

## Gender-smart agriculture: The only way forward for women and climate

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Through baobab powder production, women's group in Senegal participated in management of natural resources.

Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) is the only way forward for food and nutrition security and the planet's resilience. But we need to make sure that the climate-smart agriculture policies, technologies, and tools also work for women who, despite being a significant percentage of the world's farmers, face major gaps in capturing the benefits provided by CSA.

Over the years the World Bank has worked hard at ensuring that investments in the agriculture and foods sector match the urgency of the climate crisis. Agriculture projects are also overwhelmingly inclusive of women and their enormous roles in the rural sector. The FAO estimates that women make up 43% of the agricultural workforce globally. This number goes up to over 60% in least developed countries.

Women are experiencing increased responsibilities and workloads, especially in situations where there are climate driven outmigration of men and young people. For

example, [workloads increased for women](#) in rainfed farming households in Maharashtra, India, due to fluctuating crop yields and longer distances to travel for fuel, fodder and water for their livestock. Women may also be hesitant to adopt new adaptive practices in agriculture out of concern that their workload might increase.

Ensuring equitable access to technologies that reduce women's burden and increase their productivity is essential, and in some cases can lead to increased diversity of crops, improving household nutrition.

Women have less access to technologies, information, resources, and finance for their agriculture activities across the globe. The cost of the gender productivity gap in agriculture – inequalities in access to and control of productive and financial resources – inhibits agricultural productivity, reduces food security, and costs millions to countries. For instance, UN Women estimates that the gender productivity gap in agriculture is \$100 million in Malawi, \$105 million in Tanzania, and \$57 million in Uganda.

However, policymakers do not yet always make these connections. A recent analysis of nationally determined contributions (NDCs) submitted before October 2021 found that only 43 countries (22%) addressed gender in relation to agricultural adaptation or mitigation actions. A total of 48 NDCs were submitted by African countries, and only 23 included a reference to gender in relation to agriculture.

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For example, in Senegal, a project has helped establish a women-run baobab powder micro-enterprise. Women in the local community were trained in fruit processing and financial management, while environmental restoration activities such as increased vegetation cover and use of indigenous trees were introduced. The project has now increased women's access to and control over forest resources. Incomes have increased through fruit powder sales, and women participate in community decision-making on tree management including through women's group control of the funds used for community improvement.

Meanwhile in Nepal, the large number of male out-migration from rural communities is significantly escalating women's responsibilities in agriculture. Women are over-burdened with their involvement in agriculture and are increasingly making farming decisions that were traditionally the responsibility of men. The good news though is that there are solutions that can benefit women. Installation of solar based irrigation systems have benefitted women to grow high value crops and earn higher incomes. By substituting mechanical for manual irrigation, women's workloads are greatly decreased.

One of our more innovative projects is [Accelerating the Impact of CGIAR Climate Research for Africa \(AICCRA\)](#) which focuses on how climate-smart agriculture can contribute to women's resilience and empowerment in the context of climate change.

As part of project roll-out, AICCRA developed a "gender-smart agriculture" framework to plan, implement and assess gender-responsive CSA. It includes gender gap analysis, identification and prioritisation of gender-responsive CSA, participatory and consultative implementation models as well as gender-targeted climate information services and value chain approaches.

"Gender-smart indicators" measure gender results in five main areas to measure the degree of gender empowerment, based on the Gender Profile of Climate-smart Agriculture in Ghana and the [Gender Empowerment Index](#): 1) access and control of CSA technologies, farm inputs, personal assets; 2) increased production; 3) access to climate information services; 4) access to credit; and 5) decreases in workload, and how these affect women's participation in decisions at household and community levels.

Together with the AICCRA project, the World Bank will soon be offering a learning event on how to make use of these tools that harness the broad research experiences of the CGIAR system in research and the I spaces in our work to make use of them.

On International Women's Day, we take the opportunity to renew our ambitions on reaching the food system goals of feeding the world in a climate-positive way to ensure that the tools we have also work for a large number of the people working in agriculture: women. Let's make sure that climate-smart is gender-smart