

E-DISCUSSION REPORT – CONSOLIDATED REPLIES

7th APAN Exchange on Climate Change Adaptation

Topic: *Mainstreaming Gender into Adaptation: Examples and Experiences*



The 7th APAN Exchange was raised by Dr. Peter King on 12 Mar 2015 to engage the APAN climate change adaptation community in Asia and the Pacific. The Exchange period lasted approximately two weeks (12 Mar 2015 – 27 Mar 2015).

Dr. King is the Adaptation Project Preparation and Finance Team Leader for the USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific project. He is also the Senior Policy Advisor at the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) Regional Centre based in Bangkok, Thailand.

[Dr. Peter King](#), Adaptation Project Preparation and Finance Team Leader, USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific, and Senior Policy Advisor, [Institute for Global Environmental Strategies \(IGES\)](#) Regional Centre, Bangkok, Thailand (Posted on 06 Apr 2015)

Dear colleagues and friends,

Thank you for your insightful responses to this recent APAN Exchange on ***“Mainstreaming Gender into Adaptation: Examples and Experiences.”*** I very much appreciate the level of thought that went into your writing. Reading them has been both enlightening and useful for me as an adaptation practitioner.

Many practical examples, as well as theoretical insights, on how to mainstream gender into climate change adaptation activities were shared from across Asia and the Pacific. We heard from colleagues in government – Barisal City, Bangladesh, [NABARD, India](#), and Pacific Island Countries – and in partner organizations, including [WRI](#), [SEI](#), [IGES](#), [GIZ](#), [SPREP](#), and others.

Allow me to draw out some key learning points that I have found particularly helpful from this *Exchange*.

There is a broad consensus that mainstreaming gender into projects is more desirable than developing a standalone component. This would necessarily include dedicating a specific budget for gender-related work, as expressed by [Marita at SPC/GIZ](#) and [Patrick at NABARD](#).

Interestingly, however, [Bernadette and Ha at SEI](#) pointed out that this shouldn't be an “either-or” option – instead, both approaches should be “complementary” in order to fully address the cross-cutting nature of gender issues.

They added, quite accurately, that effectively addressing gender really means “transforming unequal gender power relations.” Solutions need to be more robust because only emphasizing greater involvement or economic aid for women is not enough. Values and structures need to change.

In that regard, all contributors are mindful of the different economic, social and political roles that women and men play in communities – and, accordingly, they would adapt to climate change differently.

[Moushumi at WRI](#) goes on further to emphasize a more nuanced approach that disaggregates women based on their socio-economic positions. Better understanding women's diverse needs helps to better design more targeted and, therefore, more effective projects.

Other suggestions include having scorecards or tracking systems to monitor gender activities, as proposed by [Akhteruzzaman at Save the Earth, Cambodia](#). Almost all contributors wanted to see more explicit gender requirements coming from international financing institutions.

Indeed we can agree with [Bernadette and Ha at SEI](#) that we cannot afford to be “tokenistic” if we’re serious about engendering transformative change – in other words, practitioners need to go much farther beyond fulfilling a female quota at a workshop to truly mainstream gender into adaptation.

You can read the full responses in this consolidated replies report.

You can also access the [USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific Online Sourcebook for Integrating Gender in Climate Change Adaptation Proposals](#) and the [Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit](#) via the links below:

<http://asiapacificadapt.net/gender-sourcebook/>

www.pacificclimatechange.net/index.php/eresources/documents?task=showCategory&catid=137

Once again, I would like to thank all the contributors for your insightful responses. I look forward to discussing with you again in our next *Exchange*.

Best regards,

Dr. Peter N. King

Team Leader

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Responses from the APAN Community

Contributors from the APAN Community to the 7th Exchange (12 Mar 2015 – 27 Mar 2015).

1. [Bernadette Resurreccion](#), Senior Research Fellow, and, [Ha Nguyen](#), Research Associate, [Stockholm Environment Institute \(SEI\)](#), Asia Centre, Bangkok, Thailand (Posted on 27 Mar 2015)

[Bernadette Resurreccion](#), Senior Research Fellow, and, [Ha Nguyen](#), Research Associate, [Stockholm Environment Institute \(SEI\)](#), Asia Centre, Bangkok, Thailand (Posted on 27 Mar 2015)

Dear Peter,

This exchange is a wonderful forum for not only sharing our perspectives, but also emphasizing the importance of addressing gender issues in climate change adaptation. Thank you so much for this. The below is the response from SEI to your questions.

To what extent, if at all, do you take gender into consideration in designing an activity or project that addresses the negative impacts of climate change? What ideas, concepts, and approaches do you consider? Do you think it is better to develop a standalone gender component or "mainstream" gender into the whole project design?

2. [Marita Manley](#),
**Technical Adviser,
 Climate Change,
 SPC/GIZ Coping with
 Climate Change in the
 Pacific Island Region**
*with inputs from
 participants at the
 Pacific Gender and
 Climate Change
 Toolkit Training
 recently held in Apia,
 Samoa (Posted on 26
 Mar 2015)*

3. [Binaya Raj Shivakoti](#),
**Water Resources
 Specialist, [Institute for
 Global Environmental
 Strategies \(IGES\)](#),
 Hayama, Japan**
*(Posted on 25 Mar
 2015)*

4. [Ella Antonio](#),
**President, Earth
 Council Asia Pacific,
 Philippines** *(Posted on
 24 Mar 2015)*

5. [Patrick Jasper](#), **Asst.
 General
 Manager, National
 Bank for Agriculture
 and Rural
 Development
 (NABARD),
 India** *(Posted on 23
 Mar 2015)*

6. [Dr. Md. Matiur
 Rahman](#), **Chief Health
 Officer, Barisal City
 Corporation,
 Bangladesh** *(Posted on
 19 Mar 2015)*

