



GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION IN **THE PACIFIC**

Framework and Guidance Tool

THE SETTING

Although the diverse cultures of the Pacific have adapted to severe weather over the millennia, the increasing impact of climate change requires new interventions to ensure their livelihoods are protected. All sectors and all levels of society—from local to national, rural to urban—require new ways of working to adapt to climate change.

The new ways need to ensure that marginalised segments of society, including women, children, people of diverse gender and sexual identities, disabled people and indigenous people, are considered. These new ways of working can be considered as gender transformative climate change action (GTCCA).

THE PROJECT

Plan International Australia (Plan) commissioned the Institute for Sustainable Futures at the University of Technology Sydney (ISF-UTS) to undertake research on “Gender Transformative Climate Change Action in the Pacific” in April–August 2018.

The research aimed to define what gender transformative climate change action (GTCCA) looks like, to assist future gender transformative climate change programming.

The research employed a strengths-based approach to reveal positive practice and opportunity for future improvements. It was designed to motivate gender transformative practice and climate change action by offering space for reflection on past experiences, identifying success stories and their enablers, and revealing preferred future actions. Focus group discussions and interviews were carried out in Fiji

and the Solomon Islands to gain insight on GTCCA from real world examples. Recognising that current programming is often gender aware or gender focused, the research considered the potential to shift or stretch existing programming to achieve transformative outcomes.

The work was informed by earlier related activities in the Pacific by Plan International, in particular the Child Centred Climate Change Adaptation (4CA) programme, and partners in Fiji and the Solomon Islands.

MAIN FINDINGS

Adaptive programming is required for both climate change action and gender transformative change. This is due to the underlying uncertainty surrounding both change processes, and that both are influenced by many external factors. Outcomes must be specific, designed locally, informed by local contexts and with engagement from stakeholders at different levels from individuals to decision makers. The nonlinear, complex processes of change need to be recognised and navigated well in order to make the best contributions through development programming.

Changing underlying cultural norms and practices around gender will take time. The research findings in the Solomon Islands highlight that while some progress on women’s rights is being made, people of diverse sexual and gender minorities face challenging barriers of discrimination. In Fiji, progress is being made with organisations such as FemLINK and Diverse Voices and Action for Equality, which represent women and people of diverse sexual and gender identities; however, more is required to ensure their equal participation.

A shift in organisational and staff practice is needed for climate change programming practice to move toward a gender transformative approach. Increased staff capacity to reflect on gender, as well as consideration of facilitation and community engagement practices that best support a gender transformative approach to climate change programming, is required. Importantly, a localised and contextualised foundation led by local partners is required.

Strengthened expertise in understanding how to respond to climate change and how it is likely to impact on men, women, boys and girls is needed for Plan and partners to optimise their contributions to climate change action. This can be supported by strengthened partnerships with government agencies and specialist organisations working in climate change. Implementing organizations need to be equipped with knowledge and practice relevant to climate change such as uncertainty, adaptive pathways, advocacy and action-learning activities that respond to changing contexts.

Organisational commitment and capacity to operationalise commitment to child rights and a child-centred approach in the Pacific are required. Following Plan’s Child-Centred Climate Change Adaptation (4CA) project, partners in Fiji and the Solomon Islands have not continued child-centred programming, which is potentially indicative of lack of interest, lack of capacity or limited funds to support this approach. Frank discussions should be held with partners about their interest to employ a child-centred community development approach and options explored on extending partnerships with other local organisations that have skill and interest in this area.

The research resulted in a framework guide and user friendly tool for implementing GTCCA (see p.10-11). The framework is built around four elements: 1) preconditions for action, 2) spaces for inclusive participation, 3) community-led action-learning pathways, and 4) locally defined outcomes and stepping stones to adaptation.

Cover image: Margaret, 58, is mother to six children and provides for them herself, through fishing and working in the garden. Her community has received climate change education through Plan International Australia’s local partners, Solomon Islands Development Trust.

This page: Russell Islands, Solomon Islands.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND GENDER IN THE PACIFIC

Climate change is altering natural weather systems and Pacific environments at an alarming rate, requiring adaptations to ensure communities can continue to live in their island homes. Rising sea levels, increasingly warmer weather and changing rainfall patterns are disrupting marine ecosystems and threaten the viability of climate-reliant livelihoods. Pacific communities are already being displaced and relocated due to climate change.

