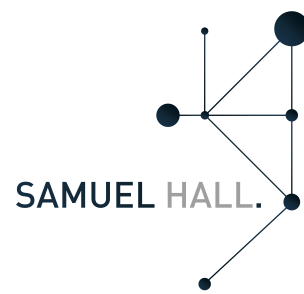


Working paper

Leading the Way: Women Navigating Climate Change, Mobility, and Resilience in Africa.

Case Studies from Somalia, Kenya, and Nigeria





Samuel Hall is a social enterprise that conducts research, evaluates programmes, and designs policies in contexts of migration and displacement. Learn more at www.samuelhall.org or follow at @Samuel_Hall_.

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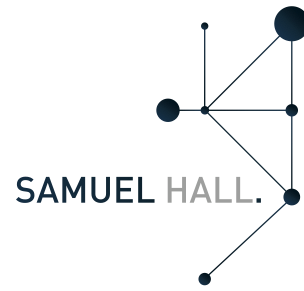
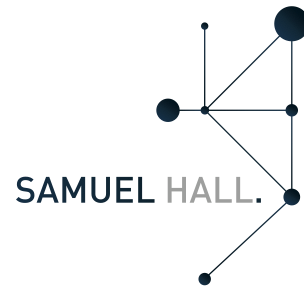


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Introduction: The Gender-Climate-Mobility Nexus

Considerable attention has been given to understanding the intersections between gender and climate dynamics, as well as the relationships between gender dynamics and displacement.¹ However, new evidence underscores the necessity of examining gender, climate and mobility as an interconnected nexus.² This approach is crucial due to the increasing frequency, intensity and severity of climate-related crises, such as recurrent floods and droughts and desertification. These slow- and sudden-onset environmental disasters disproportionately impact vulnerable populations, particularly women and girls, often resulting in displacement.³ Factors such as limited economic resources, gendered social norms, low educational attainment, and restricted mobility as well as access to information and assets further exacerbate women's vulnerability to the adverse effects of climate change.⁴

Climate-induced displacement creates unique challenges by uprooting communities and disrupting social networks, endangering social cohesion and triggering intercommunal and ethnic conflicts and tensions due to the scarce availability of resources. This can exacerbate existing gender inequalities. Women and girls, marginalized in many societies, face heightened risks during climate crises and displacement, including increased vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence, loss of livelihoods and greater difficulties in accessing critical resources and services. Traditional climate change adaptation interventions often overlook these underlying power dynamics and the specific vulnerabilities that lead to different adaptation and responsive capacities between women and men in mobility and displacement contexts.⁵

This study commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and conducted by Samuel Hall examines the intricate links between gender, climate and mobility through first hand accounts from women affected by climate change and mobility. This document summarises the evidence gathered, through desk research and fieldwork carried out in Kenya, Nigeria and Somalia over the course of three months in 2024.

The findings from this research provide evidence of these challenges. The study shows that climate change disproportionately impacts women, particularly those in marginalized communities, by deepening existing inequalities related to access to resources, economic participation and political representation. Women face restricted access to financial and educational resources, heightened exposure to gender-based violence, and limited involvement in climate policy decision-making. At the same time, the research identifies women as key agents of change, highlighting their valuable knowledge and adaptive strategies that can drive more inclusive and effective climate action. Supporting women's leadership, enhancing their access to financial services and fostering community-driven adaptation are essential steps toward building resilience to climate-induced displacement.

To strengthen climate resilience, it is crucial to understand the diverse and localised experiences of women and girls, as well as men and boys, who face the dire impacts of climate change. Gender should not be treated as a monolithic category—women, men, and gender-diverse individuals are not homogenous groups. Their experiences of climate displacement are shaped by intersecting factors such as age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, and mobility status. Adopting a localised, contextually informed approach is essential to addressing the gendered dimensions of climate displacement in a way that is both sustainable and inclusive.

This document advocates for a gender-transformative approach to sustainable development that strengthens community resilience, improves systems and promotes inclusive climate financing. For that, it also supports community-driven adaptation solutions, taking into account existing cultural, economic and political realities. By equipping communities with the tools and resources they need, we aim to empower them to respond effectively to climate-induced displacement, recognizing the diverse actors who can drive change.

1 Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), 2024.

2 Elizabeth Bryan, Quinn Bernier, Marcia Espinal, and Claudia Ringler. "Making Climate Change Adaptation Programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa More Gender Responsive: Insights from Implementing Organizations on the Barriers and Opportunities." *Climate and Development* 10, no. 5 (April 4, 2017): 417–31.

3 Samuel Hall, IOM & UNEP, 2021.

4 Nagel, J., Lies, T., Re-gendering Climate Change: Men and Masculinity in Climate Research, Policy and Practice. *Frontier*, 2022.

5 Elizabeth Bryan, Quinn Bernier, Marcia Espinal, and Claudia Ringler. "Making Climate Change Adaptation Programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa More Gender Responsive: Insights from Implementing Organizations on the Barriers and Opportunities." *Climate and Development* 10, no. 5 (April 4, 2017): 417–31.

These findings highlight the need for inclusive climate adaptation solutions. Focusing on women farmers and pastoralists, the study explores how climate change affects their livelihoods and mobility. It offers cross-country insights and identifies key challenges, laying the groundwork for deeper discussions and future research. The study concludes with actionable recommendations.

This work is particularly significant for UNDP given its pivotal role in early recovery and in the transition from humanitarian aid to sustainable development solutions. By producing more evidence that advocates for an integrated portfolio approach, UNDP aims to better address the complexities of the Gender-Climate-Mobility Nexus and reinforce its commitment to fostering resilient and sustainable communities that leave no one behind.

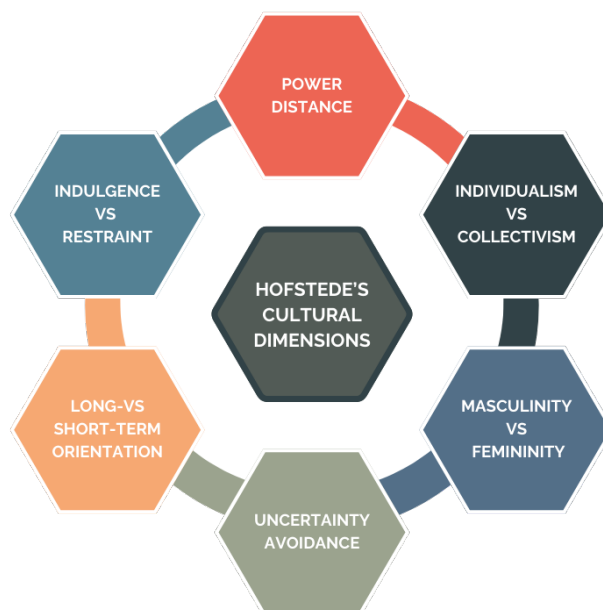
Research approach

The research is structured around the central question: “What are the barriers, enablers and entry points to address the Gender-Climate-Mobility Nexus?” This question is enriched by a multifaceted analysis incorporating socio-cultural, economic and political dimensions through case studies conducted in Kenya, Nigeria, and Somalia.

Key findings shed light on the experiences of women pastoralists and farmers, offering a nuanced understanding of their daily challenges and adaptation strategies. The study delves into the power dynamics and challenges that women face and the role of communities in addressing the challenges the study emphasises three core dimensions:

1. **Socio-cultural analysis:** Examining how gender norms and cultural practices impact women’s vulnerability and adaptability. Building on the Hofstede Model⁶, the study explores themes like masculinity and femininity, power dynamics and roles in households and communities. It examines how these cultural factors shape gendered responses to climate change and mobility.
2. **Economic analysis:** Investigating the economic barriers that limit women’s access to resources and opportunities for building resilience. This aspect examines women’s economic empowerment through employment patterns, skilled and unskilled labour, care work, and reliance on labour mobility. It also explores the role of women entrepreneurs and self-help groups.
3. **Political analysis:** Highlighting the role of policy and governance in either enabling or constraining women’s participation in climate adaptation strategies. The political dimension delves into women’s political participation, role in institutions and ability to shift power dynamics to identify entry points for a more equitable society.

By highlighting these dimensions, the study provides a critical framework for understanding and addressing the interconnected challenges faced by women in the context of climate change and mobility.



⁶ Hofstede, G., 2011.

Research methodology

This qualitative research relied on different tools (Table 1): This included a thorough desk review, case studies and primary research in communities, consultations with UNDP Country Offices, a technical advisory group composed of donors and

multi-sectoral practitioners, and workshops with feminist organizations, networks, activists, and individuals committed to climate and gender justice in Africa as part of a feminist coalition building exercise.