7. [Rothavy So](#),
**Independent Gender
 Consultant, Phnom
 Penh, Cambodia**
*(Posted on 18 Mar
 2015)*

Gender is about power. Addressing gender issues is transforming unequal gender power relations. Efforts in climate adaptation aim to be inclusive of women by addressing gender-specific vulnerabilities and strengthening women's special capacities. However, it is not fully clear if these gender-sensitive processes are genuinely transforming unequal gender relations. SEI has conducted many studies on gender in climate change adaptation and resilience building. Past research shows that the political and socio-economic structures that render women vulnerable in the first place often remain unchanged despite (or even because) of these efforts. As resilience is widely viewed as the capacity to bounce back, return to "normal" and resume "stable functioning" after stresses, we would argue that without transforming gender asymmetries embedded in socio-economic structures and cultural values, pre-existing forms of gender-based vulnerabilities and inequalities will be reproduced and maintained even with efforts to build resilience.

What are effective approaches to address gender issues, gender standalone or mainstreaming

Gender stand-alone approaches are many. One common approach is understood as initiating "women-only projects." Efforts are geared towards offering women more opportunities for leadership or economic empowerment. The downside of these efforts is that they do not address or challenge existing power relations and structures that subordinate women in the first place. For instance, many mistakes have been found in offering small loans to women to build small enterprises. There have been increased incidences of gender-based violence in situations where women were found to disenfranchise men's breadwinner position at home with their new businesses. Past research also documented gender-based violence against women who were assigned to be forest guards in community forestry projects. Current initiatives to pay women for their environmental services and climate mitigation efforts such as in reducing deforestation may potentially have the same effect. In post-disaster assessments, economic aid for women was found not to help the women free themselves from the power structures in the household and the community. For example, placing land and housing under women's names have enabled men to transfer all financial responsibilities to women, and to withdraw their own economic and physical support in the home. "Women" are therefore targeted, not gender-power relations.

Another gender-standalone approach is to establish gender units such as 'gender desks,' 'gender focal points' or 'gender departments' tasked to manage and organize gender-related activities within organizations. All gender-related business is channeled to such entities, and the rest of the organization does pretty much all other tasks it is mandated to carry out. A weakness in this is its tokenistic approach to addressing gender issues more comprehensively, which cross-cuts both staff- and program-related areas. Often these units are under-resourced and their staff members occupy multiple roles, with gender work being only one of them.

Gender-mainstreaming approaches explicitly recognize that gender is a cross-cutting issue, from a human resource issue to a component in programmatic planning and interventions. Efforts to mainstream ensure that gender is embedded in planning all programs, and that human resources departments recognize gender issues in staff benefits, advancement and rights. The weakness in this approach is that gender is often treated thinly and less substantially, or sometimes treated as an after-thought by non-specialists who may grudgingly include it in planning agendas to comply with donor

8. [Moushumi Chaudhury](#), Associate II, Vulnerability and Adaptation, World Resources Institute (Posted on 16 Mar 2015)

9. [Akhteruzzaman Sano](#), Chief Technical Advisor, Save the Earth Cambodia (Posted on 13 Mar 2015)

requirements. It is ‘everywhere and yet nowhere’, where no one meaningfully shoulders responsibility for gender work.

From past lessons, both gender standalone and gender mainstreaming approaches should be treated as complementary and not as either-or options. Gender units politically and professionally ensure that gender is mainstreamed throughout the organization, but at the same time they can advance their own gender standalone programs to more effectively and resourcefully address prominent gender issues.

Gender mainstreaming can also cover a wide spectrum, from targeting gender balance in organizations and events, addressing women’s concerns, to enabling women’s empowerment and leadership. With all that said, it may be worthwhile and more promising to focus on defining what kind of transformative change we would like to make, and what are the effective ways to bring about those desirable changes. Discussions on how to make changes in women’s lives would be much more inspiring than choosing between gender mainstreaming or stand-alone approaches, strictly speaking. The fundamental question that project designers should always ask is whether their planned interventions would reinforce existing gender roles and power relations; or whether they want to transform them.

Do you find that the inclusion of a gender perspective improves your adaptation projects and the associated outcomes? If so, how? What are the challenges? Do the benefits (i.e. better adaptation, direct benefits accrued to women) outweigh the costs (i.e. additional financial costs, time, expertise, consultations, rounds of approvals)?

Gender perspective enables us to have more nuanced and comprehensive analysis of power dynamics at family, community, national and regional levels; to understand who are benefited, who are left out or adversely affected, why so, and why adaptation efforts are/are not effective and sustainable.

One of the major challenges is the practice of considering the household as a unit of production, assuming that income and benefits are equally shared. In reality, power dynamics, different status, roles and interests amongst household members may cause disadvantage for some. At higher scales, it matters that gender issues are tackled to strategically enable equal opportunities and benefits to reach all segments of society.

Ironically, donors, researchers and research institutes may narrow their interpretation of gender mainstreaming as counting male/female participants to achieve “gender balance.” This gives the impression that gender issues can be easily fixed without complicated and costly analysis, which is often a good excuse to shy away from committing substantial investment in gender professionals and gender projects.

How can international funding sources for climate change adaptation (for example, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund) better support gender inclusion for adaptive solutions to the impacts of climate change?

Launching special funds for gender-responsive adaptation initiatives that aim to transform the drivers of gendered vulnerability, and support women’s equally with men’s innovations in adaptation.

Finally, though slightly tangential, we find that gender is often thought of as

being about women, though it is equally important to work with men. What, if any, practical solutions have you found to work with men on gender issues in climate change adaptation?