Marginalised segments of society such as women, children, people of diverse gender and sexual identities, disabled people and indigenous people are usually more vulnerable to climate change impacts because they are likely to have less access to resources, information and decision-making processes. To address these challenges a gender transformative approach to climate change action is necessary, which also incorporates consideration of how different forms of exclusion (based on disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and ethnicity, to name a few) intersect with gender to create greater barriers to rights, and how these can be addressed through climate change action.

Plan International defines a gender transformative approach through its global policy: to “tackle the root causes of gender inequality, particularly unequal gender power relations, discriminatory social norms

and legislation, in all our work. In this way we aim not only to improve the daily condition of girls but also to advance their position and value in society” (Plan International Global Policy Gender Equality and Inclusion 2017, p.4).

In the Pacific islands, women face discrimination in access to land, housing, property, credit and other productive resources. In patrilineal societies, women cannot own land but they have use rights of land from their male relatives, while in matrilineal societies, women can own and inherit land but control still rests with men.

Disasters and the impacts of climate change often exacerbate existing gender disparities due to different gender roles. For example, there may be inequality in access to climate forecasts, early warning information and emergency and post-disaster services and resources. Women may also be tasked with full responsibility for childcare and other caregiving duties prior to and during a disaster. This has implications for their ability to participate in the response, and importantly, their own safety and safety of their children. Evidence also shows women and girls are at much higher risk of gender-based violence during disasters. Documented evidence of violence and vulnerabilities experienced by people with disabilities (especially women and girls) is lacking.

Coastal family homes are elevated or moved a few meters inland in response to sea level rise in the Russell Islands.



There also remains a gap in documented evidence on the vulnerabilities experienced by people with diverse sexual and gender identities. Emerging research in this space documents instances of violence and discrimination to people of sexual and gender minorities during and after disasters. A gender transformative approach to climate change action will contribute to protecting the needs of people with diverse sexual and gender identities during such times.

Girls are often removed from education first following a disaster. In areas affected by conflict and disaster, girls are 2.5 times more likely to be taken out of education than boys. This increases the risk of girls being forced into early marriage and potentially puts an end to their education.

Restrictions on women's mobility and low involvement in decision making have a detrimental influence on policy and programme design for climate change adaptation. Although women often take primary responsibility for particular sectors such as food security and clean water supplies, they are often excluded from consultation on policy and programmes in those domains due to gendered cultural norms which exclude women from decision making, especially at the village level. There is growing recognition that by supporting women's empowerment in climate change policy

and programming, climate change action will become more successful, sustainable and equitable. Little is known about how climate change mitigation and adaptation policy might influence gender relations, particularly in the Pacific. The dimensions and requirements for a robust, gender-transformative approach to climate change is an area for contemporary research.

The gender dimensions of climate change have been recognised in international policy, such as in the Lima Work Plan on Gender at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of the Parties (COP) 20 in 2012, reinforced at the COP 22 in Marrakech (2016) and the Gender Action Plan approved during COP 23 (2017). While initial discussions at international forums mainly emphasised gender-sensitivity through equal representation of women and men in dialogue, more recently a gender transformative perspective has been proposed. Development practitioners are now considering how to implement gender transformative approaches in programming. Plan International has set an ambitious target of 100% gender transformative programme outcomes by 2022.

Bernice, 19, and her son Jayjay sit outside their home in Arawa, Papua New Guinea. She faces increased insecurity in the aftermath of disaster with limited or no access to basic hygiene supplies and reproductive health services.

KEY ISSUES

WHAT ARE THE ENABLERS OF EFFECTIVE GTCCA, PARTICULARLY IN THE PACIFIC?

A range of enablers for GTCCA exists, particularly in the Pacific, within different types of relationships between men and women, among women, among children, and between children and adults in communities; in government policies and institutions; and in development programming approaches. These enablers are described below.

Strong understanding of climate change impacts in the Pacific. Responding to climate change with a gender transformative approach requires a strong understanding of how it will impact on men, women, boys and girls. Adaptation and advocacy at both local (in rural and urban settings) and national level are needed to ensure gender issues are considered.

Side-by-side (women-men). A programming approach that prioritises women and men working collaboratively (side-by-side) and benefiting together is an enabler of gender transformative change. This approach involves men valuing roles and contributions of women, especially in relation to women having a space to express their views, being listened to, and influencing decisions in family and community life.

Space for women's dialogue and empowerment. Women empower each other through dialogue and working collectively to address climate change, grounded in the traditions of their Pacific island contexts.

Male champions. Women's involvement in decision making is more likely when active participation is

promoted by (male) leaders. Stakeholders in both Fiji and the Solomon Islands described the importance of finding champions (male or female) who promote gender equality in all types of institutions and governance structures. With training and support, champions can promote changes across their organisations.

