

Why it matters

Women and girls are at heightened risk from climate change and weather-related shocks due to pre-existing gender inequalities. Socio-cultural and gender norms also mean that women have fewer options and more limited decision-making on how to mitigate these risks. Women's livelihoods are typically more dependent on natural resources and agriculture, making them particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Climate change increases women and girls' care responsibilities, while the risk of gender-based violence may become more acute following climate-related disasters. Further, women often lack access to new technologies and climate-smart farming practices and are rarely represented in policy discussions and decision-making processes around climate. Climate change is also a key driver of humanitarian crises, forced displacement and migration – the effects of which are felt disproportionately by women and girls. All these risks are exacerbated for women and girls facing intersecting discrimination because of disability, LGBT+ status, race or ethnicity.

Gender-responsive strategies are necessary to respond to the

ENVIRONMENTAL AND HUMANITARIAN CRISES caused by climate change

Marginalised populations face disproportionate impacts of climate change.

In Bangladesh, exposure to climate disasters leads women-headed households to spend

THREE TIMES AS MUCH savings on risk reduction as male-headed households



STRONG SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEMS mitigate risks and advance gender equality in the contexts of poverty and crises



SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Cash and in-kind transfers, fee waivers, subsidies



SOCIAL INSURANCE

Social security contributions, health insurance



LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

Skills training, job search, parental benefits



SOCIAL CARE SERVICES

Child and adult care and support, protection services

Social protection measures can be combined with **complementary interventions** such as awareness raising, social behaviour change communication, skills training, savings, and nutrition supplements

What is social protection

Social protection systems prevent and protect people – especially women and girls – from poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion throughout the course of their lives. Access to social protection is a human right and a powerful tool to empower women and girls and promote gender equality. Strong social protection systems increase women's income, assets and financial decision-making, support women and girls' health and nutrition, reduce violence against women, support girls to stay in school, delay early marriage and pregnancy, and provide economic and social security in later years.

Social protection systems can range from **gender discriminatory and gender blind** (those that may actively exclude women and girls or unintentionally ignore their needs) to **gender-sensitive** (such as programmes collecting gender-disaggregated data on programme participation and outcomes) to **gender-responsive and transformative systems** that recognise and respond to gendered needs and address the root causes of gender inequality and discrimination (such as programmes that aim to support women and girls' care work or programmes that target women to enhance empowerment and decision-making and provide linkages or complementary economic inclusion, knowledge and skills training interventions).



Gender Discriminatory

Gender Blind

Gender Aware/Sensitive

Gender Responsive

Gender Transformative



Opportunity

Well-designed and implemented social protection can help increase women’s and girls’ capacity to cope with the impacts of climate change through building their resilience and improving their access to economic and financial resources. Whilst evidence is still nascent in this area, increasing attention to climate change in social protection systems shows potential to: support women with adapting to climate-resilient livelihoods; strengthen disaster response and recovery efforts to address the needs of women and girls; and accelerate just transitions to green economies through social protection policies to support women’s employment in decent jobs and strategic green sectors.

Cash transfers and labour market programmes can

INCREASE WOMEN’S ABILITY TO SAVE

a critical coping mechanism to manage the impacts of climate-related shocks

Asset transfers coupled with skills training and nutritional knowledge can

HELP WOMEN TO BETTER MANAGE the impacts of seasonal floods and long-term erosion

Supporting female social protection recipients to use climate-smart technologies has the potential to

INCREASE WOMEN’S VOICE in community discussions on climate and adopt climate-resilient practices

Practical tips

- » **Collect and analyse gender and age disaggregated data** to assess how climate shocks and stressors may affect individuals across the life course. Use data to inform decision-making on adapting social protection to rapidly respond to shocks and ensure gender equality and social inclusion are integrated into efforts to build early action into social protection systems.
- » Carry out **gender-specific climate risk research and analysis to inform social protection programme design and implementation** to improve outcomes for women across sectors (education, health, protection and economic empowerment), and to inform disaster risk management plans and strategies.
- » Identify ways to build on the skills, resources, knowledge and agency of women and girls to reduce climate risk and **champion women’s participation and leadership** in community and national decision-making and planning on climate resilience and social protection.
- » **Support partnerships with civil society and local actors in early action and social protection, to help reach and empower those most in need.**
- » Support the development of women’s skills and training through social protection interventions and the provision of care services in the non-farm sector to **diversify away from climate-sensitive economic activities**. Support women’s labour market participation in jobs in green sectors and monitor the effects of green policies on women’s jobs and livelihoods to ensure they are not disproportionately affected.

Policy tips

- » **Communicate the importance of** gender-responsive social protection (GRSP) to support resilience to climate change:
 - Stimulate discussion by **convening space for understanding the key issues and facilitating policy dialogue** amongst local and international organisations and champions working on gender, climate change and social protection.
 - Support the **development of research to fill identified gaps and disseminate evidence** to government and development partners on social protection policy and programme design on what works to support women and girls’ resilience to climate change.
- » Ensure that GRSP, with a focus on women and girls’ resilience to climate change is part of development partners’ **influencing agenda in all international engagements** with the UK and other multilateral agencies.
- » Identify national and international **commitments, policies, or international observance days** relevant to GRSP and climate change as an opportunity to influence the agenda, for example, the UN Climate Change Conference. International Women’s Day.

Key references

- » [Fact Sheet - Women, Gender Equality and Climate Change.](#)
- » [Gender-sensitive social protection in the face of climate risk.](#)
- » [Social protection and climate change: scaling up ambition.](#)