The reason why gender has been conventionally thought of as being about women is due to the need to rebalance the scales that disproportionately favored men historically and socially. Gender-responsive approaches also do not disregard the fact that there are different types of men and women. And in many situations, types of (ethnic, racial, poor) men may have less advantage to types of (ethnic, racial, well-off) women. Additionally, many gender-sensitive men have been active in transforming all forms of gender and social inequality.

Engaging women and men in the discussion and negotiation of issues and joint actions to address gender issues in CCA. It might tactically start with separate focus group discussions of women and men on gender issues; and then at a later stage, bring them together to exchange and agree on solutions and action plans.

Best regards,

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Ha Nguyen
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[Marita Manley](#), Technical Adviser, Climate Change, SPC/GIZ Coping with Climate Change in the Pacific Island Region *with inputs from participants at the Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit Training recently held in Apia, Samoa (Posted on 26 Mar 2015)*

Dear Dr King and APAN colleagues,

Many thanks for posing this question which is very relevant to the success of adaptation programs. In the Pacific, many partners (governments, NGOs, regional organizations, international organizations) recognized the lack of gender mainstreaming within climate change adaptation projects happening in our region as a gap. In response to requests, the Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit (available [here](#)) was developed by SPC, SPREP, UNDP, UNWomen and GIZ to provide climate change practitioners with practical tools and case studies from the region to support them in mainstreaming gender as part of climate change programs.

This is now being utilized in many programs and training on the toolkit has been rolled out with several organizations in Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands and this week with SPREP, government and NGO partners in Samoa.

We used the opportunity of the current training to get participant input to these questions.

1. To what extent, if at all, do you take gender into consideration in designing an activity or project that addresses the negative impacts of climate change? What ideas, concepts, and approaches do you consider? Do you think it is better to develop a standalone gender component or "mainstream" gender into the whole project design?

Many organizations are required, to a greater or lesser extent, to consider gender as part of their program design. Sometimes this is done well and sometimes these requirements are paid lip service only.

Having a gender policy which explicitly requires organizations to do this is a key part of the enabling environment to ensure this happens. Some of the organizations present at the training shared that one effective way of ensuring gender analysis is done as part of the program design phase is to ensure that it is included explicitly within project goals and indicators.

For example, one of the indicators relating to the program that I work on requires us to demonstrate that integrated approaches to climate change adaptation that incorporate the principle of gender equality have been implemented.

Running regular staff training and awareness sessions to ensure program staff have competency in the issue was also considered important. And political will from the top of the organization is also an important enabling factor.

Most participants recommended mainstreaming gender into all aspects of the project design. The danger with creating a separate gender component is that all too often addressing gender gets relegated to being dealt with as part of that component and crucial opportunities to strengthen gender responsive approaches across other areas (and increase project effectiveness) may be missed. It can also be used to provide an excuse for reluctant program managers who create a standalone project working with the women's group in the community and use that to demonstrate that they have considered gender in their project. Of course, based on initial needs and priority assessments, there may be very good reasons for targeting assistance at women's groups – but this shouldn't be the ONLY way in which gender is addressed.

More important than a standalone component perhaps if a specific budget dedicated to ensuring that gender aspects of the project are adequately resourced. This could, for example, be used to support gender analyses during initial design, for specific gender tool development and trainings, and specific monitoring and evaluation measures that capture to what extent measures implemented have addressed the different needs and priorities of men and women.

2. Do you find that the inclusion of a gender perspective improves your adaptation projects and the associated outcomes? If so, how? What are the challenges? Do the benefits (i.e. better adaptation, direct benefits accrued to women) outweigh the costs (i.e. additional financial costs, time, expertise, consultations, rounds of approvals)?

Ensuring that a program addressing the needs and priorities of all beneficiaries and draws on the skills and knowledge of all members of society can only help to deliver better projects. It can lead to an equitable distribution of resources – of time and costs – and can help ensure that the implementation of a specific measure does not increase the overall workload

of a particular group. It helps to promote inclusive decision making and ensure that all expertise needed to design good adaptation responses are available including traditional knowledge held by men and women. It can also promote community acceptance and sustainability as all community members will have been kept up to date.

For example, during an initial pilot of composting toilets in Tuvalu which originally were built a distance from the house, consultations with the women's groups indicated that women preferred them to be incorporated into the overall house area to increase social acceptance.

Participants at the training in Apia recognized some of the constraints arising from the cultural context, women's status, the availability of both men and women to participate fully and religious beliefs. It often, therefore, requires the practitioner to be innovative and to recognize, given a certain context, whether there are barriers to participation in decision making and priority setting and whether there are alternative mechanisms to ensure marginalized voices are heard (e.g. through separate consultations).

It is also important, when conducting a gender analysis, not to reinforce gendered roles and responsibilities unintentionally.

The [Pacific Gender and Climate Change Toolkit](#) includes tools that are straightforward and can be easily included as part of each stage of the design, implementation and M&E process if they are thought about early enough in the project. This helps to minimize the amount of extra time and resources gender mainstreaming requires.

A gender (or social) analysis of a program can also reveal a lot of information about a project which is useful for project effectiveness and sustainability. For example, in our program in Vanuatu a gender analysis of the solar fruit dryer revealed some areas that needed strengthening in relation to overall governance structure responsible for the dryer.

3. How can international funding sources for climate change adaptation (for example, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund) better support gender inclusion for adaptive solutions to the impacts of climate change?

Suggestions from the SPREP participants included:

- i) Provision of training targeted at NGOs/CSOs and in particular small women-led organizations on project proposal writing and submission.
- ii) Ensuring information reaches all stakeholders including community based groups, faith based organizations, etc.
- iii) Advertise and outreach to spaces where women's groups, NGOs and faith based organizations are present.