Table 1. Qualitative Research Tools and Sampling

Tool	Description	Location	Total
Desk review	A targeted desk review included thematic and country-specific desk reviews containing insights about climate change vulnerabilities, gender and mobility dynamics, and existing programmatic and policy approaches.	Virtual	N/A
Focus group discussions (FGDs)	To elicit women's and men's experiences on the links between gender, climate and mobility, FGDs were conducted, with participants divided by gender. The participants met three times to unpack the cultural, social and political dimensions of the nexus.	6 per country: Kenya, Somalia, Nigeria	18
Key informant interviews	Key informant interviews were conducted with representatives from academia, think tanks, grassroots groups, activists and human rights defenders, and international organizations.	Global, regional, national, local	12
Stakeholder consultation workshops	Five virtual consultation workshops facilitated regional discussion among stakeholders and partners on the Gender-Climate-Mobility Nexus. In addition, separate consultations were held with UNDP Country Offices in Kenya, Nigeria and Somalia.	East, West, Central, North and South Africa	8
Technical advisory group (TAG)	The TAG was established to ensure high-quality standards throughout the research. The group, comprising 20 experts from various sectors, informed on stakeholder engagement, research methodology, and key conclusions.	Virtual	4
Feminist coalition building exercise (FCBE)	Samuel Hall initiated the FCBE with 15 grassroots and feminist leaders on climate change issues in Africa as part of the project, with the vision that the coalition would be autonomously sustained beyond the research project. The FCBE validated the research's key findings and recommendations.	Virtual	3

In-person data collection was conducted through three case studies, further described in Table 2. The location for the case studies was chosen in close coordination with UNDP to allow for a diversity of contexts affected by climate change and mobility.

Table 2. Case Study Research Locations

Location	Description
Suswa, Kenya	<p>Maasai women’s adaptation practices and women ‘stayers’: The Maasai people in Tanzania and Kenya have been pushed off their ancestral lands by business development, government policies and climate change. Their displacement is linked to an enduring colonial legacy and ethnic clashes, which gives an opportunity to unpack underlying cultural and political obstacles to women’s adaptation strategies to climate change and displacement. Research has shown that women can play a leading role in raising community awareness on the impacts of climate change and how to foster resilience.</p>
Baidoa, Somalia	<p>Urban adaptation practices: Somalia has one of the highest numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Climate change has been exacerbating these trends. Previous research by Samuel Hall in 2021 on climate adaptive solutions to displacement in Somalia⁷ revealed the important role of women’s knowledge to foster adaptive practices in urban IDP contexts as well as the key role of networks in coping with disasters. The research also highlighted that, given that 75% of Somalia’s population is estimated to be under 30 years old, highlighting the importance of involving young people in climate adaptation processes is key.</p>
Plateau State, Nigeria	<p>Women’s rural adaptive capacity: Nigeria revised its National Gender Policy in 2022 and adopted a National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change. The States in North Central Nigeria, such as Plateau State, are Nigeria’s breadbasket. Most women at the community level are farmers and pastoralists and have experience with seasonal migration. State-level authorities are eager to contribute to Nigeria’s National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change; they have implemented agricultural programmes to support returning migrants and advocate for sustainable land use practices. At the same time, entrepreneurship has often been neglected in the discussion of rural climate adaptation, especially in relation to women.</p>



Photo credits: UNDP/Allan Gichigi

⁷ Samuel Hall, IOM & UNEP, 2021.

Key Findings and Opportunities:

Unpacking The Gendered Dimensions of Climate Change and Mobility

The following sections explore the key findings of the report, clarifying how socio-cultural norms, economic considerations and political factors—such as gendered divisions of labour, wealth, ownership, and control over resources⁸—shape the differentiated roles of women and men in climate adaptation and mobility.

These insights reveal that women and marginalized communities often bear the brunt of the consequences of climate change and displacement while having a reduced capacity to adapt and respond.⁹ Despite these challenges, women frequently possess specific knowledge about the domestic and social impacts of climate change, making them powerful knowledge holders and mobilizers within their communities. Indeed, women are more likely to report the impacts of climate change on their lives than men and possess greater awareness of how these impacts affect their domestic and social realities. This positions them as vital knowledge holders and mobilizers, particularly in communities experiencing gendered mobility dynamics.¹⁰

As climate-related risks and environmental degradation intensify, many individuals are forced to migrate or seek alternative livelihoods. This migration is influenced by socially constructed gender roles that dictate who leaves and who stays,¹¹ encompassing both short-term displacement due to disasters and long-term migration driven by slow-onset processes such as sea-level rise or desertification. The research identifies several critical gaps and challenges within the Gender-Climate-Mobility Nexus¹² that require urgent attention:

1. **Limited data and understanding of the nexus:** The lack of evidence and understanding of the impact of climate change and human mobility on women remains a challenge for programming and policy. Despite general knowledge of how climate change impacts specific sectors and enhances fragility and vulnerability, data gaps hinder development of solutions that can transform inequalities and advance women's empowerment. There is also lack of evidence-based programming, staff capacity, funding, joint interventions across agencies, and a limited understanding of how to address discriminatory socio-cultural constraints and power dynamics within climate change adaptation without causing any harm.
2. **Limited integration of women's knowledge and indigenous knowledge:** Gendered power dynamics and indigenous knowledge of rural climate adaptation are often overlooked, leading to gaps in developing effective and contextualised solutions.¹³ Meeting community needs, such as access to water, transport, food, and energy, education and health services, and the availability of livelihood options, are fundamental, but existing interventions that fail to consider the distinct needs of women and men continue to have a disproportionate negative impact on women.
3. **Bridging the Localisation and Gender Gaps in Climate Finance:** Local actors, including women's groups and grassroots organizations, who hold valuable knowledge and capacities for adaptation, often lack access to climate finance needed to upscale solutions, build local capacity and spread information in their communities. Furthermore, the reporting and accounting architecture is fragmented across the OECD Development Assistance Commit-

8 Niemann, J., El-Mahdi, M., Samuelsen, H., and Pinkowski Tersbøl, B., "Gender Relations and Decision-Making on Climate Change Adaptation in Rural East African Households: A Qualitative Systematic Review." PLOS Climate 3, no. 1, 2024.

9 Henry B Tantoh, Eromose E. Ebbuoma, and Llewellyn Leonard. "Indigenous Women's Vulnerability to Climate Change and Adaptation Strategies in Central Africa: A Systematic Review." Sustainable Development Goals Series, 2022, 53–66.

10 Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), 2024.

11 Samuel Hall, IOM & UNEP, 2021.

12 Nagel, J., Lies, T., "Re-gendering Climate Change: Men and Masculinity in Climate Research, Policy and Practice." Frontier, 2022.

13 Elizabeth Bryan, Quinn Bernier, Marcia Espinal, and Claudia Ringler. "Making Climate Change Adaptation Programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa More Gender Responsive: Insights from Implementing Organizations on the Barriers and Opportunities." Climate and Development 10, no. 5 (April 4, 2017): 417–31.

tee (DAC) and the UNFCCC, leading to a gap in effective methods to track climate finance directed towards gender equality goals and reach local actors, especially in contexts of human mobility.

To bridge these gaps and foster inclusive climate adaptation, this section focuses on the critical contributions of communities and local actors. By highlighting the stories and strategies of women, displaced populations, female pastoralists, and farmers who have been affected by climate change and mobility, the research provides a rich understanding of their daily struggles and adaptive measures. This chapter encapsulates the nine key findings that reveal the interconnected challenges and opportunities within the Gender-Climate-Mobility Nexus in Africa, setting the stage for informed, context-sensitive interventions.

Cultural dimension: Marginalising women further or re-negotiation of gender roles?

Due to gendered roles and expectations rooted in patriarchy, men and women experience climate change impacts differently.¹⁴ Cultural norms often intensify the challenges facing women and girls, limiting their choices and adaptive responses to climate change.

Key finding 1: Gender inequalities in climate change adaption capacities

Women's restricted access to resources, including financial capital, land, education, and information, hinder their adaptive capacity and mobility. In other words, men are more likely to move than women as a consequence of climate change.

Men are often the first to move as they have more flexibility and agency to cope with the impacts of climate change. Women may be prevented from leaving their house or community, unable to access climate information on time and obliged to stay behind to fulfil their household and childcare duties, including overseeing the cattle and land. For instance, despite the rise in extreme heat

events, women's dominant roles in cultivation and small-scale farming compel them to work outdoors, increasing their exposure to heat-related illnesses.¹⁵ Similarly, climate change forces women and girls to travel greater distances to collect firewood and water, putting them at risk of injuries, dehydration and other health and safety hazards.¹⁶

Opportunity: Women's role as the custodians of indigenous knowledge and at the forefront of early climate detection and innovation

The research confirmed that women in African societies are often acknowledged as the custodians of indigenous knowledge about sustainable practices and adaptations to changing environmental, socio-economic and political conditions. Their indigenous knowledge of climate change mitigation has been passed on through generations and is linked to cultural and religious traditions of knowledge-sharing networks and community-level resource management. This expertise, particularly among pastoral women, includes weather prediction, farming techniques and land-use strategies. By integrating this knowledge into climate change responses, there is an opportunity to develop more inclusive, locally driven adaptation solutions. For example, interviews in Nigeria and Somalia and previous research¹⁷ revealed a higher awareness among women regarding climate-adaptive accommodations and community-level solutions in displacement settings. Women in IDP settlements in Somalia have come up with a strategy to sprinkle water on clothing materials to use as pillows for the children and themselves to deal with the heat at night.

