

Intersection 2025

SOCIAL NORMS • GENDER EQUITY • CLIMATE ACTION

GLOSSARY

Demystifying Climate Change with a
Gender Lens



Glossary: Demystifying Climate Change with a Gender Lens

Purpose

This glossary serves as a resource for understanding key climate change terms through a gender-inclusive perspective. By defining essential concepts and providing real-world examples, it underscores the vital role women are playing in climate action. It highlights the need for integrating gender equity into climate action strategies to ensure inclusive, effective, and sustainable solutions for addressing global climate challenges.

Each entry includes a definition of the term that is sourced from credible and authoritative organizations such as the United Nations, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), International Labor Organization, and so on, for ensuring accuracy and reliability. Following the definition, a gender-focused approach is provided to demonstrate how the concept applies in real-world contexts, particularly highlighting the role of women and the importance of gender mainstreaming in climate action.

Key Terms: Understanding Gender-Inclusivity

1. Behavior Change

Definition: Behavioral change is about altering habits and behaviors for the long term. The majority of research around health-related behaviors (Davis, Campbell, Hildon, Hobbs, & Michie, 2015) indicates that small changes can lead to enormous improvements in people's health and life expectancy. These changes can have knock-on effects on the health of others (Swann et al., 2010)

Gender-inclusive approach: Empowering women to lead local, sustainability initiatives can inspire behavioral change within communities, such as transitioning to clean cooking solutions, reduced reliance on single-use plastics or increased use of renewable energy sources.

2. Blue Economy

Definition: Sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth, improved livelihoods, and jobs while preserving the health of ocean ecosystem.¹

Gender-inclusive approach: Women make up the majority of the workforce in coastal and maritime tourism and fisheries—key sectors of the blue economy. However, they often hold low-paid, low-status, and poorly protected positions. A significant gender disparity exists in work and pay, with women predominantly engaged in processing roles rather than fisheries management or decision-making. Many women face unequal access to opportunities, resources, financing, market information, technology, training, mobility, and bargaining power. Promoting gender equality in tourism and fisheries has the potential to unlock substantial opportunities for women within the blue economy.

¹ https://www.un.org/regularprocess/sites/www.un.org.regularprocess/files/rok_part_2.pdf

3. Climate Action

Definition: Stepped-up efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-induced impacts, including climate-related hazards in all countries; integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning; and improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity with respect to climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning.²

Gender-inclusive approach: *Women's involvement in renewable energy projects, sustainable agriculture, and climate resilience efforts can help in creating inclusive and sustainable solutions, while promoting gender equality in decision-making processes.*³

4. Climate Adaptation

Definition: Taking action to prepare for and adjust to the current and projected impacts of climate change.⁴

Gender-inclusive approach: *Incorporating Indigenous and local knowledge, particularly that held by women, significantly enhances resilience strategies. Systemic barriers, including discriminatory laws and cultural norms, often debar women from voicing their concern in climate adaptation planning.*⁵

5. Climate Change and Patriarchy

Definition: The intersection of climate challenges and patriarchal systems that limit women's agency and decision-making in environmental governance.⁶

Gender-inclusive approach: *In regions heavily impacted by climate change, patriarchal systems often restrict equitable participation in decision-making processes related to environmental governance. For instance, while communities may rely on women and marginalized groups for sustainable agricultural practices or water management, these individuals frequently lack access to resources, training, or leadership roles in crafting climate policies.*

6. Climate Finance

Definition: Local, national or transnational financing—drawn from public, private and alternative sources of financing—that seeks to support mitigation and adaptation actions that will address climate change.⁷

Gender-inclusive approach: *One way in which climate finance can bring in gender equality is by prioritizing adaptation and mitigation projects that yield maximum co-benefits to the vulnerable section, including women. For example, providing access to sustainable energy technologies to women would reduce the drudgery associated with energy production and use, while also contributing to a reduction in their dependency on solid fuels.*⁸

²<https://sdghelpdesk.unescap.org/learn-more-about-climate-action#:~:text=Background,Help%20Desk's%20dedicated%20Thematic%20Area>

³https://uncclearn.org/mod/scorm/player.php?a=709¤torg=articulate_rise&scoid=2491&sesskey=WD30moxT99&display=popup&mode=normal

⁴ <https://gca.org/what-is-climate-adaptation/>

⁵<https://unfccc.int/climate-action/momentum-for-change/women-for-results/womens-empowerment-for-resilience-and-adaptation-against-climate-change>

⁶<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/2158244019825914>

⁷<https://unfccc.int/topics/introduction-to-climate-finance>

⁸<https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/publications/UNDP%20Gender%20and%20Climate%20Finance%20Policy%20Brief%205-WEB.pdf>