The funding institution can often play a highly influential role in ensuring gender is mainstreamed by requiring it to be part of appraisal documents, implementation and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

4. Finally, though slightly tangential, we find that gender is often thought of as being about women, though it is equally important to work with men. What, if any, practical solutions have you found to work with men on

gender issues in climate change adaptation?

Ensuring that men are part of the discussions on addressing gender issues is important. Climate change adaptation may mean increased workloads for men and/or women depending on their specific roles and responsibilities and it is important that both men and women's specific needs are addressed.

Also, men can be important advocates with other men and may be able to reach groups that, sadly, a women might not be able to influence in the same way. At the last joint platform event in Nadi, a male member of our technical working group involved in designing the toolkit, presented a draft to participants. He managed to reach some men in the room which a female member might not have done. A key issue in engaging men is to recognize that addressing gender involves addressing the different needs and priorities of all members of society. The media is an important tool in changing perceptions. Peer to peer learning is also a valuable way to engage men.

Another strategy is to not use the "G" word – at least initially. For some reason many men (and women) have an irrational fear of the word gender. One strategy could be to propose a social analysis of a program (which would essentially look at the same issues).

[Peniamina Leavai](#) ([Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme](#)) and [Dean Solofa](#) ([Secretariat of the Pacific Community](#)) are among the gender balanced team of facilitators this week!

[Marita Manley](#) and [Nicollette Goulding](#), SPC/GIZ Coping with Climate Change in the Pacific Island Region with inputs from participants at the Gender and Climate Change Training held at SPREP, Apia, Samoa.

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[Binaya Raj Shivakoti](#), Water Resources Specialist, [Institute for Global Environmental Strategies \(IGES\)](#), Hayama, Japan (Posted on 25 Mar 2015)

Dear Peter,

Thank you for highlighting this interesting topic on Climate Change-Gender around the periphery of celebrating the International Women's day. I would like to share some of my thoughts with reference to climate change-gender-water nexus (Please allow me to use gender and women interchangeably). I would like to admit that my answer will be inspired based on my observation in one of our research works [Climate Change and Water scarcity in Nepal](#), which has been recently published by IGES.

1. To what extent, if at all, do you take gender into consideration in designing an activity or project that addresses the negative impacts of climate change? What ideas, concepts, and approaches do you consider? Do you think it is better to develop a standalone gender component or "mainstream" gender into the whole project design?

We do take gender issues into consideration while designing our project activities, but to be fair I do admit that we often fail to give gender a deserving position in our projects, sometimes due to design factor (like in our study above) and sometimes due to the issue, which we are investigating. However, during our investigation we have encountered that women are at

the forefront to suffer from increasing water scarcity, which is triggered by erratic rainfall patterns, a likely manifestation of climate change. Women in the rural area take the burden to meet household water needs (not only for family members but also for livestock); they have to wake-up early to beat the queue, spend hours to carry water for long distance several times a day, besides doing other household businesses and assisting in farming. They sacrifice their time and health. Our female respondents did mention that their active role in securing water is not due to a lack of support from male members, who indeed help them when it is feasible. The male members are unable to support because they have to engage in income generating activities. This fact is enough to demonstrate that missing women in adaptation activities means a failure to recognize a big part of the problem.

Dedicating a standalone gender component is definitely desirable, if the project can be designed in a way to address the vulnerability context of women and to empower them through well-designed capacity building activities. However, I do prefer to emphasize that gender mainstreaming should be the key outcome of the project whichever way we design it.

2. Do you find that the inclusion of a gender perspective improves your adaptation projects and the associated outcomes? If so, how? What are the challenges? Do the benefits (i.e. better adaptation, direct benefits accrued to women) outweigh the costs (i.e. additional financial costs, time, expertise, consultations, rounds of approvals)?

Taking women into confidence can improve the effectiveness of the adaptation interventions and can help in institutionalizing the adaptation process. We have observed that women groups were found to manage and mobilize resources more effectively such as drinking water facilities (their main issue), savings, community forestry, than other groups where male members are dominant. The main challenge could be the design of the gender programs itself because by emphasizing only involvement of the women cannot guarantee the success because the male members too have to internalize the value of women involvement. Probably this kind of confusion of measuring the success of gender involvement based on number of heads or money spent on women and not regarding necessary change in the mindset of another half of the population (male) can become a barrier for gender mainstreaming in a true sense. I am not sure about the cost-benefit, but there are sufficient studies at least in water-sanitation area showing the higher benefits of gender involvement.

3. How can international funding sources for climate change adaptation (for example, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund) better support gender inclusion for adaptive solutions to the impacts of climate change?

Probably we are over-highlighting the need and relevancy of international financing on every issue related to climate change, either mitigation or adaptation. The key problem of international financing is a lack of a transparent delivery mechanism and the role of financing should be more facilitative and should not increase the dependency on external support. Once the issue of channeling funds comes under track, gender issue can be easily and effectively accommodated into future adaptation actions.

4. Finally, though slightly tangential, we find that gender is often thought of as being about women, though it is equally important to work with men. What, if any, practical solutions have you found to work with men on gender issues in climate change adaptation?

As I indicated earlier, narrowing down the existing huge gulf between men and women through women empowerment should be the objective of gender mainstreaming not only in climate change adaptation, but the whole developmental process. It cannot be simply achieved by unidirectional emphasis on women and not recognizing the critical role of men. The optimum outcome of any adaptation action cannot be realized without equal response from both genders.

Thank you.

Best regards,

Binaya Raj Shivakoti, Dr. Eng.

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[Ella Antonio](#), President, Earth Council Asia Pacific, Philippines (Posted on 24 Mar 2015)

Hi Peter,

Thanks much for running this Exchange and picking relevant and important topics. I regret that I missed joining previous discussions. I also wish to thank you and your Adapt Team for the sourcebook on integrating gender in climate change adaptation proposals. Indeed, gender mainstreaming is not an easy task so the sourcebook would certainly be very useful. My responses below would somehow touch upon the sourcebook as well.