Women are at the forefront of seeking solutions to ensure the survival of their livelihood and support their communities. Due to women's involvement in farming and agriculture, they are often the first to learn about deteriorating resources, such as water and soil quality and specific environmental hazards.¹⁸ Supporting women as first responders to climate impacts can help identify and implement adaptive strategies from the onset of a crisis, benefiting entire communities.

¹⁴ Henry B Tantoh, Eromose E. Ebuoma, and Llewellyn Leonard. "Indigenous Women's Vulnerability to Climate Change and Adaptation Strategies in Central Africa: A Systematic Review." *Sustainable Development Goals Series*, 2022, 53–66.

¹⁵ Nagel, J., Lies, T., "Re-gendering Climate Change: Men and Masculinity in Climate Research, Policy and Practice." *Frontier*, 2022.

¹⁶ McOmber, C., "Women and Climate Change in the Sahel." *West African Papers*, March 9, 2020.

¹⁷ Samuel Hall, IOM & UNEP, 2021.

¹⁸ Carvajal-Escobar, Y et al., "Women's role in adapting to climate change and variability. *Advances in Geosciences*." Chapter. In *Ecology of African pastoral societies*. Oxford: James Currey, Ohio University Press Athens, UNISA Press Pretoria, 14: 277–280, 2008.

Box 1: Creating space for community dialogue around climate change adaptation for more inclusive solutions.

Using techniques such as climate scenario planning and adaptation in a community dialogue can create a more equal playing field for women and other excluded groups, such as youth, to be included in decision-making. These forums can serve a dual approach of fostering inclusivity and support community-based resource management to avoid conflict, access to and/or control over land, pasture and water.

Key finding 2: Increased risk of gender-based violence (GBV), early marriages and school drop-outs

During times of economic hardship due to climate change and/or displacement, cases of GBV, early marriages, and school dropouts rise among women and girls.

Research findings from Kenya and Somalia show how the scarcity of resources due to climate change and other financial factors are leading to girls being taken out of school to pursue household labour and women being regarded as commodities. Women who have been displaced often face security risks, limited access to basic services and an increased risk of sexual assault.¹⁹ A 2020 CARE International report²⁰ confirms how climate-induced migration in the context of environmental disasters can increase the risk of sexual and gender-based violence for women. The study showed that displaced women and marginalised groups often have less access to aid and recovery support.

Opportunity: Supporting community networks and local actors for adaptation and protection

Informal social protection mechanisms and community support during and after disasters strongly contribute to better, faster adaptation practices due to climate events and related displacements. Supporting local networks and women's groups can be key to preventing and responding to gender-based violence and strengthening referral pathways, including in the context of climate impacts. Respondents in Somalia even highlighted that a more substantial involvement of religious

and traditional leaders is vital to spreading awareness and information about climate change and displacement, as well as the role of gender. There is an opportunity to create stronger community alliances and support local actors at the forefront of humanitarian action to lead in adaptive solutions.

Key finding 3: Shifting gender roles and expectations

Climate-induced migration can temporarily shift traditional gender roles as men migrate to urban areas for new opportunities, leaving women to manage livelihoods and the household.

Findings from focus group discussions show how women often feel burdened by the new responsibilities that they have to embrace when their husbands migrate elsewhere. Instead of feeling empowered by the opportunity to lead the household and oversee their family business, women feel overwhelmed by the responsibility. Female respondents reported feelings of loneliness, anxiety and stress due to managing the household and economic responsibilities alone, negatively affecting their wellbeing and sense of security. In Kenya and Somalia, women describe men as “running away” from challenges, leaving them to take care of both household and economic duties. In some cases, women reported that while their husbands migrate, older men within the community take over the patriarchal role and reinforce traditional gender norms within the household.



Photo credits: UNDP

¹⁹ Samuel Hall, IOM & UNEP, 2021.

²⁰ CARE International. Geneva: Care International.

“The major roles like providing food for the family, women are taking care of them completely. The men have left, and the women take care of every household.”²¹

Key informant, Suswa, Kenya

Mobility can change previously oppressive gender relations and provide new opportunities to improve women’s and men’s lives.

However, this process can also cement or worsen existing inequalities, expose women to new vulnerabilities - especially IDPs - and can overall worsen issues of poverty, discrimination and socio-economic inequality for women.

While in conflict-affected contexts, traditional notions of masculinity also impact men’s susceptibility to being recruited into criminal groups during times of economic hardship, reflecting cultural expectations about masculinity and ideas of men being ‘providers’. As one key informant in Plateau State, Nigeria, shared: “There is a high competition for resources, and men are unable to fend for their families. So now it exposes them to threats. Probably being used as criminals by politicians or being recruited into certain bandit groups as the terrorists which we have now because these are the effects.”

Opportunity: Investing in women, men and youth’s knowledge to shape gender-transformative climate adaptation strategies

Research insights showed that women were very vocal about the need for men to change and be involved in sensitization activities to recognise and re-negotiate gender norms affecting their experiences in climate change adaptation.

A narrative shift, focusing more strongly on women’s agency²² might open new spaces for women’s involvement in decision-making processes, ensuring their experience and knowledge are heard. This requires investigating men’s knowledge, attitudes and perceptions concerning women’s roles and responsibilities in relation to climate change adaptation, resilience building, and mobility dynamics. Successful approaches show how “male champions” can spread awareness and sensitize the community on how to address gender inequalities.

Challenging social norms also opens opportunities to engage youth in gender-transformative strategies as different demographics experience the cultural dimension differently. Focus group discussions with men showed that younger generations are eager to change persistent gender inequalities and recognise men’s role towards a more just society for all. In Somalia, over the past decade, young women have become more economically active and independent, taking on various jobs and responsibilities outside the house. In Kenya, the research showed a demographic difference between younger and older women regarding mobility, whereby younger women increasingly migrate to urban centres or abroad. In comparison, older women stay and are the custodians of social norms and culture. These changes in the perception of traditional gender roles and youth’s fresh perspectives on technology and digitalization open new possibilities for youth’s engagement in new climate adaptation practices. By investing in their skills, creating platforms for youth participation and allocating resources specifically for youth-led initiatives in climate change adaptation, they can become key agents of change and building resilience.



Photo credit: Samuel Hall/René Habermacher

²¹ KII1, Kenya

²² McOmber, C., “Women and Climate Change in the Sahel.” West African Papers, March 9, 2020.

Economic dimension:

Women's economic life in a changing context

While cultural norms shape women's roles, economic barriers further impact their adaptive capacity. The changing economic context, combined with cultural norms and legal restrictions, prevent women from becoming resilient and diversifying their livelihoods. Women's dominant socio-economic role in the agricultural sector is closely tied to gender norms and power relations.

Key finding 4: Persistent inequalities in resource access and ownership

While men are often more likely to migrate to diversify their livelihood, women have limited decision-making power and access to assets and financial services, making adaptation particularly challenging.

Despite being responsible for 80% of food production in sub-Saharan Africa, women have less access to resources for adaptation technologies and decision-making on farming practices.²³ As men widely own household assets and control a large portion of household resources, women's access to these resources often depends on male household members or relatives. Women's access to resources is, therefore, insecure, as they could be faced with divorce or estrangement from male family members and lose access to necessary resources.²⁴ These restrictions are exposing women to increased social vulnerabilities and poverty.

Opportunity: Enhance gender-responsive financial services through group-based financial empowerment

Expanding access to financial tools like credit, insurance and agricultural financing is critical to supporting women's resilience to climate change and provides a support system in contexts of mobility and displacement.

Cultural practices and norms restrict women's ownership of property and assets, making it difficult for them to take loans from the bank given their lack of collateral. This affects their access to financial services and limits their economic independence. Access to financial services should happen with improving women's access to agricultural credit and related technologies. Group-based approaches, such as self-help groups, savings collectives and microcredit programmes, have proven effective in increasing women's control over income and assets.²⁵ These models enable women to build economic stability with assets and respond more effectively to climate-related challenges.

Key finding 5: Education and information as key barriers to women's climate adaptation

Education and information are at the forefront of climate change adaptation and can empower communities to make informed decisions and avoid maladaptation practices.

Yet, the research highlighted how the increasing economic pressure falling on households due to resource scarcity and displacement caused by disasters leads to girls dropping out of school and an increase in early marriages. Women in the focus group discussions in Suswa, Kenya argued that men would decide to "marry off" their daughters earlier and take girls out of school due to a lack of resources in the household.²⁶ This occurs in a context where women's access to information is already limited in many rural areas in Africa, affecting women's adaptation capacity to climate change.²⁷ A lack of educational resources and accessibility for women and girls also poses the risk of cyclical poverty, known as "poverty traps", as women's deprivation of education reinforces the idea of women as a commodity for families when faced with adversities.

