



GENDER JUSTICE AND RESILIENCE IN THE SAHEL

The ALFA Sahel Webinar N°4 allowed about 30 participants to explore why gender justice is fundamental to building resilience and to share their experiences of integrating gender into resilience projects. Participants represented seven Sahelian countries (Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Chad, Guinea, Burkina Faso) and belonged to government institutions, NGOs & associations, and research institutions. Subgroup discussions addressed the following questions:

1. Why do men, women, young men, young women, boys and girls have different experiences of climate risks?
2. Are all women affected equally by the impacts of climate change? Yes? No? Why or why not?
3. What strategies do you use in your adaptation planning and resilience building work to address discrimination faced by women and girls in particular and to promote gender justice? Share experiences on what has worked.

Results of the discussions on question 1: *Why do men, women, young men, young women, boys and girls have different experiences of climate risks?*

Discriminations, social norms and unequal power relations impact the distribution of goods, the level of control over these goods and resources (water, land etc.), the roles and responsibilities of each person, the influence in decision making, the access to land and natural resources. All of these differences will determine how climate hazards and pressures will impact people of different genders and ages and the options available to them to adapt.

There is growing evidence that women are more vulnerable than men, largely because they represent the majority of the poor and are more dependent on natural resources threatened by climate change.

In addition, the division of labor within households is a significant factor in times of crisis that accentuates this unequal experience between men and women; this is due to the fact that in rural

areas, it is women and girls who search for wood, water and food for the family at the village level; they are the ones who are on the front line of shocks while the men are often on the move. Thus, in times of climatic crises, they tend to work more to secure their household's livelihoods, leaving less time for income-generating activities, literacy and education in general, let alone the development of other skills.

Women have less access than men to resources such as land, credit, agricultural inputs, community decision-making bodies, technology, training, information, and extension services that would enhance their ability to adapt to climate change.

The situation of conflict and insecurity in the Sahel context makes women and girls even more vulnerable and accentuates the existing inequality both in access to resources and in the face of climate change impacts.

Results of the discussions on question 2: *Are all women affected equally by the impacts of climate change? Yes? No? Why not?*

Women's vulnerability to climate change results from several social, economic and cultural factors.

Indeed, in the face of climate change, women are not a homogeneous group in the sense that some women possess and control resources (assets and time) better and can better seize opportunities (mobility, market, education etc.) than others. This may depend on a number of factors: age, living with a disability, ethnicity, level of education, existing power relations, level of vulnerability of the household to which they belong, urban or rural setting, etc. Participants thus recognized that gender inequality issues intersect with other forms of discrimination (intersectionality).

The participants stressed that rural women who only have an agro-pastoral activity are often more vulnerable to climate risks than those who combine agro-pastoral activities with other income generating activities and who are in big cities.

In general, the level of education and organization is higher in cities, which has a positive impact on the level of vulnerability and adaptive capacities.

The social level of women is another factor of difference between women that can greatly influence access to resources, infrastructure, markets. For example, a woman who is married to a community leader or to large landowners will often have a lower level of vulnerability. Single or widowed women, on the other hand, are often vulnerable to climate shocks due to social norms that restrict their adaptation options.

Results of the discussions on question 3: *What strategies do you use in your adaptation planning and resilience building work to address discrimination faced by women and girls in particular and to promote gender justice? Sharing experiences on what has worked.*

In order to fight against gender discrimination, CARE's gender equality framework stresses the importance of working on 3 components:

- Empowerment
- Power relations
- Changing governance structures and norms

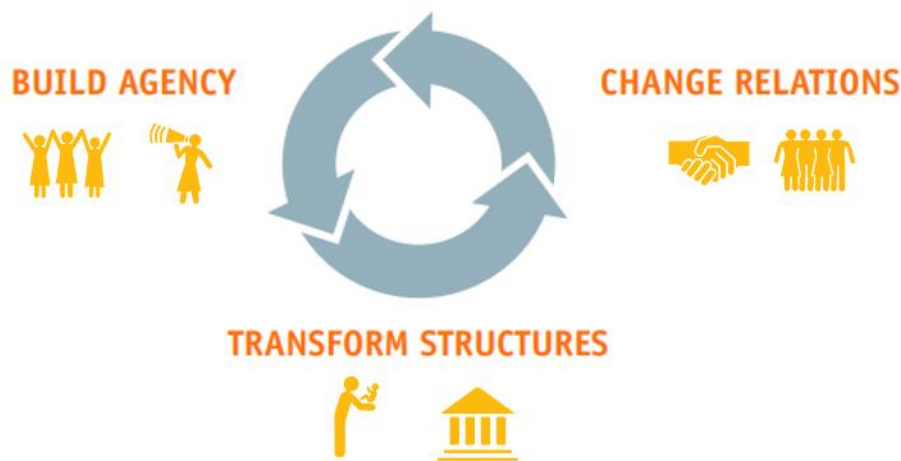


Figure 1: CARE's Gender Equality Framework

Participants proposed the following examples of activities for these 3 pillars:

01. Strengthening the capacity to act, to adapt of discriminated people

- Strengthening access to education for women.
- Strengthening women's self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Reinforcement of management capacities/capacity to carry out income generating activities.
- Creation of revolving funds.
- Access to health care.

02. Changing relationships, power dynamics

- Train men on gender and be able to discuss with "resource" persons, especially men, to reduce gender disparities.
- Promote the emergence of collective voices of women and youth at the national, regional and local levels (creation of platforms, groups or strengthening of existing collective structures).
- Strengthen the capacities of authorities in charge of development plans on gender, inclusion and social justice issues.

03. Structural changes and social norms

- Setting up quotas for certain resource management committees. For example, for activities to improve water supply to the population and to set up management committees, a quota of 30/35% minimum of women has been set up and the position of treasurer has been entrusted to women.
- Take into account the specific needs of youth and women in local and national plans and strategies.
- Work on barriers to access to land.
- Rebalance the workload e.g. by promoting the use of biogas instead of wood collection. This time can then be used for market gardening or other income generating activities.

In order to select and fund the most relevant activities that contribute to both gender equality and climate change adaptation, participants shared the following tools to use in project implementation:

Category	Objectives	Links to specific resources
Gender Marqueur	Analyze the quality of gender mainstreaming in the project proposal develop. Enable the development of a gender action plan and a gender-sensitive budget.	CARE Gender Marker: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation Form • User's Guide
Vulnerability and adaptive capacity analysis and development of local adaptation plans	Conduct a gender-sensitive vulnerability and adaptive capacity analysis to take into account the perspectives, needs and capacities of people of different genders and to gather differentiated information about vulnerability. Select adaptation options that also enhance gender equality.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CVCA Resources • CVCA Handbook in English • Oxfam VRA tool • Good practices for integrating gender equality and women's empowerment in resilient agriculture projects - FAO-CARE
In-depth gender analysis	Conduct, if necessary, an in-depth gender analysis to refine the understanding of certain barriers or discriminations such as men's and women's workloads that may have an impact on women's participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good Practice Guide to Gender Analysis - CARE • CARE Resources on Rapid Gender Analysis
Evolution of social norms	Accompany communities to lead a social change process through which individuals and communities explore and challenge the social norms, beliefs, and practices around gender and sexuality that shape their lives. SAA uses participatory tools (some developed by CARE and others borrowed from third parties) to achieve the long-term goal of empowering vulnerable communities through changing norms of gender equity, social relations, and gender power relations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global Process Implementation Manual: Social Analysis and Action (SAA) - CARE

The ALFA Sahel 2020 webinar series is a forum for joint learning among practitioners, decisions-makers and researchers on the challenges and opportunities for climate resilience in the Sahel. Go to alfasahel.org to learn more