Girls and boys model a gender transformative approach. Girls and boys in the Pacific have experienced the impacts of climate change in the course of their lifetime and hold knowledge and potential leadership skills to address climate change. Children and youth also demonstrate openness to relating as equals regardless of gender identity, which provides a valuable enabler to transforming gender relations concerning climate change action.

Legal frameworks. International and national legal frameworks, policy, plans and monitoring mechanisms provide a mandate for a gender transformative approach across development programming in the Pacific, including climate change initiatives, e.g., many Pacific island countries are signatories to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and several have submitted National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPA) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Cross-sector action for climate change and gender equality. There is growing appreciation by government and NGOs carrying out climate change policy, planning and implementation of community-level projects, of the need to promote gender equality across sectors and to integrate climate change action into sector practice.

Local gender-focused organisations can support and advocate GTCCA. Partnering with local organisations and supporting their existing work will add value to the future work of Plan International Australia and its partners in the Pacific. Bringing together different skill sets and expertise will be essential for GTCCA. For example, a particular skillset is required in gender analysis, and design and monitoring of interventions to achieve inclusion and equity.

Seeing is believing. Gender transformative change in climate change action is enabled when men, women, boys and girls and people with diverse identities see tangible benefits from changes in gendered norms, roles and responsibilities as part of programming initiatives.

Focus on practical needs of women and their potential to enact strategic changes. Programming that focuses on addressing women's practical needs and encourages engagement and participation of women, has potential to address women's strategic needs, such as decision making and control of resources. However, caution must also be raised to ensure that this theory of change or influence does not entrench existing gendered norms.

Build on and strengthen existing gender-aware and gender transformative programming. Plan International partners in the Pacific have gender-aware and gender-focused elements in their programming, which can be strengthened to include

future gender transformative focus. For example, Plan's partners demonstrate gender awareness in their discourse and programming practice, and existing tools from Plan, such as the Project Design Gender Equality and Inclusion Self-Assessment, could be used by other organisations as a means of reflecting on their own practice.

TO WHAT EXTENT COULD GENDER-FOCUSED CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRAMMING BE GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE?

Based on the enablers described above, potential exists for gender-focused climate change programming to be gender transformative. Three aspects were considered:¹ informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices; formal laws, policies and institutional structures; and women's access to resources and opportunities.

Informal cultural norms and exclusionary practices. The research identified shifts in attitudes toward the role of women and girls in development, in view of recognition of their unique knowledge based on their gendered roles and responsibilities, which can be harnessed to support transformative outcomes. For example, there is strong support for men and women working together (side-by-side) to address development needs. Working together was valued not only in implementation but also in decision making.



Carol Potol found that the changing climate has shifted the timing of when to plant traditional crops in her home garden, affecting her income, needed to raise five children alone after her husband died in 2011. She highlights the importance of educational opportunities for her children to increase their knowledge and know-how to prepare for the future.

Similarly there have been shifts in adults' perceptions of the role of children. Shifts in informal cultural norms demonstrate that transformative change happens through engagement and relationships between these different groups: men/women/boys/girls.

Formal laws, policies and institutional structures.

Pacific island countries are signatories to international frameworks relevant to a gender transformative approach to climate change; however, their operationalisation, including national policy and planning, needs strengthening to bring together climate and concerns for gender and social inclusion. Pacific national governments have developed gender equality policies that articulate the structural barriers that contribute to women's vulnerability in their specific country contexts. To avoid isolating gender initiatives in a women's empowerment or gender equality department, gender policies need to be mainstreamed across all government departments and agencies.

Women's access to resources and opportunities.

Numerous projects have shifted gender norms, roles and responsibilities of men and women, and have resulted in benefits within the community. Programming initiatives include inclusion of women in savings and loans collectives and water management committees, which are traditionally male domains. Women are gaining increased resources and opportunities and men are realising the tangible benefits of changes for women. An example of strategic needs being met is

construction of an evacuation centre, with women being involved in decision making about its management and use. However, there are cases where climate change programmes are gender-blind or reinforce gender roles, and in so doing reinforce existing structural inequalities; for example, focusing on identifying and enriching women's and men's knowledge about agriculture practice without also considering how gendered roles could be shifted.

Programmes need to have a gendered programme logic, with a theory of change informed by gender analysis and specific gender goals and objectives, and integrate gender transformative interventions into activity design. This includes developing stepping stones toward their vision, recognising the connected but unique aspects of both practical and strategic changes for women and men. Outcomes need to be realistic within the time frame of programme and project cycles, and sustainable over the long term. It is also essential to identify immediate and intermediate results and indicators that are stepping-stones to transforming gender relations and achieving gender equality outcomes.