Women across the case studies shared that they are not getting all the needed information about the changing weather patterns and how to adapt to their daily lives. Participants noted the lack of multifaceted approaches to climate adaptation that are accessible and relevant to women. As such, current knowledge and strategies advanced to tackle climate change are often restricted to basic measures like tree planting.

23 Ayanlade, A., Oluwatimilehin, I.A., Ayanlade, O.S. et al. "Gendered vulnerabilities to climate change and farmers' adaptation responses in Kwara and Nassarawa States, Nigeria", *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 10, 911, 2023.

24 Vinke, Kira et al.

25 Aberman, N.-L., Ali, S., Behrman, J., et al. (2015), SSRN Electron. J.

26 FGD1, Women, Kenya

27 Tall, A., Kristjanson, P., Chaudhury, M., McKune, S., Zougmore, R., "Who gets the Information? Gender, power and equity considerations in the design of climate services for farmers." CCAFS Working Paper No. 89. Copenhagen, Denmark: CGIAR Research Program on Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS), 2014.

Box 2: UNDP global study on collective intelligence for climate action

UNDP Kenya participated in a global study, *UNTAPPED: Collective Intelligence for Climate Action*, with an example of community knowledge to map water sources in Kenya's Tana River county, one of Kenya's most important wetlands. The frequency of floods and droughts has increased and resulted in negative impacts on communities that rely on the river for their livelihoods, whether cattle herders or farmers. UNDP and the national government agreed to create a collaborative community mapping platform with "water scouts" from the communities recruited and trained to collect data, which was then made accessible through a public dashboard. The discussions with women revealed that pastoralist societies tend to be very patriarchal, resulting in the need to have separate sessions and conversations with women.

Opportunity: Education and information as entry points for climate readiness that helps everyone respond

Climate change-related education and information are at the forefront of adaptation, empowering communities to make informed decisions and avoid maladaptation practices. Ensuring women and girls have equal access to climate-related information, early warning systems and solutions is crucial for adaptation. Utilising familiar channels such as SMS, community radio and public broadcasts in local languages can empower women with the knowledge they need to make informed decisions and enhance their resilience to climate impacts.²⁸

Key finding 6: Transformation of women's livelihoods in a changing economic context

Women's changing role reflects broader economic and lifestyle transformations driven by climate change and gender norms.

Climate change has disrupted traditional mobility patterns among African pastoralist communities.²⁹ Furthermore, it has also negatively impacted the gendered labour division among many rural and

pastoralist communities, which traditionally see women being responsible for farming and men being herders. Due to extreme household vulnerability, women are forced to seek alternative income sources that are climate resistant, like beadwork, beekeeping, the tourism industry, construction, domestic work, and beauty services. Yet, even when women engage in traditionally male-dominated sectors, they still face heightened vulnerability. Examples in Somalia show that women who have been displaced by climate change tend to be paid less and work in more precarious conditions than men.³⁰ Especially in contexts of climate-induced displacement, where women lose access to the farm and face difficulties maintaining the livelihood their household depends on, they may need to resort to survival sex work, as shown by findings in Nigeria.



Photo credit: UNDP/Allan Gichigi

28 Rebecca Witinok-Huber, Steven Radil, Dilshani Sarathchandra, and Caroline Nyaplu-Daywhea. "Gender, Place, and Agricultural Extension: A Mixed-Methods Approach to Understand Farmer Needs in Liberia." *The Journal of Agricultural Education and Extension* 27, no. 4 (February 12, 2021): 553–72.

29 Carvajal-Escobar, Y et al., "Women's role in adapting to climate change and variability." *Advances in Geosciences*, Chapter. In *Ecology of African pastoral societies*. Oxford: James Currey, Ohio University Press Athens, UNISA Press Pretoria, 14: 277–280, 2008.

30 Samuel Hall, IOM & UNEP, 2021.

Opportunity: Empower women and promote women's alternative livelihoods

Female participants shared their aspiration to pursue other livelihood options in areas less affected by climate change, like crafts and beadwork, different forms of farming like poultry and beekeeping, or tourism. This shift may expand women's agency and roles as well as access to markets and diversified livelihood opportunities. It provides an opportunity to support a business environment for women that is less vulnerable to climate change and its consequences.

Previous research has shown that women who have been displaced due to climate change are triggered to engage in traditionally male-led sectors to improve their livelihoods.³¹ Displaced Women in Baidoa, Somalia, began working in construction, healthcare, domestic work, and small businesses such as beauty services. There is an opportunity to leverage shifts in gender roles in displacement settings to empower women in the long term, including looking at opportunities that link to attitudes of men and women within specific age groups, such as young adults. One key informant in Somalia³² suggested providing adequate entrepreneurial training in different sectors and tailoring already available educational services to give women the opportunity to enter the business sector successfully. Another suggestion was to offer spaces to women where they can share their solutions, experiences, and views on climate adaptation strategies and how they should be implemented.

Political dimension: Alternative ways to challenge women's exclusion from decision-making

In addition to economic and cultural factors, political exclusion remains a significant barrier to gender equity in climate adaptation. Focusing on women's political participation and role in institutions is key to identify entry points for shifting power dynamics.

Key finding 7: Women's underrepresentation in climate policy and barriers to women's leadership

Women's voices remain excluded from climate change adaptation discussions.

Women's underrepresentation in climate policymaking reflects a broader challenge, where discussions prioritise climate goals over inclusive adaptation strategies that address the diverse impacts of climate change on different groups.³³ The exclusion of women from decision-making tables and the limited acknowledgement of their unique needs and capacities has stripped women from the capacity to become more resilient and better adapt to the consequences of climate change.³⁴ The absence of women from climate-related leadership positions is further challenged by the presence of restrictive gendered social and cultural norms, the lack of climate funding directed to women and women-led organizations, and women's barriers to access capacity and skills building in climate-related topics. Without female representation, climate and displacement responses will remain gender-blind, failing to address women's specific challenges and perspectives.

Opportunity: Amplify women's voices in climate adaptation and support multi-stakeholder engagement

Women are already at the forefront of climate change adaptation in Africa, but their contributions must be recognised. Acknowledging the role that women play in fostering climate adaptation and resilience through their indigenous knowledge is key. Yet, what women, women-led grassroots organizations, youth activists and feminist networks really need is a seat at the table. Reinforcing women's representation in relevant fora will ensure that their contributions are both heard and included into developing adaptation strategies related to climate and displacement. It is critical to involve women in the decision-making process, evidence generation, and the development of adaptation strategies. To bridge the gap of women's participation in policymaking, women must be recognised and empowered as critical actors in climate change initiatives, not just as beneficiaries.

³¹ IBID

³² Kil7, Somalia

³³ Wageni, E. "Masculinities, Patriarchy and Climate Change", HeForShe, 2021. Available at: <https://www.heforshe.org/en/masculinities-patriarchy-and-climate-change>

³⁴ Johanne Niemann, Miriam El-Mahdi, Helle Samuelsen, and Britt Pinkowski Tersbol. "Gender Relations and Decision-Making on Climate Change Adaptation in Rural East African Households: A Qualitative Systematic Review." PLOS Climate 3, no. 1 (January 10, 2024).

Recognising their contributions and building their leadership capacity through training and funding is essential to ensure an inclusive decision-making process regarding adaptation to climate change.

“I would love to consider the women and their opinions because they know their problems and what they need assistance with. The government agencies and local agencies should be more involved in this work. During data collection, the women should be asked and involved more. When decisions are being made, they should be the ones to come up with solutions that help them.”³⁵

Key informant, Baidoa, Somalia

Amplifying women’s participation in climate adaptation requires a multi-stakeholder and participative approach across sectors, focusing on including local actors, women-led organizations and allies committed to this agenda. There is an opportunity to leverage multi-stakeholder engagement to contribute to the development of gender-responsive programmes and policy interventions collectively to build a movement to monitor to what extent the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and action plans are gender-responsive and inclusive at the national and regional levels. This can ensure that duty bearers are held accountable. This also increases the chances of strengthening adaptive capacities and providing targeted support to address women’s specific needs. Efforts should also focus on strengthening local knowledge by sharing local and national best practices, enhancing regional cross-fertilization and learning, and integrating evidence-based research into climate adaptation programmes to ensure they are gender-responsive and transformative.

Key finding 8: The key role of social capital and women-led groups

Women are already change-makers in the community and are realising the importance of coming together as a group to make their voices heard in the discussion about community matters.

Research findings showed that group-based approaches, including women’s groups, are a key strategy for adapting to climate change as they can be used as a tool to acquire assets (physical capital), group loans (financial capital), capacity development (human capital), and share weather and climate information.³⁶ Due to the lack of inclusion in many formal institutional structures, many women perceive groups as a form of power and use them to advocate for and support themselves to achieve a wider reach and impact.

