venn Diagrams – see the GCVCA Practitioners Guidelines in the Useful Resources on page 22.) or mapping of access to and control over services¹³.

- o These dynamics can change over time, as people grow more confident to engage in public conversations (see below)
- **Taking literacy and numeracy levels into account is crucial.**
 - o Are men and women from different groups literate and numerate or not?
 - o What can be done to ensure everyone can contribute to the discussion in equal measure?

- **Respect privacy around sensitive issues.**

A brief, public meeting is unlikely to reveal the most deep-seated and problematic gender issues people are dealing with. While it may be relatively easy to discuss public participation or how certain resources are distributed, other, more sensitive issues concerning for example, married life, social stigma or violence tend to surface only gradually, over time. Nothing replaces long-term relationship building and the value of working closely with local organisations and groupings that are valued and trusted by community members.

This sounds like a lot to handle. But in a process that is truly oriented toward the people it serves, it will become second nature. It is important to remember that you are not implementing a perfect, blueprint process, but that all we are ever doing in analysing social relations is to learn. It is more important to try it out and learn by doing, than to not try it out at all.

Speaking in public – Increasing confidence and acceptance in Nanighi, Kenya

“In Nanighi Village in Garissa, North Eastern Kenya a pastoralist Muslim woman would rarely raise her voice to share opinions in community meetings that include men. Through community-driven digital photo stories facilitated by ALP the women told their own stories, which enabled them to express themselves more freely. The women were initially reluctant to have the men see their stories but male elders asked the women to show their film. The women decided that not only could their husbands and fellow villagers watch their films but they wanted their story told more widely - to children in their village, in other villages, to Kenyan policy-makers, and to the world at international forums. ‘We understand now how sharing our information with the local community helps people understand more about activities for women in this village,’ said Asha Klas Abdullahi, 29. ‘The elders who watched have appreciated what we have done, and no one is criticising it. It gives us more confidence to share our stories’.”¹⁴

Step 4: Analysis and identifying strategic gender issues

Once all the information generated from reviewing existing information, interviewing key informants and community discussions has been collected and transcribed, it is time for the team to return to the original purpose (see table 1) and questions behind the exercise, and analyse the findings, capturing the emerging themes and issues as they relate to each of the questions. The table on the next page is one possible way of organising and presenting this.

Defining the next steps: Going back to the purpose of your gender analysis, CVCA or monitoring, evaluation, reflection or learning exercise, the following considerations need to be discussed with relevant groups and individuals, in order to agree on a set of actions to follow the inquiry:

- What are the patterns and themes – but also irregularities/ exceptions – that emerge from the new information?
- What additional actions need to be taken to respond? How do existing activities (such as adaptation planning processes and strategies) need to be adjusted or changed to respond adequately to the issues arising? How do existing plans and strategies (such as community adaptation action plans CAAPs) need to be adjusted?
- Are the planned actions merely accommodating the status quo in gender relations, or are they helping to gradually challenge and transform gender inequalities?
- Are any of our activities or plans doing, or at risk of doing harm? How do we respond to this?
- What new questions are arising? Where and how can they be built into the process?

| Questions | Themes/ issues | Source | Notes |
|--|--|---|--|
| Who generates and makes use of climate information? | Those who are literate can share more easily: high illiteracy levels, especially among women; also low levels of numeracy – major barrier for sharing/ accessing information in writing | Monimart & Diarra 2015 gender report | Confirmed by focus groups in Dakoro, April 2015 |
| | More equitable use and generation of information at community level than above (municipality and district) | Focus group discussion in [location] on [date]; | Observation: Even at community level, women's official roles mostly confined to their traditional domains (children's health, nutrition) |
| | Mobile phones are helping expand access to information/ sharing of information: Giving women new autonomy and ways to 'open their minds'. However, many women can only use mobile phones to receive calls, not to share information as they cannot operate them. | Focus group discussion in [location] on [date] | Confirmed in Monimart & Diarra 2015; > recommends action on literacy/ numeracy/ phone use |
| How are decisions about new adaptation strategies made in the household and community? | Emerging themes/ issues and how it matters in relation to this situation | Date/ group/ tool, Report, etc | Observations, linkages, assumptions, reflections... |
| | Another theme/ issue | ... | ... |
| What are the most effective adaptation strategies in use, and who accesses/ controls them and how? | | | |
| Next question... | ... | ... | ... |

