



## Key messages

- A research study looked at whether gender-sensitive approaches to climate compatible development are being adopted in urban areas of Kenya and if so, whether these approaches influence development outcomes for men and women.
- The study assessed gender awareness and action in Kisumu, with a focus on the 5-year project 'People's Plans into Practice (PPP): Building Productive and Liveable Settlements with Slum Dwellers', whose main achievement has been to improve the wellbeing, productivity and living conditions of poor people in informal settlements.
- The study found that where vulnerable groups were included in decision-making processes, the project was better able to address their practical needs, which are often quite distinct from those in rural areas. When women participated actively in these processes they went on to take managerial and leadership roles.
- Despite this, limited opportunities exist for women's participation in planning processes and project activities and men tend to dominate due to cultural attitudes.
- A very wide range of actions are recommended across all sectors of society to lift the barriers and address gender issues effectively in climate change interventions.

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## How do gender approaches contribute to climate compatible development? Lessons from Kenya

### Introduction

**This brief is based on a research project carried out by Practical Action Consulting with support from the Institute of Development Studies, commissioned by and supported by the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN), to provide evidence on the advantages and challenges of integrating a gender dimension into climate compatible development strategies in urban settings, with a focus on Peru, India and Kenya. Although considerable evidence exists pertaining to rural areas, significant knowledge gaps can be found in relation to climate compatible development and gender in urban areas. The research attempts to respond to the following four questions:**

- **What does a 'gender-sensitive' approach to climate compatible development mean in the urban context?**
- **What is the evidence of the relevance of gender-sensitive programming in climate compatible development to promote and achieve people's empowerment?**
- **Does a gender-sensitive approach enable better climate compatible development outcomes and if so, in what way?**
- **What socioeconomic, political and cultural factors constrain or favour gender-sensitive approaches in the context of climate compatible development, and the ability of men and women to tackle climate-related risks in urban contexts?**

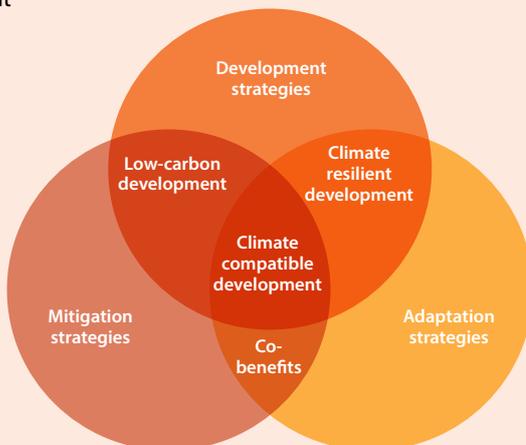
The Kenyan case study examined the experiences of Kisumu, Kenya, drawing lessons from the five-year project 'People's Plans into Practice (PPP): Building Productive and Liveable Settlements with Slum Dwellers in Kisumu and Kitale'. The findings presented in this brief are based on interviews and focus group discussions held with key informants, as well as a review of relevant literature, policy documents and plans.

### Kenyan case study: Kisumu and the PPP project

This study focuses on urban areas of Kisumu in the western part of Kenya, and in particular on the five-year project 'People's Plans into Practice: Building Productive and Liveable Settlements with Slum Dwellers in Kisumu' project, also known as the PPP project. The PPP project was carried out between 2008 and 2013 with support from Comic

## Climate compatible development

Climate compatible development is about transforming development pathways to face the climate problem head on. It moves beyond the traditional separation of adaptation, mitigation and development strategies. Climate compatible development processes adopt strategies and goals that integrate the threats and opportunities of a changing climate to lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, build resilience and promote development simultaneously.



Relief and implemented by Practical Action Eastern Africa, the Kisumu Urban Apostolate Programme (KUAP) and Shelter Forum. The objective of the PPP project was to improve the wellbeing, productivity and living conditions of poor people in the informal settlements in Kisumu by ensuring their inclusion in the planning and development processes of the local authority and by improving access to clean water, better sanitation, waste management, drainage, supporting secure land tenure and affordable housing.

## Key findings

### What does a gender-sensitive approach to climate compatible development mean in Kisumu?

Gender relations play a key role in determining vulnerability in urban Kisumu. A gender-sensitive approach means understanding the complex issues around how gender currently affects vulnerability to climate risks and the ability of both men and women to cope with and adapt to climate variability and change.

### Understanding vulnerability.

Compared to rural areas, residents in urban parts of Kisumu have more access to self-help groups, and have more

livelihood options. Gender relations are dynamic and changing, however. Some of the changes are due to local factors, such as increased rural–urban migration and a movement away from traditional sectors like fisheries and agriculture towards more reliance on business and employment. Others are due to external factors such as changes in national and county level policies that give women, in principle, more formal rights and spaces for participation. However, there are still significant challenges in realising these gains in practice.

### Participation in design of solutions.

A gender-sensitive approach is key to design and development of solutions to tackle climate risks. This includes men and women's participation in the selection of technology options, whilst taking into account the unique needs and capacities of both genders to access the different levels of services. For example, this means toilets for women with bins for disposal of sanitary towels, enhanced security features such as lockable doors, more accessibility and better lighting.

### Engagement in planning processes.

Engagement of both genders in participatory urban planning and development processes is important in order to identify and prioritise the unique needs of men and women so

that initiatives can respond to them. Climate change manifests itself at the community level, and therefore community members are best placed to identify and carry out measures using their own knowledge and skills.

**Monitoring and evaluation.** Finally, integrating gender and climate change into programming means development of appropriate tools for monitoring and evaluation of progress in achieving both development and climate change goals. Examples of progress indicators for the key drivers of vulnerability may include gender-based violence, unemployment among women, accessibility to services and opportunities by both genders, and skills transfer to the more vulnerable groups, such as single headed families.