7. Climate Justice

Definition: Putting equity and human rights at the core of decision-making and action on climate change. It suggests that the countries, industries, businesses, and people that have become wealthy from emitting large amounts of greenhouse gases have a responsibility to help those affected by climate change, particularly the most vulnerable countries and communities, who often are the ones that have contributed the least to the crisis.⁹

Gender-inclusive approach: *feminist climate justice aims for a world where women, girls and gender-diverse people can flourish on a healthy and sustainable planet.*¹⁰

8. Climate Migration

Definition: The movement of people due to the adverse effects of climate change, such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events, or resource scarcity.¹¹

Gender-inclusive approach: *In communities affected by climate-induced migration, programs that provide women with skills training and support networks ensure they can adapt to new environments, access employment opportunities, and participate in decision-making processes in their host communities.*

9. Climate Mitigation

Definition: Efforts to reduce emissions and enhance sinks.¹²

Gender-inclusive approach: *Women's participation in clean energy projects, such as solar panel installations and biogas systems, can help reduce emissions while providing economic opportunities to women and empowering them as leaders in climate mitigation.*¹³

10. Climate Resilience

Definition: The ability to prepare for, recover from, and adapt to the impacts of climate change."¹⁴

Gender-inclusive approach: *In regions prone to floods or droughts, women often play a significant role in preparing their communities for extreme weather events by leading early warning systems, organizing evacuation plans, and ensuring the availability of emergency supplies. Their local knowledge and leadership skills help strengthen the community's capacity to recover and adapt to the ongoing impacts of climate change.*¹⁵

11. Community-based Climate Action

Definition: Local initiatives that draw on traditional knowledge and collective action to address climate challenges.¹⁶

⁹<https://climatepromise.undp.org/news-and-stories/climate-change-matter-justice-heres-why>

¹⁰<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-10/feminist-climate-justice-a-framework-for-action-overview-en.pdf>

¹¹<https://www.migrationdataportal.org/themes/environmental-migration>

¹²<https://unfccc.int/topics/introduction-to-mitigation>

¹³<https://www.pwc.in/assets/pdfs/consulting/esg/gender-equality-in-climate-action.pdf>

¹⁴<https://www.c2es.org/document/what-is-climate-resilience-and-why-does-it-matter/>

¹⁵<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2212096324000706>

¹⁶<https://niua.in/intranet/sites/default/files/2669.pdf>

Gender-inclusive approach: Women's groups in rural areas often lead efforts towards reforestation or community solar projects, demonstrating the role of social cohesion and norms in effective climate action.

12. Cultural Barriers and Climate Adaptation

Definition: Socio-cultural norms or traditions that impede the adoption of climate-resilient practices or technologies.¹⁷

Gender-inclusive approach: In some regions or in certain societies, cultural norms restrict women's land ownership and participation in household decision making, limiting their ability to implement climate-smart agricultural techniques.

13. Ecofeminism

Definition: A movement or perspective that links the exploitation of nature with the oppression of women, advocating for the interconnected liberation of both.¹⁸

Gender-inclusive approach: Ecofeminist projects may involve women-led reforestation programs that combat deforestation and climate change while empowering women in local communities.

14. Food Security

Definition: Access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food, which is increasingly threatened by climate change.¹⁹

Gender-inclusive approach: Women in agricultural roles often lead to innovations in climate-resilient farming practices that can ensure food security for their communities.

15. Gender Roles and Resource Management

Definition: The socially constructed roles of men and women that influence how resources are used, managed, or conserved.²⁰

Gender-inclusive approach: Women are often primary managers of household water and energy in rural areas, making them critical stakeholder in the adoption of sustainable resource management practices.

16. Gender-disaggregated Data

Definition: Data collected and analysed separately for different genders to understand disparities and inform equitable policies.²¹

Gender-inclusive approach: Gathering gender-disaggregated data on climate impacts helps policymakers design interventions that address women's unique vulnerabilities and contributions.

¹⁷https://agenda21culture.net/sites/default/files/files/documents/en/report_10_-_culture_and_climate_resilient_development_-_en_2.pdf

¹⁸<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311983.2024.2303200#d1e263>

¹⁹[https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a4fd8ac5-4582-4a66-91b0-55abf642a400/content#:~:text=%E2%80%9CFood%20security%20exists%20when%20all,World%20Food%20Summit%2C%201996\).](https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a4fd8ac5-4582-4a66-91b0-55abf642a400/content#:~:text=%E2%80%9CFood%20security%20exists%20when%20all,World%20Food%20Summit%2C%201996).)

²⁰https://eugender.itcilo.org/toolkit/online/story_content/external_files/TA_NaturalResources.pdf

²¹<https://genderhealthdata.org/resource/differences-between-sex-disaggregated-data-and-gendered-health-data/>

17. Gender-responsive Climate Policies

Definition: Policies that actively consider and address the differing needs, opportunities, and roles of all genders in the context of climate action.²²

Gender-inclusive approach: A gender-responsive climate policy might include targeted financial support for women entrepreneurs in renewable energy sectors.