1. To what extent, if at all, do you take gender into consideration in designing an activity or project that addresses the negative impacts of climate change? What ideas, concepts, and approaches do you consider? Do you think it is better to develop a standalone gender component or "mainstream" gender into the whole project design?

Gender is always a key consideration in all my professional work and activities, particularly in designing proposals that address climate change impacts. Apart from the already known and expressed importance of gender sensitivity/mainstreaming, I have a strong belief that women have a different way of looking (or understanding and feeling) at things, hence the solutions that come out of their perception of issues, which are largely based on their experiences, tends to be simple, creative and innovative. However, I also believe that men's perceptions, hence solutions, to issues are also important and useful in many ways. The challenge, therefore, is how to balance or make these two sets of perceptions/ideas/priorities harmonize and synergize. This could best be achieved at the assessment stage when men and women get to understand the causes and effects of climate change and their activities as well as in project identification stage when men and women discuss and agree on needed solutions/projects and what role each one will play. I would thus argue that gender must start to be mainstreamed earlier than project design (as proposed by the sourcebook), i.e. during environmental scanning, assessment and project identification. For same reasons, it is deemed more

useful for gender to get integrated into the whole project design. Notwithstanding this, there should always be a room for standalone gender component but this component must be based on the assessment and project identification process, not automatic earmarking. In other words, let the beneficiary men and women decide for themselves. This view presupposes that men and women of a community or project area have the capability to readily understand their situation/issues and priorities, identify projects and design interventions. As this can't be assumed, any standalone component for gender mainstreaming must primarily be along these lines.

2. Do you find that the inclusion of a gender perspective improves your adaptation projects and the associated outcomes? If so, how? What are the challenges? Do the benefits (i.e. better adaptation, direct benefits accrued to women) outweigh the costs (i.e. additional financial costs, time, expertise, consultations, rounds of approvals)?

Yes. As mentioned above, there are solutions/projects that women, in view of their experience and ability to understand the family's needs, often come up with useful, practical and simple solutions. They also have better capability of communicating and building awareness and generating support with family (through the children) and community, which is an important element in climate change adaptation projects. The challenge has always been the lack of confidence to assert and express their thoughts in a coherent manner due to traditional role/treatment of women. Empowering women especially in this regard would be useful and the standalone component should cover this. Benefits certainly outweigh costs. Apart from contributing to project outputs and outcomes, women have the capability to widen project impact areas and beneficiaries, usually starting with their children and spreading to the community. As women are empowered, their multiplier capability expands.

3. How can international funding sources for climate change adaptation (for example, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund) better support gender inclusion for adaptive solutions to the impacts of climate change?

Involving women in assessment and project identification stages and empowering them through capacity and confidence building.

4. Finally, though slightly tangential, we find that gender is often thought of as being about women, though it is equally important to work with men. What, if any, practical solutions have you found to work with men on gender issues in climate change adaptation?

Cooperative assessment and project identification, design and implementation between men and women (see #1); awareness building for children/youth who have often been effective agents of change; and ensuring that project team and tools have gender balance.

My best regards to all.

Ella Antonio
President
Earth Council Asia Pacific
Pasig City, Philippines

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Patrick Jasper, Asst. General Manager, National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), India (Posted on 23 Mar 2015)

Dear Dr. King,

Thank you very much for keeping me on your mailing list. I still remember the to-the-point discussions you had with us during the APAN Forum 2014, and the valuable insights you shared with us during the side event. I have been reading with quite a lot of interest on the views by the other contributors and hope mine will be of some use to you and to them too. Once again thanks. My observations are given below.

1. To what extent, if at all, do you take gender into consideration in designing an activity or project that addresses the negative impacts of climate change? What ideas, concepts, and approaches do you consider? Do you think it is better to develop a standalone gender component or "mainstream" gender into the whole project design?

As you are aware, Dr. King, I work for a National Development Bank (NABARD) in India and in most of the projects which we implement in the Natural Resource Management sector Gender considerations are inbuilt. We have over 10 million ha of land under watershed development and involve around 1 million tribal families in our tribal development programs across the country. We also have the largest micro-credit program in the world under operation which involves 99% women. In all of these programs we have specific components built in to address the issues of gender and when we say gender in this context I specifically mean women folk. For example, capacity building activities targeted at women are budgeted in the program itself. Activities to reduce the drudgery of women and training them in income generating activities like tailoring, etc. are also budgeted into the programs depending on need and necessity. Community institutions created as part of these programs compulsorily have to have the participation of women. Preference and relaxation in norms are given to single women households and widows.

It is always better to integrate gender components into projects rather than develop stand-alone projects. While stand-alone projects may seem more focused and targeted, mainstreaming them with whole project design ensures that gender considerations are taken into account while achieving project objectives. I hope I have made myself clear here.

2. Do you find that the inclusion of a gender perspective improves your adaptation projects and the associated outcomes? If so, how? What are the challenges? Do the benefits (i.e. better adaptation, direct benefits accrued to women) outweigh the costs (i.e. additional financial costs, time, expertise, consultations, rounds of approvals)?

Sometimes it's a matter of acceptance. In India the involvement of women in development programs varies vastly from region to region. It is much better in the south of the country and lesser in the north. Acceptance of women related interventions is much more of a challenge in the northern region of the country and a lot of capacity building is required before mindsets can be changed and real change achieved. Sustained interventions in the right manner do yield the desired results over time. Over time you find the women moving forward in meetings, participating more and taking decision on their own and generally more aware and you know you are getting there.

