

Women's capacity to cope with climate change: Best practices

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What characterizes a best practice for adapting to CC?*

1. Provides for equal participation of both women and men in planning and decision making
2. Utilizes skills of both men and women
3. Draws upon women's traditional knowledge and expertise
4. Provides women with opportunities to take leadership
5. Evidences creative problem solving on the part of women
6. Ensures ecological sustainability and preserves biodiversity
7. Empowers women economically, e.g. providing skills training and access to agricultural technology

*Criteria based on one or more of the selected examples listed below.

Selected examples of best practices

Surviving natural disasters & extreme weather conditions

Hurricane Mitch

Unlike most other communities in Honduras, the municipality of La Masica (pop. 24,336) did not have any fatalities from Hurricane Mitch in 1998 due to a process of community preparedness that began six months prior to the disaster. The project, launched by the Central American disaster prevention agency, included both men and women in the establishment of local organizations in charge of risk and disaster management, training in geographical mapping of hazards and development of an early warning system. When the hurricane struck, the municipality was prepared and vacated the area promptly, thus avoiding deaths.

Hurricane Mitch: Women's Needs and Contributions, Women in Development Program Unit, Inter-American Development Bank, Washington, D.C., Sustainable Development Department Technical Papers Series, 1999.

Drought in Micronesia

During a drought in the Federated States of Micronesia, local women knowledgeable about island hydrology, found potable water by digging a new well that reached the freshwater lens. While Pacific island men know more about fishing in deep waters, women know about the shoreline, because they often collect shellfish close to the waters edge. Thus their knowledge could add significant value to programs designed to protect

against coastal erosion. Such divisions of labor between men and women based on different experiences and understanding can offer an entry point for gender sensitive programming.

http://www.ausaid.gov.au/closeup/gender_adaptation.cfm *Aid Close Up, Australian Government (AusAID)*

Prolonged rainy seasons in the Philippines

Prolonged rainfall in the Rizal area in the Philippines make rice farming difficult. For this reason and due to the high costs of agricultural inputs, women farmers, members of the Amihan, are beginning to cultivate a traditional indigenous variety of rice that does not require massive doses of chemical fertilizers and pesticides and is more resistant to pests. They are also planting fruit trees and vegetables on the borders separating the rice paddies as a form of intercropping. While this practice of farming rice yields only one harvest a year, it respects the environment, generates lower GHG emissions and adapts rice farming to these prolonged wet seasons brought about by climate change. *Gender & climate change finance: A case study from the Philippines*

<http://www.wedo.org/prototype/wp-content/uploads/genderandclimatechangefinance.pdf>

Adapting to arid and degraded land

Watershed initiatives in Andhra Pradesh

Padmamma, who lives in a small village in the Mahaboob Nagar district of Andhra Pradesh, owns 4 acres of land. Like most of the agricultural land in her district, it is 75% barren owing to the degraded soil and depleted moisture conditions partly due to global warming. During the community interaction organized by 'Youth for Action' to deal with this problem, soil erosion was identified as the cause of decreasing productivity. Village women formed into sangams or local self-help groups and decided to use water harvesting techniques, e.g. check-dams, pit digging, minor irrigation works. Within a year, soil erosion was arrested and water retention capacity increased; as a result, Padmamma was able to shift from food crops to cash crops and to increase her crop yields. www.dainet.org/sdnp/success.htm

Chemical free, non-irrigated, organic agriculture in southern India

A collective of 5,000 women, spread across 75 villages in the Andhra Pradesh region of southern India, is now using chemical-free, non-irrigated, organic agriculture as one method of combating global warming by following a system of interspersing crops that do not need extra water, chemical inputs or pesticides for production. They grow as many as 19 types of indigenous crops to an acre, on arid, degraded lands, regenerated with help from an organization called the Deccan Development Society (DDS) and so respond to the threat to food security. <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=46131>

Village level management of water resources in Tamil Nadu

Water is a very precious commodity in Tamil Nadu due to an arid climate exacerbated by global warming. Self-help groups have enabled women to protect the areas around hand pumps. The women canalize the wastewater and use it to water vegetable and fruit gardens and collect a water users' fee from every household for maintenance of the hand pumps. These women trained in rainwater harvesting also learned how to repair hand pumps and are now empowered to raise their voices with Panchayati officials from the

forest conservation departments regarding environmental issues. **Mainstreaming Gender in Water Management: A Practical Journey to Sustainability: A Resource Guide, 2003 54**
http://waterwiki.net/index.php/Gendered_adaptation_to_water_shortages_and_climate_change#Experiences_in_Tamil_Nadu.2C_India

