



DEVELOPING RADIO PARTNERS

Gender in climate change

It is widely recognized that climate change does not affect people equally. The related disasters and impacts often intensify existing inequalities, vulnerabilities and economic poverty.

Differently positioned, women and men perceive and experience climate change in diverse ways because of their distinct socially constructed gender roles, responsibilities, status and identities, which result in varied coping strategies and responses.

Climate change induced flooding, drought, and changes in forest management over time increases women's workloads in domestic fuel and water collection. This will therefore, reduce their time available for childcare, education and participation in public life.

Often, women are more vulnerable to climate change than men because they make up the majority of the world's economically poor, do most of the agricultural work, and rely on threatened natural resources for their livelihoods such as water.

The Weekly Information Resource Bulletin

The goals of the Weekly Bulletin are:

- Bring listeners in the project area the latest information on natural resources, the environment and agriculture
- Focus on solutions, what works and what people can do
- Encourage listeners to share both their questions and solutions (African solutions for African problems)
- Raise awareness of issues that need to be discussed to affect public policy.
- Bring the latest solutions and practices that have relevance to this region from around the world
- Identify and link other NGOs working in the region share the project interests and goals
- Give the participating journalists guidance and tips on their reporting on these issues

The Problem: Effects of Climate Change on Women and Children.

One reason women in Zambia are particularly vulnerable to climate change is because their livelihood activities are often directly dependent on the natural environment (UNDP 2009). For example, many women living in rural communities are responsible for agricultural production and collecting water for drinking and agricultural use.

As water collectors, they face high exposure to water-borne diseases, such as cholera and dysentery. Expected shifts in rainfall patterns caused by climate change will result in declines in water resources and decreased agricultural productivity.

These changes will directly impact their livelihoods and create additional hardships. For example, women and girls may have to travel further to collect water this also

affects their learning time at school hence not achieving many of their intended achievements in life.

During disasters, such as drought or floods, women and children are more vulnerable to organised criminal traffickers as a result of communities being scattered, and protective patterns in families and society become disrupted.

Women generally have far less access to and control over the resources they depend upon. Nor do they have opportunities for direct governance and effective influence in politics from the household to community, national, regional and international levels.

This therefore, makes the women and children most vulnerable as they do not have much influence in decision making.

Activities for Journalists

Climate change affects people across the communities; however, certain groups are more vulnerable to climate shocks and likely to experience more severe consequences than others. Poor communities, for example, are expected to be more acutely affected by climate change partly due to their limited access to information and financial resources. Women are the most vulnerable and children due to societies perception.

Women play a key role in managing the natural environment and perform many essential functions in the communities and households; however, currently, policy-making in Zambia does not take into account the gender dimensions of climate change. Women are usually poorly represented in decision-making roles at national, regional and global levels. This difference also holds true on a more local scale, with women rarely being included in decision-making at the household or community level. The absence of women in decision-making increases their vulnerability to climate change, since their needs and concerns are not represented and are often inadequately addressed. In addition, the important insights and knowledge that they have developed through their experiences in the community and household are not heard or included. It is therefore important to recognize the positive contributions of women. Involving them in decision-making at all levels could help reduce the effects of climate change and increase their capacity to mitigate and adapt.

Women's relative lacks of formal education and high illiteracy rates have two key consequences in the context of climate change. First, women often have limited access to and understanding of climate science and the impending effects of climate

change.

It is therefore, important to encourage as many women as possible to go to school. The government of the republic of Zambia through the ministry of education has a policy of bringing back to school those girls who had fallen pregnant during the course of their studies.

How is the community encouraging woman to be part of decision making at the local level? (Interview traditional leaders)

Do a story on several women who spend their time carrying water and doing other daily chores. Remind people of the hard work they do every day. How can their jobs be made easier?

How are women getting involved in fighting climate change in the communities?

Get some views on what could be done to improve the participation of women in fighting climate change.

Encourage listeners to participate in the program by sending mobile texts and calling the station with suggestions.

Useful Links

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