In our case since integration or mainstreaming of gender issues is taken up as a matter of routine rather than as special projects, the costs are inbuilt and economics of the project are worked out around them.

3. How can international funding sources for climate change adaptation (for example, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund) better support gender inclusion for adaptive solutions to the impacts of climate change?

One solution could be to incorporate in the guidelines that a certain proportion of the budget must be used specifically for gender inclusive projects or programs with their own concrete action plan and deliverables. It has worked for us in our projects in India.

4. Finally, though slightly tangential, we find that gender is often thought of as being about women, though it is equally important to work with men. What, if any, practical solutions have you found to work with men on gender issues in climate change adaptation?

It is interesting that you should ask this question Dr. King. Sometime ago I attended a training on Climate Change Adaptation in Kampala, Uganda. There was a spirited discussion on the issue of gender in climate change. It was overwhelmingly felt by the participants that when we say gender we usually mean women and women centric programs, while in actuality climate change affects both men and women maybe differently and with differing intensities but it does affect both. What came out from the discussions was that the whole issue of gender has been twisted into women only and so in actuality while women have become empowered, they go to work, they earn, etc., but they still tend to the families, put food on the table and send children to school while the men have taken a step back – many men are now satisfied to sit back at home and relax. Now I am not sure this reflects only the African context or was general in nature but it showcases how ignoring the men and involving women alone could have its own deleterious effects.

However, having said this, I would emphasize that, in places like the rural hinterlands of India, it is very difficult to get the womenfolk to come out and participate in the development process and decision making process and for such communities women centric programs or “gender” related (call it what you will) is essential.

Thank you,

Patrick Jasper

Asst. General Manager

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

India

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[Dr. Md. Matiur Rahman](#), Chief Health Officer, Barisal City Corporation, Bangladesh (Posted on 19 Mar 2015)

Dear Peter,

Greetings from Barisal City, Bangladesh. Your topic is very perfect and relevant. Thank you very much for keeping me in your network. Accordingly, I have answered your questions below:

1. To what extent, if at all, do you take gender into consideration in designing an activity or project that addresses the negative impacts of climate change? What ideas, concepts, and approaches do you consider? Do you think it is better to develop a standalone gender component or "mainstream" gender into the whole project design?

Yes, I believe gender should be considered in designing an activity or project that addresses the negative impacts of climate change. Climate is a wide range issue. Multidimensional works are there. It needs a social movement to mitigate or adapt to climate change impacts. A social movement cannot take place without the involvement of men and women. Considering the LDCs or developing countries, it is of great value to think of gender balance for designing a climate change project. If there is no gender balance strategy in project design, women's participation in implementing the project may lack behind. So gender balance should be considered in all tiers: in project design, project implementation, and beneficiary selection. Gender balance should have in mainstream, not a standalone gender component. If there is a standalone gender component, again there is a chance of gender imbalance. So, gender balance should be considered in all stages of project design.

2. Do you find that the inclusion of a gender perspective improves your adaptation projects and the associated outcomes? If so, how? What are the challenges? Do the benefits (i.e. better adaptation, direct benefits accrued to women) outweigh the costs (i.e. additional financial costs, time, expertise, consultations, rounds of approvals)?

Yes, inclusion of gender perspective improves our projects outcomes. In local government organizations in Bangladesh, we are implementing many projects that have gender balance approach, and impacts are good. In adaptation projects, gender balance is more necessary. Because in all stages of an adaptation project men's and women's participation are mandatory. Such as for recovery work after a disaster, men and women volunteers are necessary. There are many challenges to make gender balance in a project implementation, such as availability of educated, skilled women workers as well as social stigma. We can solve these challenges, if we can give more training opportunity to female workers, more priority to female beneficiaries in project design and awareness raising activities for women empowerment. For long term or sustainability, gender balance should be ensured in education and early childhood development. There should be a national policy and plan for gender balance.

3. How can international funding sources for climate change adaptation (for example, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund) better support gender inclusion for adaptive solutions to the impacts of climate change?

This can be done in two ways: firstly, international funding sources can adopt a mandatory clause for funding to climate adaptation projects that have gender balance design and implementation strategy; secondly, more funding or more grants for gender inclusion in climate adaptation projects.

4. Finally, though slightly tangential, we find that gender is often thought of as being about women, though it is equally important to work with men. What, if any, practical solutions have you found to work with men on gender issues in climate change adaptation?

The issue is very interesting. Society has made gender. We can remove it from society. But it needs many things like; equal education, equal stillness, equal social support, equal social security, equal financial opportunity nationally as well as internationally for men and women. In developed countries it may be less important to think about gender balance in project design. But it is very important for developing countries and LDCs. Generally when we say gender balance, we mean women's participation like as men. It is equally important to work with men and women for climate change adaptation project in developing countries and LDCs. In climate change adaptation projects, if we work with men, we will suggest to involve women in the work, otherwise we recommend stopping fund. Because, in that case, there will be less outcome. In an area, if we find all are women working in climate change adaptation projects or all beneficiaries are women, then we recommend to involve men for gender balance.

Regards,

Dr. Md. Matiur Rahman

Chief Health Officer
Barisal City Corporation
Barisal, Bangladesh

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[Rothavy So](#), Independent Gender Consultant, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

(Posted on 18 Mar 2015)

Dear Dr. King,

Please find below my response to a few of your questions:

1. To what extent, if at all, do you take gender into consideration in designing an activity or project that addresses the negative impacts of climate change? What ideas, concepts, and approaches do you consider? Do you think it is better to develop a standalone gender component or "mainstream" gender into the whole project design?

As a gender specialist, I have worked with project design teams where I have been responsible for ensuring that gender is taken into consideration when designing an activity or project that addresses the negative impacts of climate change. The key concepts that I keep in mind are gender roles, equality and equity in climate change adaptation, as well as improving the livelihoods of women.