Our interviews in Kenya identified women’s networks and community-based organizations (CBOs) as entry points for actors willing to support women’s empowerment and capacity. Women-led CBOs plant trees to battle the effects of climate change and support women’s livelihoods, as a representative of the CBO in Suswa shared: “We’ve just developed different sessions with women in our CBO to teach them about climate change and not to cut the trees because most of them depend on charcoal. So, we now teach these women who are doing the charcoal business, and we’ve brought them on board. They are not cutting anymore, but instead, we are planting trees.”³⁷

Opportunity: Promote direct support to and partnership with women’s groups, including for their nature-based solutions

Group-based approaches that centre women’s perspectives have proven to increase women’s financial inclusion, asset-building capabilities and agency. Case studies show how women have the ability to empower each other, mobilize other women and successfully generate economic opportunities. While men migrate as a result of climate-related livelihood challenges, women have adopted initiatives such as afforestation programmes — resulting in long-term action in climate adaptation strategies. Supporting these initiatives, such as afforestation programmes led by women, empowers women to take the lead in building community resilience while also addressing gender dynamics at the local level

³⁵ KII7, Somalia

³⁶ Aberman, N.-L., Ali, S., Behrman, J., et al. (2015). SSRN Electron. J.

³⁷ KII2, Kenya

Key finding 9: The impact of land ownership and legal rights on climate change adaptation

Women's restricted legal rights to land ownership can slow down climate adaptation responses.

Research showed that land ownership influences land use, including biodiversity and farming. In Kenya, while the law does not discriminate against women regarding land ownership or inheritance, men are still the majority of landowners. Legal recognition and enforcement of rural women's land rights can contribute to climate change mitigation and improve living conditions. Research by Baskin (2022)³⁸ on the intersection between gender and land rights in the context of climate change in Nigeria argues that women are the custodians of indigenous knowledge but have historically been denied land rights in the country, which is "creating a disconnect between the women who cultivate the land and the men who own it and leading to unsustainable use of agricultural land in Nigeria."

³⁸ Cate Baskin, 2022.

Land ownership is relevant as it relates to decisions about land use, including biodiversity and farming techniques impacting the land quality and produce.

Opportunity: Advance land rights for women

There is a need to conduct legal analyses that examines the gaps between women's and men's rights, advance ratification of national implementation of land rights, as set out in the Maputo Protocol, and repeal customary ownership arrangements that deny women's rights. Land ownership is crucial for building women's economic assets and stability and equipping them with the resources to become more resilient to shocks and crises. Interventions should work toward raising awareness about the need to shift socio-cultural and legal land ownership restrictions toward women.



Photo credit: UNDP/Allan Gichigi

Way forward: Inclusive solutions for climate adaptation

The research aimed to understand not only how women and men are impacted by climate change and climate-induced mobility from a cultural, economic and political perspective, but also how their gendered experience impacts their adaptive responses. The evidence from Kenya, Nigeria and Somalia, combined with the insights from UNDP Country Offices allowed to highlight challenges and opportunities that can be leveraged to build a more gender-equitable and environmentally sustainable society for future generations, in which both men and women have the tools to become resilient and adapt to climate change and displacement.

Looking at the way forward, the paper promotes a shift in discussions on climate adaptation from technical approaches to social change and gender equality in line with principles of inclusive development as shown in the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report from Working Group II: “Climate resilient development is enabled when governments, civil society and the private sector make inclusive development choices that prioritise risk reduction, equity and justice, and when decision-making processes, finance and actions are integrated across governance levels, sectors and timeframes.”³⁹

Recommendations

Examining issues at the Gender-Climate-Mobility nexus reveals complex and interconnected challenges and opportunities. To address them, three sets of recommendations guide stakeholders towards building inclusive, participatory and sustainable climate adaptation approaches with women’s empowerment and gender equality at their core.

Community resilience



Resilient communities, both host and displaced communities, can better respond, adapt and react to climate crises, for instance, by diversifying their livelihoods and improving sustainable land, energy and resource management. To promote gender-transformative approaches to resilience at the community level, women and girls must be acknowledged as agents of change.

1. Ensuring gender equality is a key objective in climate adaptation approaches.

A gendered analysis of decision-making and economic power dynamics in communities is central to understanding the challenges, needs and capacities and subsequently develop gender-transformative interventions. Community consultations must go beyond immediate needs and tap into indigenous knowledge and existing capacities for adaptation and economic empowerment.

2. Empowering women and local communities to lead in building resilience.

A resilient future cannot exist if segments of society are left behind and social cohesion is threatened. As resources are increasingly scarce due to climate change, there is a higher likelihood that social ties will deteriorate and intra- and inter-community conflicts will arise. Championing an agenda of social inclusion ensures no voice is silenced, indigenous knowledge is recognised and women have a seat at the table. Solutions should focus on strengthening sustainable, community-based resource management with local actors to include all affected people in designing interventions, decision-making processes and implementation.

³⁹ IPCC. (2022). Summary for Policymakers [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, M. Tignor, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lössche, V. Möller, A. Okem (eds.)]. In: [H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, M. Tignor, E.S. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Craig, S. Langsdorf, S. Lössche, V. Möller, A. Okem, B. Rama (eds.)]. Cambridge University Press. Available online at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/> (accessed March 23, 2022).

3. Investing in local knowledge and capacity: Linking community action with national climate change action plans.

Investing in community knowledge and capacity collaboratively with local actors, such as grassroots organizations and women's groups, will empower them to spread knowledge and gather information on the impacts of climate change in their community and effectively contribute to National Climate Change Action Plans (NCCAP). These efforts can also be linked to climate action plans at urban or local levels. By aligning community-driven initiatives with broader policy frameworks, local actors can contribute their expertise and ensure climate strategies are grounded in local realities. Strengthening communication channels for knowledge sharing and data collection will help ensure that community efforts complement and enhance government-led action plans, creating more resilient and cohesive climate responses.

Systems strengthening



The resilience of a community is directly connected with the resilience of institutional, social and infrastructural systems, which are responsible for responding to climate change-related events and displacement crises. The study shows that recognising the integral role of indigenous knowledge, local partners and women in climate adaptation and policy is crucial to strengthening an inclusive response to the Gender-Climate-Mobility Nexus.

4. Empowering national and local governments: Strengthening institutional capacities for gender equality, climate and mobility

National and local authorities should be at the forefront of integrating gender and mobility in climate action, with targeted support to build their capacity. By strengthening the roles of governments at all levels, we can ensure that climate actions are locally relevant and inclusive. National authorities

need to be supported with the necessary tools and expertise to embed gender and mobility considerations into their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and NCCAP. Local authorities, too, need support in tailoring national commitments into local strategies to address specific community needs. This involves training government officials and institutionalizing gender-responsive policies across all levels of governance.

A systems-strengthening approach, in coordination with UNDP and other international actors, should foster collaboration between national and local authorities, civil society and the private sector, promoting whole-of-society engagement. Furthermore, interdisciplinary research that explores the links between gender, climate and mobility and regional knowledge-sharing platforms will help national and local authorities implement evidence-based strategies.

5. Shared responsibility: Building strong coalitions for inclusive climate policies and solutions

Inclusive climate policies cannot be led by governments alone. Rather, this needs to actively champion the formation of powerful coalitions —national governments, regional bodies, local communities, women's groups, grassroots organizations, civil society, donors, and academia and non-traditional actors (e.g., the private sector), and faith actors all working together towards a shared vision of sustainable development and durable solutions. The role of international actors is to support national governments and regional bodies in translating global climate commitments into actionable and inclusive solutions and policies at the national level through climate action plans. This includes bringing women-led groups, grassroots organizations and the private sector to the table for more accountability of policy commitments.

For instance, to elevate women's leadership and perspectives on climate change and mobility in Africa, for this research Samuel Hall and UNDP consulted with the members of the Feminist Coalition on Climate Change, an initiative which was launched in June 2024 bringing together 17 women leaders from 10 countries, including representatives from research networks, NGOs, activists, entrepreneurs, experts, and Refugee-Led Organisations (RLOs), to address barriers women face in these contexts. Consulting with such coalitions and collaborative networks is key to map successful gender-transformative projects and feminist and indigenous initiatives across Africa, to unite grassroots women leaders and ensure that women's voices are central to climate solutions.

6. Opportunities for localization: Integrating local knowledge and capacity

Localization through integrating indigenous knowledge and local capacities is key to inclusive climate adaptation. Indigenous knowledge is often excluded from scientific evidence due to the reliance on non-western methods of knowledge transfer, such as oral traditions and community-based learning, making it challenging to fit into traditional academic frameworks that prioritise written literature and peer-reviewed reports with western academic standards. Throughout the case studies and consultations, it was evident that it is essential to empower local communities to build their own knowledge and adopt sustainable solutions for improving livelihoods rather than relying on decontextualized solutions. Effective localization requires aligning this agenda with broader strategies like disaster risk reduction, environmental conservation and sustainable land use.

Climate financing



Climate financing is essential to building community resilience, improving climate and disaster preparedness and response, managing climate-induced displacement, reducing inequalities, and supporting populations in vulnerable situations through access to better livelihoods, social protection and health services.