The research found that Plan staff and partners in the Pacific have gender-aware and gender-focused elements in their programming that can be strengthened to enable gender transformative outcomes. Organisational commitment to a gender transformative approach and willingness to reflect

on current norms and structures is a key foundation to gender transformative change. Reflective organisations and individual staff are key to translating concepts to community development. Sustained training and coaching over a long period of time are required to support this practice.

TO WHAT EXTENT CAN ENABLERS OF SUCCESS BE REPLICATED TO OTHER PACIFIC ISLAND CONTEXTS AND ELSEWHERE?

Some enablers of GTCCA can be replicated across the Pacific, building from similar governance structures, national commitments to climate change action and also gender equality, while other enablers are unique to local social and cultural contexts. It is important that programming for GTCCA in the Pacific recognises these differences.

International and national commitments to gender equality as a foundation for gender transformative programming are replicable since they are present in many countries. International frameworks, such as CEDAW and the Gender Action Plan under the Lima work programme on gender, provide a mobilising framework for governments and civil society to use as a foundation for gender transformative approach to climate change action. In addition, most Pacific island countries have national gender-focused frameworks, plans and policies. Development practitioners wishing to implement a gender transformative approach can draw on these frameworks as a foundation of their practice and use them to hold duty-bearers accountable to their commitments.

Cross-sector collaborative practices as an enabler of successful gender transformative climate GTCCA are replicable across the Pacific and depend on the nature of partners in each country. For example, a newly formed gender and climate change task force in Fiji is replicable, since the same actors are present in other Pacific countries, i.e., national government agencies and civil society organisations (CSOs) focused on climate change and gender. Programming activities that enable successful GTCCA, such as applied gender analyses as a precursor to any effective programming, are replicable across some Pacific island countries but require a high level of gender sensitivity of programme staff. In some contexts gendered division of labour and roles will be very entrenched and difficult to change. The potential to leverage climate action programming activities to support gender transformative change will depend on capacities and interests of organisations and staff.

While cultural similarities in the Pacific provide potential for some replication of successful enablers of GTCCA, the research identified a need to caution against a one approach fits all. There are significant cultural differences within a country. Differences exist in matrilineal and patrilineal societies, and even within matrilineal societies among Solomon Islanders. In Fiji, differences within urban and rural settings are stark. Due to connection to their customs and traditions, Pacific island people are best placed to design and implement GCCTA. It is very important that gender concepts are understood in the context of local culture and traditions. Local CSOs can facilitate peer-to-peer exchanges across Pacific countries within their network, to support a culturally-sensitive and bottom-up approach to transformative change. As the gender transformative approach is new in the Pacific, skills around programming for climate change action are also limited. Thus, capacity development of practitioner organisations is a critical first step in starting-up GTCCA.

WHAT ARE THE ASPIRATIONS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS IN RELATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION THAT CAN BE SUPPORTED IN FUTURE PROGRAMMING?

Existing climate change programmes in the Pacific are addressing some needs of women, but it is not yet an area of adequate focus.

In both Fiji and the Solomon Islands, community consultations identified various types of women's aspirations, primarily related to building on past practice of climate change adaptation programming and achievements. Women said they had received increased knowledge about climate change, but wanted more information and awareness raising and how local changes to weather and climate would affect their livelihoods. They also wanted to continue to participate in decision-making roles in community-wide committees for climate change action, and for these committees to be better connected to the broader community. When women are provided with more information about climate change, their self-confidence increases and they are more confident and capable to take up decision-making roles.

GTCCA FRAMEWORK

This framework gives practitioners in GTCCA a user-friendly tool to undertake and measure the progress of projects.

The framework is based on several key GTCCA principles that guide thinking and practice. GTCCA is:

- multidimensional, long term and uncertain
- respectful of marginalised groups and ensures nondiscrimination and empowerment of marginalised groups
- locally defined and situated in cultural contexts

The four major elements of a programming approach of GTCCA in the Pacific considered here are shown below. They should not be employed in isolation but together as building blocks for GTCCA.

1. Preconditions for action: organisational commitment and competency, and contextualisation of the framework guidance to local country contexts

- Commitment of the organisation
- Strengthening staff competency
- Recognising and supporting local social movements for change
- Contributing to national government mandates
- Contextualising to country and local cultures and co-designing for action

2. Spaces for inclusive active participation, prioritisation of marginalised groups in decision making and action, and connections across different groups

The three 'spaces' to consider here are a) In communities (women together, women and men side-by-side, and girls and boys as models of transformative change), b) with different levels of government, and c) with civil society and the private sector. However, there is opportunity to cause harm where entry points are used in isolation (e.g., women-only focused activities with no interest in involving men may cause harm).