In this sense, I think it is better to develop a standalone gender component, rather than only mainstreaming. I have found that gender should be put into a separate component with a separate budget because otherwise some people may say that the higher number of women present at a meeting or a training indicates sufficient gender mainstreaming already taking place, and there is no need to have budget. Unfortunately, the presence of some women at a meeting doesn't necessarily mean that their needs and issues are being addressed – depending on the social constraints of a given community. Additionally, I think it is crucial that each project design incorporate gender expertise to implement and follow up on the gender component – otherwise no gender issues will be taken into consideration during implementation.

2. Do you find that the inclusion of a gender perspective improves your adaptation projects and the associated outcomes? If so, how? What are the challenges? Do the benefits (i.e. better adaptation, direct benefits accrued to women) outweigh the costs (i.e. additional financial costs, time, expertise, consultations, rounds of approvals)?

I find that the inclusion of a gender perspective does improve adaptation projects and the associated outcomes because women are often the most vulnerable people in communities and so should be involved in the project – both design and implementation.

In a recent project I worked on in Cambodia, we found elderly women (who are responsible for the care of their younger grandchildren) to be one of the especially vulnerable populations. Oftentimes in these communities both men and young adult women migrate to other towns for work, leaving the grandparents – or, more accurately, the grandmothers – in the communities to care for the children. Therefore, the issues and needs of these elderly women needed to be taken into serious consideration in a project's design – given the impact they would have on a large percentage of the community's children. By working with these women to promote adaptation, the project also promotes the adaptation of their families. If the adaptation projects address the needs of women and men equally and provide for gender equity and women empowerment, the adaptation project will more likely be successful.

A primary challenge, however, is that women are often not valued and supported in some local communities. This results in them not wanting to participate in a project if they are not invited to join in the early stage of the project design. In some communities, women will not be invited to participate in technical training as some may think that women have low capacity.

4. Finally, though slightly tangential, we find that gender is often thought of as being about women, though it is equally important to work with men. What, if any, practical solutions have you found to work with men on gender issues in climate change adaptation?

At the present, women are the most vulnerable and women do not have equal power, position or equal value as men – that is why we have to empower women. We need to strengthen women to be equal to men, but it does not mean that we ignore men or do not want to work with men. In a recent project I was involved with, we work with both men and women on project activities, including irrigation, water user group, etc. But for the irrigation water user group, we found more men rather than women participate, and for making decisions within the communities, they are done by men rather than women as well.

Thanks and all the best,

Rothavy So
Independent Gender Consultant
Phnom Penh, Cambodia

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[Moushumi Chaudhury](#), Associate II, Vulnerability and Adaptation, World Resources Institute *(Posted on 16 Mar 2015)*

Dear Dr. King,

Thank you for posing these very important questions. Here are some of my thoughts on question 1:

I think gender is an extremely important issue that should be addressed by those working in climate change adaptation, especially in the developing country context where gender roles are still distinct. Because women and men have different social and economic roles, they adapt to climate change differently. Therefore, to better target adaptation strategies, we need to know how men and women operate differently to create a holistic picture of a society where we would like to create an impact. Although I do consider applying a gender lens to the work I conduct, I do not think we can talk about men and women in a homogenous manner. Not all women are economically and socially poor, and in need of assistance to develop their adaptive capacity. In some cases, there are women who have higher adaptive capacity than men due to women's high socio-economic positions. If we are to design targeted adaptation projects that build adaptive capacity, we need to examine who among women and men need support and not assume that all women need support. This would require thinking about how gender connects to poverty and social status to determine who are the less privileged and would benefit from building their adaptive capacity. Considering gender by itself is not enough. This is the approach I take when trying to link gender to my work.

Thank you,

Moushumi Chaudhury, PhD
Associate II, Vulnerability and Adaptation
World Resources Institute
WRI.org

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[Akhteruzzaman Sano](#), Chief Technical Advisor, Save the Earth Cambodia
(Posted on 13 Mar 2015)

Dear Dr. Peter King,

Thanks for focusing on gender considerations in climate change adaptation.

I think the key challenge in gender issues is not only in adaptation projects but also in overall development initiatives - changing of mindset at institutional levels is crucial. In order to make it happen, we need adequate policies and guidelines. Most of the cases, we have policy but it is not implemented properly. Sometimes, it is interpreted wrongly.

The policy should be very simple like:

- Gender balanced staff in the office, in project and beneficiaries levels.

- Defined roles and responsibilities for each person that can bring to check the accountability. It is monitored using scorecards and update accordingly.
- Advocate and support with necessary capacity building initiatives so that newly coped persons can carry out their assigned responsibilities.

I do support the approaches of equity rather than equality.

Please see my answers below to your specific questions:

1. To what extent, if at all, do you take gender into consideration in designing an activity or project that addresses the negative impacts of climate change? What ideas, concepts, and approaches do you consider? Do you think it is better to develop a standalone gender component or "mainstream" gender into the whole project design?

I think, at all levels, gender considerations need to be balanced when designing activities or projects to address the impacts of climate change - positive and negative both cases. A simple idea is to develop and implement the policy and ensure it is made accordingly. There can be some scorecard to monitor to what extent the implementations are taking place.

I think developing of a standalone gender component or "mainstream" may create more complexities. Women and men at home are living together, so at work places also follow it. Let them come up naturally. If cannot do any help, at least ensure that their progress-process is not slowing down in any way.

2. Do you find that the inclusion of a gender perspective improves your adaptation projects and the associated outcomes? If so, how? What are the challenges? Do the benefits (i.e. better adaptation, direct benefits accrued to women) outweigh the costs (i.e. additional financial costs, time, expertise, consultations, rounds of approvals)?