Climate financing also plays a crucial role responding to women's unique priorities and advancing gender equality, which is likewise foundational for durable solutions to displacement.

7. Financial accessibility: Leveraging climate finance mechanisms to drive local change

Multilateral climate finance mechanisms such as the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) are essential in funding large-scale climate action and it is crucial to ensure financial resources are accessible to local communities, grassroots organizations, and especially women's groups. Other mechanisms like the Adaptation Fund and the Climate Investment Funds (CIF) also play a key role in financing adaptation and mitigation projects. However, the challenge lies in ensuring that these funds are not only directed toward high-level initiatives but also reach those at the grassroots level, where the impact is most immediate and transformative.

By partnering with local communities, grassroots organizations and especially women's groups financial resources can be used to catalyse indigenous knowledge in support of disaster preparedness, sustainable land management and environmental conservation, as well as piggybacking on existing initiatives. Large-scale programming can include partnerships with women's groups, for example, to scale up their local, context-appropriate and nature-based solutions for climate resilience. Women-led and -owned groups, in particular, need enhanced support to access those funds, which would allow them to upscale their activities and better target women and girls' unique needs (climate-related health issues, mental health challenges, heightened risk of GBV).



Photo credits: UNDP

8. Fund durable solutions:

Supporting all people affected by migration and displacement

Climate finance needs to support all people affected by climate mobility—those who move, those who stay, and those who return—through durable solutions that build on area-based approaches. Localized, durable solution responses can ultimately contribute to more sustainable outcomes and resilience for all affected communities. Targeted funding instruments can improve migration and displacement preparedness and response mechanisms through better early warning systems, evacuation plans and emergency shelters, which are adapted to the needs of all affected groups. Similarly, the right resources are also key to rehabilitating and reintegrating displaced populations, providing resources for rebuilding homes, schools, healthcare and maternal facilities and their socio-economic reintegration.

9. Drive advocacy for long-term climate finance commitments

Joint advocacy efforts should raise awareness within the donor community about the need for sustained investments in climate adaptation, particularly for women and displaced populations. These efforts should prioritise building local capacity, improving access to climate information and facilitating technology transfer. Channelling long-term finance through grassroots organizations, women-led businesses and local intermediaries will help ensure that financial solutions address the specific challenges these groups face.



Photo credit: Samuel Hall/René Habermacher

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Annex

Case Study 1: Kenya

Context, policy and programming on climate, gender and mobility in Kenya

With 80% of Kenya's territory classified as Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), communities across the country experience frequent droughts and conflicts over resources exacerbated by climate change. Limited adaptation capacity has led to increased urban migration and heightened competition over resources, fuelling local tensions and conflicts.

Climate change is viewed as the main driver for future conflicts.¹ In Kenya's pastoralist communities, there has been an increase in conflicts due to resource scarcity, especially during prolonged drought.² Pastoralists are moving to neighbouring communities' lands or crossing borders where people compete for grazing lands and water resources.³

While the issues of climate change, gender and migration have been addressed separately in Kenya, there is limited discussion on the interlinkages of climate, gender, mobility and conflict.⁴ While climate change impacts the whole nation, women in pastoralist communities are disproportionately affected, facing greater barriers to migration and adaptation.

The Policy Response

Kenya's national and county governments are strengthening resilience in sectors like agriculture and tourism. Key policy responses include:

- The Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for 2020-2023, targets a 32% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions 2030.
- The National Climate Change Action Plan focuses on building resilience in vulnerable, arid regions.
- Kenya Vision 2030 integrates climate actions into development plans, supporting sustainable agroecology.

UNDP in Kenya

The UNDP Country Programme Document for Kenya primarily focuses on 'Governance, peace and social cohesion; sustainable, inclusive green growth as well as nature-based solutions and resilience'.⁵ The last two pillars of the Programme Document are key to better understand the interlinkages of climate change, gender and mobility in Kenya.

Key Findings

For the aim of this case study, Suswa was selected as a key geographical location to explore Maasai women's adaptation practices and women 'stayers'. The Maasai people in Tanzania and Kenya have been pushed off their ancestral lands by development, government policies, and climate change. Their displacement is linked to an enduring colonial legacy and ethnic clashes, which gives an opportunity to unpack underlying cultural and political obstacles to women's adaptation strategies.

¹ Omolo, Nancy A. "Gender and climate change-induced conflict in pastoral communities: Case study of Turkana in northwestern Kenya." *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 10, no. 2 (2010).

² UN Women Watch, "Women, Gender equality, and Climate change" UN Women, 2009. Retrieved from:

³ UNDP, "Promoting Rapid Recovery to COVID-19 and Climate-Induced Shocks in Africa's Borderlands in Kenya's Turkana, West Pokot, and Marsabit Counties."

⁴ Nyaoro, Dulo, Jeanette Schade, and Kerstin Schmidt. "Assessing the evidence: migration, environment and climate change in Kenya." (2016).

⁵ UNDP, "Country Programme Document (CPD) 2022-2026", Kenya.

Findings from Suswa in discussion with the Masaai community showed climate change and other economic and political factors have disrupted the pastoralist community's traditional mobility patterns and ways of living.

1. Traditional Roles Reinforced

The Maasai's pastoralist lifestyle is rooted in traditional mobility patterns, but climate change is intensifying resource scarcity and disrupting these practices. This shift disproportionately impacts women, who often remain behind, while men seek work in urban areas or other regions. Men migrate to urban areas as a temporary solution to cope with climate impacts, leaving women to assume household responsibilities. This creates a temporary shift in gender roles as older men in the community reinforce traditional roles.

“I'm a Maasai. From our cultural point of view, women are seen as lesser human beings. They are not allowed to get out, go to work or do big things. So, when women are affected because they are left behind, they are left behind to take care of the children, giving birth, and they are not involved in major things in the community.”

Key Informant,
Suswa, Kenya

2. Searching for Alternative Livelihoods for Women and Men

The gendered labour division of women responsible for farming and men as herders is changing, forcing women to seek alternative income sources that are climate resistant, like beadwork, beekeeping or participating in the tourism industry. This change is compounded by the agricultural challenge of unpredictable planting and herding seasons, which disrupt traditional weather-based planning for migration and have significant economic consequences. To cope with the effects of climate change on their livestock, men also adopted new farming methods, such as Boma Rhodes grasses in crop rotation, to help create animal feed. This would curb the effects of climate change on grazing grounds and increase the intention to change the type of livestock despite cultural norms against reducing livestock numbers.

“Old men and women view migration to the urban centres as a way of disregarding social set-up and our cultural well-being of keeping large herds of livestock. The younger generation, both men and women, are prone to easier movement to the urban centres in their desire to look for a lavish lifestyle.”

Focus Group Discussion with Women
Suswa, Kenya

3. Restrictions on Access to Land Impacting Women

Cultural restrictions prevent women from owning land, limiting their access to resources and financial services for climate adaptation. Though aware of their inheritance rights, many avoid legal claims to maintain household and community gender dynamics. In this context, cows symbolise wealth, but assets belong to men, leaving women economically dependent on their husbands. Consequently, women turn to informal financial systems like table banking, chamas, and cooperatives for loans and financial support.

4. Leadership positions for women remain limited

Due to cultural practices in the pastoralist community, women have been neglected in the community decision-making process regarding adaptation to climate change.⁶ This is not only experienced in the community but is often practised in policy-making, where women's views and voices are not being

6 Coulter, J. E., Witinok-Huber, R. A., Bruyere., B. L, and Nyingi, W. D. (2019). Giving women a voice on decision-making about water: barriers and opportunities in Laikipia, Kenya. *Gender Place Cult.* 26, 489–509.

considered. Women in Suswa reported limited access to climate-related information and felt the government showed little interest in gender and climate issues. They called for government support, access to resources and policies that amplify women's voices.

Women emphasised the need for men's involvement in addressing harmful gender norms and urged the county government to improve infrastructure to connect farmers to markets. They also advocated for government-backed solutions, like tree-planting initiatives with private-sector collaboration, to support women's climate resilience efforts.

“Information on migration relation issues can be shared through community baraza's and focus group discussions for women, men, youths, older people and those with disabilities. Community mobilisers can help and sensitise the people.”

Focus Group Discussion with Women,
Suswa, Kenya

Advancing climate resilience and gender equality through community initiatives in Kenya

The UNDP Kenya country office has initiated projects that acknowledge these findings and inform future interventions through:

1. Financing women-led initiatives through short-term grants to women for climate adaptation strategies

In Narok, UNDP's support to a women's group enabled the harvest of natural medicine, reducing healthcare costs and mortality rates. Expanding and replicating such impactful initiatives nationwide would benefit from more sustained funding.

2. Using indigenous knowledge

UNDP Kenya builds on indigenous knowledge by mapping water sources in Tana River County, a vital wetland affected by rising floods and droughts. Through a community mapping platform, “water scouts” were trained to gather and share data on a public dashboard. Insights from women underscored the patriarchal nature of pastoralist societies, emphasising the importance of separate sessions for women's input.