18. Green Jobs

Definition: Decent jobs that contribute to preserve or restore the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction, or in new, emerging sectors such as renewable energy and energy efficiency.²³

Gender-inclusive approach: Although there are numerous opportunities in green jobs and employment in renewable energy sectors, participation in these is highly gendered and often offers unequal opportunities for women, partly cultural and largely due to women's limited engagement in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) which is needed in technical areas of renewable energy.²⁴

19. Intersectionality (Climate and Gender)

Definition: People are not defined only by their gender, but by other unique and diverse identities as well. This could be a person's race, ethnicity, age, disability, profession, education, marital status, sexual orientation or social group. Groups of people, including women, often face compounding and overlapping forms of inequalities and discriminations based on these multiple and intersecting identities. This is what is referred to as intersectionality.

Gender-inclusive approach: Rural women often face different and distinct impacts to climate change as they have limited access to credit, healthcare and education. Here not only their gender but also their living status in resource poor rural setting further compound their vulnerability. They also rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihoods, such as farming, fishing and forestry, which are extremely sensitive to climatic changes.²⁵

20. Just Transition

Definition: Greening the economy in a way that is as fair and inclusive as possible to everyone concerned, creating decent work opportunities and leaving no one behind.²⁶

Gender-inclusive approach: To ensure that women, especially those in rural areas, have equal access to renewable energy technologies and green jobs. This includes providing women with training in renewable energy sectors, such as solar panel installation or energy-efficient technology.

²²<https://unfccc.int/news/five-reasons-why-climate-action-needs-women#:~:text=The%20Gender%20Action%20Plan%20agreed,making%20a nd%20in%20climate%20action.>

²³<https://www.ilo.org/resource/article/what-green-job#:~:text=Green%20jobs%20are%20decent%20jobs,energy%20and%20raw%20materials %20efficiency>

²⁴https://unccelearn.org/mod/scorm/player.php?scoId=2485&cm=4285¤torg=articulate_rise&display=popup

²⁵https://unccelearn.org/mod/scorm/player.php?scoId=2485&cm=4285¤torg=articulate_rise&display=popup

²⁶<https://www.ilo.org/regions-and-countries/europe-and-central-asia/areas-work/enterprises-development/green-jobs-and-just-transition-ea stern-europe-and-central-asia>

21. Loss and Damage

Definition: The irreversible impacts of climate crisis that cannot be mitigated or adapted to, often hitting the most vulnerable communities the hardest.²⁷

Gender-inclusive approach: After a severe cyclone destroys homes in a coastal village, a recovery program ensures that women and marginalized groups are actively included in compensation processes and rebuilding decisions, addressing their specific needs, such as safe housing and access to livelihoods.

22. Nature-based Solutions (NbS)

Definition: Actions that leverage ecosystems to address societal challenges, including climate change, while delivering environmental and social benefits.²⁸

Gender-inclusive approach: Women's participation in mangrove restoration projects can reduce coastal flooding and support sustainable livelihoods.

23. Normative Shifts in Climate Narratives

Definition: Changes in the dominant societal perceptions and discourses around climate change, driven by advocacy, education, and awareness campaigns.²⁹

Gender-inclusive approach: Shifting norms to celebrate women's leadership in renewable energy cannot only challenge stereotypes but also encourage broader societal acceptance for gender equity in the green economy.

24. Social Norms and Climate Change

Definition: Perceived informal, mostly unwritten, rules that define acceptable, appropriate, and obligatory actions within a given group or community. Social norms are learned, sometimes explicitly but often implicitly, and evolve over time.³⁰

Gender-inclusive approach: Women are disproportionately affected by climate change due to social norms that limit their access to resources and decision-making power. However, efforts to shift regressive social norms by actively including women in disaster management can promote gender equity and enhance community resilience.

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²⁷<https://www.wri.org/insights/loss-damage-climate-change#:~:text=%E2%80%9CLoss%20and%20damage%E2%80%9D%20is%20a,and%20ives%20during%20extreme%20floods.>

²⁸[https://www.nature.com/articles/s43247-024-01308-8#:~:text=Nature%2Dbased%20Solutions%20\(NbS\),UNEA%2D5%20definition2\).](https://www.nature.com/articles/s43247-024-01308-8#:~:text=Nature%2Dbased%20Solutions%20(NbS),UNEA%2D5%20definition2).)

²⁹<https://www.mdpi.com/2076-0760/8/1/24>

³⁰<https://knowledge.unicef.org/resource/definining-social-norms-and-related-concepts>

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