In the CARE Gender Toolkit, you can find useful resources for:

- Programmatic review and design: <http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Pages/Design.aspx>
- Reviewing and deciding how to integrate gender inequalities in programming: <http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Pages/gender%20continuum.aspx>
- Doing no harm: http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Pages/Do_No_Harm.aspx

As the climate shifts over time, so do gender relations

“In the communities where ALP works in Mozambique women and men had very specific roles in agriculture, but in recent years these divisions are beginning to blur, as men are now working alongside women in weeding, harvesting and processing agricultural products (traditionally women's roles). In Kenya, men have begun to engage in agriculture and wage labour, in addition to rearing livestock. Climate change-induced water and fuel wood scarcity in Kenya has forced men to participate in their collection, which had been unheard of before as it was seen as a role for girls and women.”¹⁵



Women and men watering camels in Niger.
Credit: Marie Monimart, 2010.

4. WHAT HAS ALP LEARNED?

It was early days for community-based adaptation when ALP first started, and the experiences in integrating gender into the processes in the four different countries varied greatly. However, some cross-cutting lessons and good practices are emerging from the four countries and the joint work across them.

No one size fits all: There is no one single, perfect way of doing gender analysis. It is important to keep the process simple and straightforward enough for it to be useful and doable. At the same time, there are too many changing variables to use one and the same process and questions everywhere. Most important is to listen carefully and with interest to the people involved, their situation and context and adapt the process accordingly.

Purpose before tools: Analysis is not about mechanically running through a pre-determined set of participatory exercises, without being clear on why they are being used or which questions they are supposed to help answer. The key is to be very clear on purpose and questions from the beginning – then the tools can be selected and adapted as needed.

Quality comes before quantity: It is better to have deep and detailed focus group discussions around one or two strategically chosen tools than to race through a large number of them without a clear purpose for each. Many tools can cover several purposes – they need to be strategically chosen.

Team training and reflection on gender and diversity is a key part of preparing to do good work with communities. We all bring our own personal experiences, questions and dilemmas on gender to the table, and becoming aware of these is a precondition for engaging in effective work on gender with others.

Including wealth ranking in the process: It is difficult to understand gender and differential vulnerability without establishing a picture of the socio-economic make-up of the community – what does being better off, or poor or extremely poor look like in a given context? Wealth ranking exercises¹⁶ can help fill this gap and help avoid the common pitfall of mistaking an ‘elite opinion’ for a widely applicable situation.

Considering multiple social factors: Whilst gender inequalities may be profound, social inequalities (and therefore, differential vulnerability and capacity) are also linked to other factors. In the communities ALP worked with across four countries, young men were often excluded from decision-making, alongside people who are poor or living with disabilities. These additional social factors create a more complex picture than inequalities merely between women and men.

The analysis does not stop at the community level: Community-based adaptation itself is not a process limited to the community level. By the same token, gender dynamics present in policy, planning, institutional and governance arrangements need to be examined – in fact they often fall through the cracks. Key informant interviews and, perhaps, group discussions, with representatives at higher levels, e.g. municipal, district, regional and national levels, should be included in the plan, too.

Age matters for adaptation opportunities in Dakoro, Niger

In the communities where ALP is working in Niger some women have more freedom, mobility and decision-making control than others: older women have more freedom in terms of mobility than younger married ones, so they are more able to go to market and participate in meetings and other community events. Women who are widowed, divorced or young and unmarried, often face particular constraints in adaptation because they are at a further disadvantage when it comes to control over productive resources, mobility and access to opportunities for education and economic development.¹⁷

5. WHAT NEXT?

This brief has outlined where, why and how gender analysis needs to be integrated into the community-based adaptation process. It has shown that, while the entry points for gender analysis vary, the key steps in the process are the same. At the same time, there is no one way of doing this: it is always a learning process, with specific circumstances and multiple trade-offs to consider.

It has also demonstrated that the uses and benefits of doing gender analysis in a community-based adaptation context are numerous. The information generated supports CBA practitioners and participants by strengthening their understanding of vulnerability, improving planning and targeting, informing inclusive and empowering strategies and monitoring and evaluating the resulting changes. And, it can also feed into a growing body of evidence and learning, to be used by local authorities, researchers, and policy-makers alike.