3. Community-led action-learning pathways

Community-led action-learning pathways are at the heart of the approach for GTCCA. Establishing preconditions and multiple, connected entry points of inclusive participation provide the basis for action by the community. The qualities of this process are:

Community led and inclusive of different groups in the community and with outside stakeholders, encouraging inputs of diverse knowledge and exchange and recognising contested values within communities and with external stakeholders.

Action-learning, with a focus on community-led process (plan-do-reflect) not on achieving set outcomes², enabling adaptation and response to changing conditions and uncertainty.

Pathways include assessment of climate change vulnerability and capacity, and analysis of gender; community-defined strategic visions for climate change action and gender equality; incremental and transformative change actions at different scales, local and systemic; monitoring–decision triggers–monitoring–feedback; and decision making that is flexible and responsive to changing contexts.

4. Locally defined outcomes and stepping stones to adaptation

While GTCCA is outcomes orientated, outcomes cannot be defined as they will be set by communities as part of cycles of learning and action-learning and will depend on their specific geographical, social, cultural and financial contexts. The outcomes may also depend on the extent to which climate change is expected to impact on the community.

Children, women and men commuting by boats: they must adapt to the logistical challenges of living in remote island communities affected by climate change.

GTCCA GUIDANCE TOOL

The following matrix tables provide guidance for practitioners in the Pacific in implementing the four framework elements. The tables should be completed by the practitioners.

Guidance Framework	Process carried out to complete. <i>What activity did you carry out to achieve this precondition?</i>	Process completed. <i>Who was involved? When completed?</i>	Demonstration of completion. <i>Evidence that precondition is in place?</i>	Comments/ Notes	
1. PRECONDITIONS FOR ACTION					
1a. Organisational commitments of Plan and partners					
1b. Strengthen staff competency					
1c. Recognise and support local social movements for change					
1d. Contribute to national government mandates					
1e. Contextualise to country and local cultures and co-design for action					
2. MULTIPLE SPACES FOR INCLUSIVE ACTIVE AND CONNECTED PARTICIPATION	What is the active participation of this group in community-led action-learning pathways for GTCCA?	How is active participation of this group connected to participation of other groups?	How will connected participation of this group with other groups contribute to GTCCA?	Comments/ Notes	
2a. In community					
Women together					
Women and men side-by-side					
Girls and boys as models of transformative change					
2b. With different levels of government					
2c. With civil society and the private sector					
3. COMMUNITY-LED ACTION-LEARNING PATHWAYS FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION AND GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE	Women together	Women and men side-by-side	Girls and boys as models of transformative change	With different levels of government	With civil society and the private sector
3a. Community-led					
3b. Action-learning					
3c. Pathways					
Assessment of vulnerability and capacity, and analysis of gender					
Community-defined strategic vision					
Incremental and transformative change actions at different scales					
Monitoring / decision triggers / monitoring / feedback					
Decision making that is flexible and responsive to change					
4. LOCALLY DEFINED OUTCOMES AND STEPPING STONES TO CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND GENDER TRANSFORMATIVE	Monitoring of actions and outcomes of this process should be documented, community-led and within action-learning.				

² Further guidance is also available in Getting it right: Gender Transformative Programming and Influencing (Plan International 2018).

THE WAY FORWARD

This study has resulted in guidance framework and user-friendly tool for practitioners to complete during program design and implementation to ensure transformative outcomes. The guidance framework and tool can be applied and further refined by development practitioners to existing climate change adaptation and disaster risks resilience programmes, taking a reflective step approach to systematically widen its application in programme design, implementation, monitoring, assessment and promotion of adaptation pathways.

Further research extending to other Pacific country contexts will enrich efforts to understand and define stepping stones to accelerating climate action that is gender transformative in the region.

For more information:

Marilou Drilon
Senior Advisor - Climate Change
Plan International Australia
Email: marilou.drilon@plan.org.au

About Plan International

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 80 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 75 countries.

PLAN.ORG.AU

Plan International Australia

18/60 City Road, Southbank VIC 3006
GPO Box 2818, Melbourne VIC 3001
Tel: 13 75 26 Fax: +61 (3) 9670 1130
Email: info@plan.org.au

ABN 49 004 875 807

 /planaustralia

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