### Lessons on the importance of gender-sensitive programming for people's empowerment

By implementing activities that improved access to services or resources for both men and women, the PPP project empowered both sexes. However, given the scale of the intervention provided, the PPP project had little influence on the larger contextual issues that lie at the root of gender inequities and thus the PPP project approach was probably not sufficient to fundamentally alter the balance of power in gender relations.

Findings from the PPP project show that engagement of both sexes in participatory urban planning and development processes are fundamental in order to identify and prioritise the unique needs and vulnerabilities of men and women so that initiatives can specifically respond to them. Community members are best placed to identify and execute adaptation and mitigation measures using local and traditional knowledge and existing capacities held by people living and working in urban areas. In this sense, participatory planning processes are useful tools for integrating a more gender-sensitive approach because

they can empower men and women to play an active role in making decisions and taking actions affecting their lives. Special care should be taken to ensure vulnerable populations are able to participate equally in these processes. In Kisumu, some organisations have set their own requirements to encourage pro-active participation from both sexes, such as defining the gender balance amongst committee members. In particular, this has led to women taking on managerial and leadership roles.

### Hurdles to gender approaches

The main challenges to integrating gender approaches were found to be entrenched in structures that are slow and difficult to change. The key ones include:

- insufficient budgets, training and staffing within public departments
- cultural attitudes where men still assume power and consider women as the weaker sex and are working against gender equality at both county and urban levels
- limited opportunities in practice for women's participation in activities due to their manifold responsibilities and the domination of men in formal and informal spaces
- lack of policies and spaces for discussion of gender issues at the local (city and ward) level
- lack of technical capacity and understanding of the linkages between gender and climate change and how to make projects gender transformative
- unequal opportunities to access and use technologies, with some solutions affecting women negatively
- limited ability of women to express issues in ways and in fora that matter.

### What could make gender-sensitive approaches succeed?

The study also highlighted a number of opportunities that can support gender integration – and in turn improved gender equality outcomes

– in interventions to support climate compatible development, but also some of the key challenges to achieving this. Key supporting factors found in the Kisumu case study include:

- a policy environment that gives increasing weight to gender equality, including increasing formal spaces for women to participate in decision-making
- efforts to drive empowerment so that more women take on leadership roles
- targetting women and other vulnerable groups with economic activities and market-based approaches
- use of participatory tools and processes to ensure project and policy design is able to capture the differences between how urban men and women experience, and are affected by, climate change
- using adequate monitoring and evaluation indicators to monitor the gender impact of interventions as they progress.

### Does a gender-sensitive approach enable better climate compatible development outcomes and if so, in what way?

Findings from this study suggest that gender-sensitive approaches can help improve outcomes by better understanding the gender-based drivers of vulnerability to climate change, and responding to the different roles and needs of women and men. Gender-sensitive approaches can also help improve climate compatible development outcomes by increasing flexibility in planning. However, these approaches only work when coupled with some crucial building blocks. In the case of the PPP project, these include:

- continuous engagement and dialogue among policy-makers on gender and climate change at the county level which would help keep the debate and discussions on gender and climate change alive

- improved coordination of programmes and activities that address gender and climate change. At the moment, such coordination is non-existent. One example is the need to align the mandates of different institutions and strengthen areas that would address this issue or identify opportunities and programmes that would best fit this debate within the county governance structure.

## Recommendations

### National and county level policy-makers

- Address entrenched biases against women in policy processes.
- Introduce a designated gender focal person in every department in the county.
- Kisumu county and institutions working in Kisumu need to be accountable for their performance in addressing gender in climate change interventions.
- Integrate findings on the need to understand gender-based vulnerability drivers and barriers to gender-sensitive approaches in county bills across various sectors and the national climate change bill.

### City and ward level policy-makers and planners

- Carry out a gender and climate change audit for Kisumu city in order to document the differentiated impacts of climate change on people's vulnerability.
- Encourage participation of both men and women in meetings and community projects, addressing specific strategic needs for women.
- Create and build partnerships and collaboration with stakeholders who value gender equity, such as the National Environment Management Authority of Kenya, to disseminate policies and incorporate views of the stakeholders.

## Development agencies and donors

- Document best practices and examples of successful gender integration in climate change programmes and projects in urban areas.
- Focus on deeper, structural barriers to gender equality as much as individual and household level capacity of women to participate.
- Create an avenue for raising funds to benefit all groups such as enterprise funds that can empower men, women and people with disabilities.
- Design and implement an information-gathering process on gender and climate change, which also ensures increased access to this information. For example, Umande Trust is reaching out to county leaders and sensitising them to the importance of gender differentiation. Another way is to request women in leadership to be vocal and share stories of change.

## About CDKN

The Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) aims to help decision-makers in developing countries design and deliver climate compatible development. We do this by providing demand-led research and technical assistance, and channeling the best available knowledge on climate change and development to support policy processes at the country level.

## About Practical Action Consulting

Practical Action Consulting (PAC) is the consulting arm of Practical Action, an international development agency working with poor communities in Africa, Asia and Latin America to help them choose and use technology to improve their lives.

## About IDS

The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) is a leading global institution for development research, teaching and learning, and impact and communications, based at the University of Sussex.

## About ODI

The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) is the UK's leading independent think tank on international development and humanitarian issues.

## For further information

Access the complete Kenya report, the Synthesis Report and country reports and briefs from Peru and India online: <http://www.cdkn.org/gender-equality-climate-compatible-development> and <http://practicalaction.org/cdkn-gender-and-climate-change-initiative>



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