ALP has seen that the existing body of work around gender in public decision-making, rights, institutions, livelihood strategies and assets, is as relevant to community-based adaptation as it is to any other local development process. Gender inequalities are as much a key factor behind many of the underlying causes of vulnerability to climate change among people living in poverty, as they are being transformed by the changes that are helping many of them adapt. This is seen for example in the differential barriers and also increasingly widespread access to mobile communication and finance for women and men in many remote, rural areas across Africa.

The next step, already underway across several initiatives, is to use the “gender lens” to zoom in more closely on those issues and processes that are emerging as particular features of community-based adaptation practice, and therefore are not yet understood in sufficient depth. They include:

- Looking more deeply at how gender dynamics affect the generation, access, use and utility of climate information.
- How gender affects people’s strategies and behaviours in dealing with uncertainty and changing risks.
- The role gender norms and expectations play in shaping people’s concerns and aspirations for a future under a changing climate.

All of the above can be explored in the context of practices and approaches introduced in more depth in other practitioner briefs by ALP – such as, Participatory Scenario Planning, Adaptation Planning with Communities and Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction and Adaptation to Climate Change (see useful resources section for more details).

Ultimately, however, realising gender-equitable community-based adaptation is not just a matter of discovering the unexplored. As gender imbalances in power, voice and resources are well-known and widespread across the world, it is also about ensuring that CBA planning and implementation follow simple standards of good practice – so as to do no harm, contribute to equality and promote the realisation of human rights and sustainable development for all.

USEFUL RESOURCES

CARE – Gender Toolkit

<http://gendertoolkit.care.org>

- Good Practices Framework for Gender Analysis:
<http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Pages/core.aspx>
- Programmatic review and design:
<http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Pages/Design.aspx>
- Reviewing and deciding how to integrate gender inequalities in programming:
<http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Pages/gender%20continuum.aspx>
- Doing no harm: http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Pages/Do_No_Harm.aspx

CARE - Gender Sensitive Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Analysis - Practitioners Guidelines

http://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/GCVCA_Practitioners-Guide-FINAL-July-2014.pdf

CARE - Participatory Scenario Planning

http://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/ALP_PSP_EN.pdf

CARE - Adaptation Planning with Communities – Practitioner Brief 1

http://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/CBA_Planning_Brief.pdf

CARE - Gender dynamics in a changing climate: how gender and adaptive capacity affect resilience.

<http://careclimatechange.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Gender-and-Adaptation-Learning-Brief.pdf>

CARE - Integrating disaster risk reduction and adaptation to climate change: practitioner Brief 2

<http://careclimatechange.org/publications/cba-and-drr-practitioner-brief>

CCAFS/ ICRAF/ CARE – Gender and Inclusion Toolbox for Participatory Research in Climate Change and Agriculture.

https://cgspace.cgiar.org/bitstream/handle/10568/45955/CCAFS_Gender_Toolbox.pdf?sequence=7

Pacific Climate Change Alliance – Gender and Climate Change Toolkit

<http://pacificclimatechange.net/images/Documents/toolkit%20all%20in%20one%20pdf%20final%20copies.pdf>

World Food Programme – Thematic Guidelines for Integrating a Gender Perspective into Vulnerability Analysis

http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/manual_guide_proced/wfp197271.pdf

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ENDNOTES

1 ALP 2015a.

2 ALP 2015 c.

3 CARE International 2014.

4 Based on CARE's Good Practices Framework for Gender Analysis

<http://gendertoolkit.care.org/Resources/Good%20Practices%20Brief.docx>

5 WFP 2015

6 *ibid.*, p.17

7 *ibid.*

8 ALP undated.

9 ALP 2015d.

10 CARE International 2012.

11 Daze et al. 2009.

12 WFP 2005.

13 WFP 2005.

14 ALP 2015c, p.21

15 ALP 2015c, p.17

16 See WFP 2005

17 ALP 2015c p.16.



The Adaptation Learning Programme for Africa

The Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP) for Africa aims to increase the capacity of vulnerable households in sub-Saharan Africa to adapt to climate change and climate variability. Since 2010, ALP has been working with communities, government institutions and civil society organisations in Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique and Niger to ensure that community-based adaptation approaches and actions are integrated in development policies and programmes. This is achieved through the demonstration of innovative approaches for CBA, supported by practical tools, methodologies and evidence of impact. ALP is also working to create an enabling environment for CBA but working with civil society groups to influence national and international policy frameworks and financing mechanisms for adaptation.

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