Combating Desertification and Deforestation

Reducing deforestation in Mali by promoting sustainable sources of income

Mali, a Sahelian country, is two thirds desert, and 90 per cent of the country's energy needs are met by burning wood and charcoal. As a result, desertification is accelerating erosion, making the soil poorer for farming and more vulnerable to frequent flooding. The Sinsibere project works to reduce desertification by developing sustainable sources of income for rural women as an alternative to their commerce in wood. Besides environmental, literacy and financial education, rural women are trained to grow vegetable gardens, make soap and use energy-efficient stoves, thus diversifying their income sources. After six years, 80 per cent of the participating women no longer cut wood for commercial purposes. Such a reduction in wood-cutting as well as better management of resources, will mitigate the future threat of climate change and weather-related hazards *Gender Perspective- Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into Climate Change Adaptation: Good Practices and Lessons Learned, 2008, UN/ISDR Secretariat, pp. 3-4.*

Utilizing local knowledge to reduce desertification in Tunisia

Béni Khédache, a dry and mountainous region in Tunisia, is vulnerable to drought in summer and torrential rain and landslides in winter. The Mali-Folkecenter (Nyetta, Mali) in partnership with Dodo Finland and the ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland sponsored a wide-ranging sustainable environmental resource management project comprised of numerous initiatives for tackling desertification, water stress and erosion, through a variety of methods often based on traditional knowledge. The participation of women was particularly important for identifying local knowledge techniques such as rainwater harvesting, innovative irrigation, and for increasing the area's biodiversity and plant cover. Thus hazards likely to be exacerbated by climate change were reduced. *Gender Perspectives" Integrating Disaster Risk Reduction into Climate Change Adaptation: Good Practices and Lessons Learned, 2008, UN/ISDR Secretariat, pp. 3-4.*

Links to examples of best practices

Sisters on the Planet: How four inspirational women are fighting back against climate change (video) www.oxfamamerica.org/campaigns/climate-change/sisters-on-the-planet

Women's role in adapting to climate change and variability <http://www.adv-geosci.net/14/277/2008/adgeo-14-277-2008.html>

People-centred climate change adaptation: integrating gender issues
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/a1395e/a1395e00.pdf>

Women's role in adapting to climate change and variability - <http://www.adv-geosci.net/14/277/2008/adgeo-14-277-2008.html>

Gender, Climate Change & Human Security: Lessons from Bangladesh, Ghana, & Senegal ****use this for added examples if necessary**

Training Manual on Gender and Climate Change -
<http://www.escueladefeminismo.org/spip.php?article332>

People-centred climate change adaptation: integrating gender issues -
<ftp://ftp.fao.org/docrep/fao/010/a1395e/a1395e00.pdf>

UNDP's Experience integrating practices, tools and systems for climate risk assessment and management and DRR strategies into national policies and programmes

Gender Paper for CC Roundtable - www.sprep.org/climate_change/pdfs/

Mainstreaming Gender into the Climate Change Regime -
www.gendercc.net/fileadmin/inhalte/Dokumente/UNFCCC_conferences/

<http://www.treehugger.com/files/2009/03/untouchable-dalit-women-community-certified-organic-seed-bank.php>

http://www.USAID.gov/closeup/gender_adaptation.cfm

<http://www.motherjones.com/blue-marble/2007/03/climate-change-will-affect-women-more-severely-men>

ENVIRONMENT-INDIA: Women Farmers Ready to Beat Climate Change
<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=46131>

<http://www.wedo.org/category/learn/campaigns/climatechange/gender-climate-finance>

http://waterwiki.net/index.php/Gendered_adaptation_to_water_shortages_and_climate_change#Developing_and_implementing_gender-sensitive_adaptation_strategies
<http://www.genderandenvironment.org/>

<http://southasia.oneworld.net/fromthegrassroots/indian-women-farmers-beating-climate-change>

<http://www.madre.org/index.php?s=2&b=20&p=51>

<http://www.wedo.org/category/learn/campaigns/climatechange/national-climate-change-advocacy-project>

SUSTAINING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH WATERSHED INITIATIVES:
A success story from Hyderabad <http://www.dainet.org/sdnp/success.htm>

<http://gbmna.org/w.php?id=13>

<http://desertification.wordpress.com/2009/01/18/women-and-climate-change-issues-of-impact-equity-and-adaptation-google-celsias/>