We have proven cases, inclusion of a gender perspective not only improves the adaptation projects and the associated outcomes but it also adds value to enhance resilience. The key challenge is we do not implement the developed policy properly.

For example, we need to look at ourselves, is my office, projects, beneficiaries gender balanced? If not, just simple make it happen. On the other, there are case studies that show, the higher and more visible positive outcomes can be found if we invest in gender balanced initiatives.

But I support the idea that ensures women and men have the access to opportunities openly and unbiasedly. If we can ensure gender balanced meaningful participation, the expected result can be achieved.

If we look at schools from pre-school to upper levels, up to primary levels, girls are doing even better comparing than those of boys. Once the girls start growing and then they face challenges. If we can reduce those barriers, no additional attention, i think. If the institutions can ensure the natural growth of women, they can add value in all initiatives.

3. How can international funding sources for climate change adaptation (for

example, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund) better support gender inclusion for adaptive solutions to the impacts of climate change?

All funding agencies should justify to what extent the gender mainstreaming is made, how the project ensures the balanced and meaningful participation and contributions from women and men.

The less complexity is placed for gender mainstreaming is better for their result oriented participation.

4. Finally, though slightly tangential, we find that gender is often thought of as being about women, though it is equally important to work with men. What, if any, practical solutions have you found to work with men on gender issues in climate change adaptation?

I think, it is clear that 'gender' stands 'men and women'. Working with only 'men' or working with only 'women' worsens the situations and creates higher levels of risks.

For example, there are some agencies, bring women to empower them, train them on their rights, etc. There are cases, it creates gaps between men and women even at home, sometimes it creates misunderstanding between husband and wife, etc. We found working with men or women for gender issues, it means investing resources (time, efforts and money) to expand the existing gaps between women and men and add value to make sort of complexity.

Kind regards,

Akhteruzzaman Sano

Chief Technical Advisor

Save the Earth Cambodia

Website: www.savetheearthcambodia.org

Working for Building Community Resilience

Quality and Environmental Management System (ISO 9001 and ISO 14001)

Vice President

ECO GROUP

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E-DISCUSSION LAUNCH EMAIL (posted on 12 Mar 2015)

**[Dr. Peter King](#), Adaptation Project Preparation and Finance Team Leader for the [USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific](#) project, and Senior Policy Advisor, [Institute for Global Environmental Strategies \(IGES\)](#) Regional Centre, Bangkok, Thailand
(Posted on 12 Mar 2015)**

Dear colleagues,

As the world celebrates the achievement of women this International Women's Day, it is a good time for us, in this 7th APAN Exchange email discussion, to reflect on the issue of gender equality as it relates to climate change adaptation.

Thank you to all who contributed in our last [Exchange](#) on COP20 and the Green Climate Fund. In this Exchange, we would like to discuss your experiences incorporating gender concerns into climate change adaptation, highlighting the successes and the challenges.

At the [USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific](#) project, where I serve as Team Leader for Adaptation Project Preparation and Finance, we are working to help countries access finance for adaptation. Integral to our work is ensuring that the funding is channeled towards supporting women in adaptation solutions. In this sense, we try to go beyond gender mainstreaming and develop targeted, budgeted activities within the adaptation project that not only support better adaptation, but also bring tangible benefits directly to women.

Truly integrating gender concerns into adaptation projects, however, is no easy task. So to help project proponents design gender responsive adaptation projects, we developed an [Online Sourcebook for Integrating Gender in Climate Change Adaptation Proposals](#) that provides sector-specific support in the form of compiled resources and related examples from around the globe.

Going forward, we are keen to explore what practitioners across sectors and countries are doing to better incorporate gender into their adaptation work – and how we could all be doing it better. Please consider the following questions:

- 1. To what extent, if at all, do you take gender into consideration in designing an activity or project that addresses the negative impacts of climate change? What ideas, concepts, and approaches do you consider? Do you think it is better to develop a standalone gender component or "mainstream" gender into the whole project design?**
- 2. Do you find that the inclusion of a gender perspective improves your adaptation projects and the associated outcomes? If so, how? What are the challenges? Do the benefits (i.e. better adaptation, direct benefits accrued to women) outweigh the costs (i.e. additional financial costs, time, expertise, consultations, rounds of approvals)?**
- 3. How can international funding sources for climate change adaptation (for example, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund) better support gender inclusion for adaptive solutions to the impacts of climate change?**
- 4. Finally, though slightly tangential, we find that gender is often thought of as being about women, though it is equally important to work with men. What, if any, practical solutions have you found to work with men on gender issues in climate change adaptation?**

I look forward to your responses.

Thank you once again.

Dr. Peter N. King

Team Leader

Adaptation Project Preparation and Finance
USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific

Senior Policy Advisor

Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES)
Regional Centre
Bangkok, Thailand

Admin matters: For each *Exchange*, community members have about 2-4 weeks to share any thoughts, ideas, and experiences via the-exchange@adapt-asia.org with the group. At the end of the *Exchange* period, a consolidated summary of the discussion will be shared.

The APAN Exchange Series on Climate Change Adaptation is facilitated by APAN Knowledge Management Team and supported by the [USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific](#) project. The team moderates the exchanges and ensures that members receive a maximum of one email a day. Messages posted reflect the personal views of the contributors and not the positions of their organizations.

If you would like to opt-out of the *Exchange* at any time, please contact Augustine Kwan, Knowledge and Outreach Manager at the APAN Regional Hub at kwan@iges.or.jp

The APAN Exchange Series on Climate Adaptation is made possible by the generous support of the USAID Adapt Asia-Pacific project. Learn more about APAN and our partners by visiting: <http://www.asiapacificadapt.net/>



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