3. Empowering women within local peace committees

Local peace committees can foster resource sharing, especially through women advocates for peaceful coexistence. Initiatives like shared boreholes can promote unity between communities, while collaboration with climate change committees can address resource conflicts over water and pasture. Women already play a role in these committees, but additional training and increasing attention to gender dynamics are crucial. Strengthening these committees should play a key role in enhancing women's representation.

4. Integrating multi-sectoral responses

UNDP is developing a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) investment toolkit to boost private sector support, particularly in northern Kenya. Another key focus is the potential for SDG investment in borderlands, aligning with the World Bank's Africa Water project in the Horn of Africa and the UN cooperation framework.

Case Study 2: Nigeria

Context, policy and programming on climate, gender and mobility in Nigeria

Nigeria ranks among the most climate-vulnerable nations. With six diverse vegetation zones—from swamps to deserts—the country faces rising temperatures, sea levels, desertification, erratic rainfall, and natural disasters, all demanding tailored adaptation strategies.

High unemployment and inflation impact Nigerians, with socio-economic disparities fuelled by overlapping issues such as conflicts over resources, climate disasters, religious and ethnic tensions, and insurgency.⁷ As a result, Nigeria has low adaptive capacity.⁸

Climate change impacts in Nigeria have intensified mobility and insecurity. Declining agricultural productivity lowers household incomes and increases competition for resources, prompting more migration. In the North, the Boko Haram insurgency and cattle rustling pushes herders toward the Middle Belt. Additionally, in the northwest, bandit presence in forests prevents people from gathering firewood, leading to deforestation around urban areas.

While farmer-herder violence has spread across the country, Nigeria's Middle Belt is particularly affected. Since 2018, Benue, Kaduna, Plateau and Nasarawa states have witnessed hundreds of clashes, armed attacks on communities or other violence involving farmers and herders.⁹ With women heavily reliant on agriculture, insecurity and climate disruptions have restricted their access to farmlands.

The Policy Response

Nigeria aims to turn climate change threats into opportunities for sustainable growth and green jobs. Key policies include:

- The 2021-2030 National Climate Change Policy focused on low-carbon, climate-resilient and gender-responsive growth.
- An updated 2021 Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) incorporating gender and youth engagement.
- The 2024 NDC Implementation Framework was launched to drive climate action and reduce emissions.
- The National Climate Change Programme, detailing actions for adaptation and mitigation.
- Revisions to the National Gender Policy and a National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change, addressing gender disparities exacerbated by climate change.

UNDP in Nigeria

UNDP's programmatic response in Nigeria has two key objectives: socio-economic recovery in the medium term and structural transformation for inclusive and sustainable development to achieve the SDGs by 2030. The programmatic work of UNDP Nigeria is structured into four portfolios: Democratic governance and peacebuilding; climate change and environment; inclusive and sustainable growth; and crisis response and resilience.

⁷ Zahra Khan Durrani Z K, Bwala M D, Ibrahim S M, "When climate change and conflict collide: the need for localisation amid Nigeria's protracted crises", Humanitarian Exchange Magazine, March 13 2024.

⁸ Osei-Amponsah C, Quarmin W and Okem A, "Understanding climate-induced migration in West Africa through the social transformation lens", 2023.

⁹ Okunade, S. K., Kohon, H. S., "Climate Change and Emerging Conflict Between Herders and Farmers in Nasarawa and Plateau States, Nigeria" In: Contemporary Issues on Governance, Conflict and Security in Africa. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2023.

Key Findings

For the aim of this case study, research in Nigeria was conducted in Bokkos Local Government Area (LGA) in Plateau State to better understand women's rural adaptive capacity. Nigeria revised its National Gender Policy in 2022 and adopted a National Action Plan on Gender and Climate Change. The states in North Central Nigeria, such as Plateau State, are Nigeria's breadbasket states, where most women at the community level are farmers and pastoralists.

Findings from Plateau State in Nigeria summarise the key cultural, economic and political factors that need to be addressed to improve women's engagement in climate-resilient interventions:

1. Barriers and Opportunities for Women's Engagement

Women, traditionally responsible for tasks like gathering firewood, face greater labour burdens due to climate change, while men are increasingly drawn to crime groups given the pressure of being "providers." In focus groups, women highlighted their caregiving roles, contrasting with their perception of men as more self-focused. Climate change also intensifies conflicts over resources, with herders and farmers competing over land, leaving women vulnerable and fearful of violence when working alone on farms.

Participants noted that women, seen as implementers of change, preserve traditional knowledge crucial for environmental conservation despite limited access to formal education and resources. However, cultural norms often deprioritise girls' education, restricting women's livelihood options, political participation and access to information, especially in displacement situations. There is a gradual shift toward ensuring girls' access to education, but in the meantime, communities mainly rely on support, religion and spirituality as informal coping methods for climate impacts.

"There is a high competition for resources, and men are unable to fend for their families. So now it exposes them to threats. Probably being used as entrepreneurs of crime through politicians or being recruited into certain bandit groups as the terrorists which we have now because these are the effects."

Key Informant
Plateau State, Nigeria

2. Limited Land Rights Impact Women's Role in Agriculture

Research by Baskin (2022)¹⁰ on the intersection between gender and land rights in the context of climate change in Nigeria argues that women are the custodians of indigenous knowledge but have historically been denied land rights in the country. This is "creating a disconnect between the women who cultivate the land and the men who own it and [is] leading to unsustainable use of agricultural land in Nigeria." Land ownership plays a key role in decisions on land use, biodiversity, and farming practices that affect soil quality and crop yields. The author argues that legally recognising and enforcing rural women's land rights within Nigeria's customary tenure systems can aid climate change mitigation and enhance living conditions.

Another study¹¹ on gender vulnerabilities and responsive strategies to climate change in Kwara and Nasarawa States in Nigeria found that gender significantly impacts adaptation practices in the agricultural sector. Our research shows that women in small-scale agriculture face added challenges, as limited land prevents access to mechanisation for better yields. Extreme heat also restricts working hours, but women's cultivation duties often force them to work in harsh conditions, increasing their risk of heat-related illnesses. Furthermore, women in displacement camps struggle to maintain family livelihoods, sometimes resorting to survival sex work due to lost farming income. Additionally, norms of paying women less for labour heighten their vulnerability to abuse.

¹⁰ Cate Baskin, Empowering Women's Land Rights as a Climate Change Mitigation Strategy in Nigeria, 2022.

¹¹ Ayanlade, A., Oluwatimilehin, I.A., Ayanlade, O.S. et al. "Gendered vulnerabilities to climate change and farmers' adaptation responses in Kwara and Nassarawa States, Nigeria", *Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 10, 911, 2023.

“Talking about mobility, you know, once the conditions are not favourable for your normal activity, the tendency is for you to think of migrating to where things may be better for you, where you will be able to find something else to do. So, assuming there’s a flood, and then your farm has been washed off, the next thing you do is not to sit there but think of where to go and what you can do to survive. So, mobility is seeking for survival.”

Key Informant, Plateau State, Nigeria

3. Lack of Interest and Knowledge in Women’s Role in Climate Change Adaptation

Despite government efforts to promote sustainable land use, women’s challenges and roles in rural climate adaptation remain under-recognised. Current community-based natural resource management schemes may contribute to gender inequality as they do not consider gendered power differences at the household and community levels.¹² The research shows that both women and men perceive political leaders as lacking interest and knowledge in climate change adaptation, with unenforced policies leading to government distrust and reliance on alternative groups, including terror cells. Leaders are seen as overlooking the climate-conflict link, potentially damaging mitigation efforts by ignoring the root causes of the tensions. Despite their limited formal decision-making role, women activists and groups are tackling climate change by building drainage systems, educating communities, and advocating for climate-aware policies. Excluded from formal institutions, women see groups such as Village Savings and Loans Associations as a source of empowerment, using them to advocate for broader impact and community support.

Systems Strengthening: Investing in Women, Men and Children for Sustainability

UNDP Nigeria has initiated projects and planned future interventions that are informed by these findings through:

1. Partnerships

UNDP Nigeria partners with a global facility on small-scale projects in climate, land, water, and biodiversity, supporting 190 projects with 130 civil society groups across 200 communities. However, insecurity often shortens projects and threatens gains, especially for women. UNDP Nigeria aims to focus on the intersection of agriculture, land rights, and child protection, addressing challenges faced by women and children together.

2. Early Warning Systems

UNDP Nigeria is strengthening its work on early warning systems to reduce livelihood conflicts and protect women seeking food or water. These systems are crucial in Northern Nigeria to address climate, gender, and mobility through a conflict-sensitive lens and deepen understanding of these dynamics.

3. Funding to Expand Irrigation Farming

The Nigeria Country Office has implemented projects using pitcher irrigation with clay pots, rainwater harvesting, and forest protection through community bylaws and forest guards. Many initiatives have also focused on cleaner cooking options, like briquettes and moringa gel. In Maiduguri, only micro-gardening is available near boreholes and shelters. UNDP has supplied seedlings to areas with water access, with mixed results, and funding is needed to expand irrigation farming and train women-led groups and CBOs.

¹² Hartmann, B., “Will the circle be unbroken? A critique of the project on environment, population, and security” In N. L. Peluso & M. Watts (Eds.), 2001.

Case Study 3: Somalia

Context, Policy and Programming on Climate, Gender and Mobility in Somalia

Numerous climate-specific challenges severely impact Somalia.¹³ The climate is predicted to shift towards more eccentric conditions, with the weather becoming hotter and drier. Climate change has been identified as a multiplier to insecurity in Somalia.¹⁴ Tensions between pastoralists and farmers over land often result in conflict. Due to land degradation, which is in some places considered to be irreversible, these conflicts increase, and the resulting displacement may become permanent.¹⁵

Environmental changes have severely affected traditional pastoralism, and recurrent droughts have impacted grazing lands and livestock production.¹⁶ Droughts, irregular rain patterns and flooding have led to harvest failure, undermining crop production.¹⁷ To cope with the effects of climate change and the changes to livelihood options, rural populations may choose to migrate to urban areas, causing rapid urban expansion.¹⁸ Conflicts within urban areas have been linked to limited economic opportunities and weak institutional frameworks due to the rapid expansion.¹⁹

Women are disproportionately affected by the effects of climate change. Gender has significantly shaped how people adapt or cope with these challenges, including the ability and likelihood to migrate.

The Policy Response

Key climate-focused policies have been drafted over the last decade in Somalia.

- Updated NDC 2021: Targets a 30% emissions reduction, focusing on low-emission sustainable development, adaptive capacity, resilience, and gender mainstreaming.
- National Climate Change Policy (2020): Establishes the Directorate of Environment and Climate Change (DoECC), National Climate Change Committee (NCCC), and Cross-Sectoral Committee on Climate Change (CSCC) for coordinated climate action.
- Ninth National Development Plan (2020-2024): Emphasises inclusive economic growth, addressing climate challenges by enhancing crop production, livestock resilience, and sectoral growth to combat climate impacts.

UNDP in Somalia

The UNDP Country Programme Document outlines the priorities in Somalia, among which solutions to address climate change, develop sustainable natural resources management, with links to climate justice

Key Findings

For the aim of this case study, Baidoa has been chosen to assess Urban IDPs' adaptation practices. Somalia has one of the highest numbers of internally displaced populations (IDPs).

¹³ Bezabih, Mintewab. "Climate Change, Adaptation and Building Human Resilience in Somalia FINAL REPORT March 2022,"

¹⁴ Richard, Sliuzas. "Land Governance for Climate Resilience." landportal.org, November 21, 2023.

¹⁵ UN Women. "Gender, Climate and Conflict Analysis in Somalia and Assessment of Opportunities for Climate Agriculture and Livelihood Opportunities for Crisis-Affected and At-Risk Women in Somalia," March 2022.

¹⁶ Muse, Mohamed Dahir Mohamed Ahmed, and Faisal Muhammad. "Pastoralists Adaptation Strategies, and Resilience Capacity to Climate Change in Somalia: A Scoping Review." Research Square 1 (February 2, 2023).

¹⁷ Bezabih, Mintewab. "Climate Change, Adaptation and Building Human Resilience in Somalia FINAL REPORT March 2022,"

¹⁸ UNHabitat. "Urbanisation in Somalia: Building Inclusive & Sustainable Cities." unhabitat.org, n.d.

¹⁹ Somalia Stability Fund. "KEY ISSUES and CHALLENGES," 2021.

Previous research by Samuel Hall in 2021 on Climate Adaptive Solutions to Displacement in Somalia revealed the important role of networks in coping with disasters and women’s knowledge of adaptive practices in urban IDP contexts. An estimated 75% of Somalia’s population is under 30 years old, highlighting the importance of involving young people.

Findings from Baidoa, Somalia, present the key cultural, economic and political factors that need to be addressed to improve women’s engagement in climate resilient interventions.

1. Barriers and Opportunities for Women’s Role in Climate Resilient Interventions

In Somalia, patriarchal norms make women responsible for family and household duties, including farming, water collection, childcare, and caregiving. Climate change intensifies their burden, as women must travel farther for water and firewood, face reduced vegetation and crop yields, and have limited time for income-generating activities or education. Participants in our focus group discussions also reported additional strain on women as their caregiving responsibilities may increase when other family members affected by the drought or floods move in with them. Research conducted by Samuel Hall, IOM and UNEP on internal displacement and climate change in Baidoa suggested a higher level of awareness among women regarding adaptive accommodations and community-level solutions, thereby calling for more inclusion of women in land management, placemaking and urban planning.²⁰ Over the years, women’s role in climate-related interventions has grown as community elders recognise their contributions, leading to greater efforts to involve them and seek their feedback. However, women in displacement face rising sexual assault risks, along with stress from managing households and finances alone, while lacking access to reproductive health services.

“In the traditional Somali family, the father is the head of the household, and his word has the final say, but now people come to the house and ask for the mother and give her the card where she is sent the money. This makes the mother the head now.”

Key informant
Baidoa, Somalia

2. Economic and Protection Impacts on Women and Girls

Climate change affects women’s livelihood and education options in Somalia. During periods of drought, families often pull daughters out of school to help with the household and further reduce the financial burden and boys are often prioritised over girls for education, especially in rural areas. Rates of GBV have also reportedly increased in recent climate crises in Somalia.²¹ This has been partially attributed to shifting gender roles as women take on the breadwinner role when the loss of livestock resulted in men being unable to secure sufficient income.²² Women took on casual work in urban centres, became street vendors in internally displaced person (IDP) camps or villages, or kept or sold goats to sustain the family. Men, at times, perceived this shift in gender roles as a threat to their roles and position.²³

Moreover, cultural norms limit women’s property ownership and access to bank loans, so many join savings groups like Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs). Migration is common among young men, driven by high unemployment and the decline of traditional livelihoods, leading them to seek new opportunities, both legal and illegal, unlike older generations.

²⁰ Samuel Hall, “Identifying Climate Adaptive Solutions to Displacement in Somalia,” IOM & UNEP, 2021.

²¹ Amy Croome, and Muna Hussein. “Climate Crisis, Gender Inequalities and Local Response in Somalia/Somaliland | Forced Migration Review.” [www.fmreview.org](https://www.fmreview.org/issue64/croome-hussein), 2020. <https://www.fmreview.org/issue64/croome-hussein>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

“Women have adapted to climate change and can accomplish great things. Because women are not all the same, and women are classified into two types: fool and wise. The wise and active ones manage and raise their families while continuing to work for their families. If she works, the fool wants to lead her husband. So this is the issue with women who began working and earning money.”

Focus group discussion with men
Baidoa, Somalia

3. Women’s Roles and a Broader Recognition Gap

Despite formal encouragement and openness for women to participate in political life, informal institutions and patriarchal clan traditions prioritise men in political matters. There were calls for key actors among government, civil society, NGOs, the private sector, and international organisations to be involved in the mitigation and prevention of climate change and gender-related issues, and that women should not only be engaged as beneficiaries but as main actors through providing opportunities to work in government offices and organisational positions. Key informants emphasised the need for the government to recognise women’s insights in climate adaptation, as women are perceived to have valuable knowledge on climate challenges and solutions. Youth involvement in adaptation efforts has also increased, highlighting their role in climate initiatives. However, government interventions in Baidoa have largely focused on emergency support rather than long-term adaptation, resulting in dependency and continued vulnerability within the community.

The Climate Promise with Somali Women, Men and Youth

UNDP Somalia has initiated projects that recognise these findings and inform future interventions through:

1. Somalia has Revised its NDC with UNDP Support to Focus on a Climate-Resilient Path.

With 75% of the population being youth—many of whom migrate—UNDP Somalia centres its programmes on youth. For a pilot on displacement, gender and climate adaptation, Baidoa was suggested, with a focus on 2-3 south-west communities representing agriculture, pastoralism and internal displacement. Stakeholder engagement is recommended through government, then traditional and religious leaders, and finally, youth inclusion. UNDP Somalia is collaborating with the government on the NDC, which will be submitted next year, emphasising the need for federal involvement to achieve local impact.

2. Integrating Digital Green Business to Engage Youth, as Digital Transactions are Common.

Key questions include how to involve youth and women in digital climate initiatives. Within UNDP’s resilience portfolio, the Somalia youth platform is crucial for engaging youth organisations, with a focus on gender, digital participation and green businesses.

3. Women’s Networks in Somalia for Peace and Protection.

For community resilience, targeting women in IDP settings, especially minority household heads, is essential. Baidoa is suggested as a pilot location as Somalia launches its National Transformative Plan in May 2024. Collaboration with private sector actors and financial institutions is the next step, though women face significant barriers in accessing funding due to ownership and land rights issues. Additionally, mobile payments from cash-for-work programmes often do not reach women directly, as men usually control these funds.

