

Study reveals the gender gap in Tanzania, Uganda climate policies

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Climate change is [negatively affecting many regions](#) of the world. The impact is more pronounced in regions with limited economic resources to adapt and highly reliant on natural resources. In East Africa, for instance, a large portion of the population depends on rain fed agriculture for their livelihoods. This makes them especially susceptible to changes in climate.



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High temperatures and the delayed onset of rains have already created [desperate situations](#) for many people in the region. The most recent IPCC [climate change report](#) cites strong evidence that African ecosystems are being affected by climate change. The impact is likely to be substantial in the future marked by an increase in water stress throughout the continent.

The effects of climate change are different for women and men. This is because their roles, challenges, rights, and preferences are also different. Analysing the extent to which climate change policies integrate gender issues is fundamental.

Indeed, if policies and strategies fail to acknowledge priorities, opportunities and challenges of men and women they run the risk of perpetuating existing gender and other social inequalities. The result could be failure to achieve the greatest possible potential.

Take the example of newly-developed drought resistant food crops. If the preferences of women in terms of taste and cooking time required are not taken into account during the breeding process, the attempt to adapt to climate change would likely fail. Since women in East Africa are generally in charge of cooking and household chores, they are a vital component of national climate change adaptation efforts.

Overlooking gender issues in agriculture also comes at a high cost for the economies. A [recent study](#) by the World Bank concluded that closing the gender gap in agriculture would increase Tanzania's GDP by \$105 million and Uganda's by \$67 million.

Increased women's participation

Uganda and Tanzania have for years demonstrated their commitment to gender equality through legal and constitutional means. For example, Tanzania's constitution was amended in 2005 to increase women's participation in the National Parliament and local authorities.

This is in addition to various national policy and strategy documents. The most notable of these is the [Women and Gender Development Policy](#) of 2000 and the [National Strategy for Gender Development](#) of 2008.

In Uganda, the commitment to promote gender equality is also evident. The [National Gender Policy](#) of 1997 was subsequently revised in 2007. Other supportive provisions are contained in the 1995 constitution, the [Equal Opportunities Act](#) and recent national development plans.

Both East African countries have also ratified key international instruments. These include the Convention on the [Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women](#) and the [Beijing Platform for Action](#).

In more recent years, they have translated these commitments into their agricultural and climate change policies. However, a lot still needs to be done. Allocation of resources and better planning of activities and strategies for gender transformation will be key. This in turn will contribute to efforts to reduce poverty and achieve economic growth in an equitable manner.

These are the findings of the latest research from the [Policy Action for Climate Change Adaptation](#). The analysis of national and local policies and institutions will better equip governments to adapt and mitigate against climate change.

The key findings on the gender and climate change policy efforts of both East African countries were recently published in two information notes. The [first](#) is titled "Towards gender responsive policy formulation and budgeting in the agricultural sector: Opportunities and challenges in Uganda". The [second](#) is entitled "Gender responsive policy formulation and budgeting in Tanzania: Do plans and budgets match?"

In Tanzania, the researchers analysed 75 documents. These ranged the national, district, and ward levels together with an examination of primary quantitative budget data at the district level. In Uganda, 83 agri-food policies and strategies at national, district and sub-county levels were analysed along with district and sub-county budgets.

Risk of perpetuating existing inequalities

In both countries, a sizeable portion of the documents reviewed presented some degree of gender integration. This was 70% for Uganda and 49% for Tanzania. This demonstrated efforts to strengthen the gender component of their agri-food policies and strategic planning documents.

However, within the policies, gender issues were mostly seen as women's issues. Women were generally stereotypically portrayed as vulnerable and marginalised by society with limited access to land and resources. These characterisations reinforce gender inequalities. They might even become counter-productive as they leave women in a helpless state and in need of perpetual assistance.

The studies also found gaps in gender planning and implementation. This was for both national and lower governance levels. In Tanzania, the majority of the national policies and strategies sufficiently integrated gender issues. But they lacked clear implementation plans and appropriate budgetary allocations.

In [Uganda](#), budget allocations for gender issues at sub-county and district levels were low. These were 0.43% of national budgets for sub-county level and 0.09% for district level. In addition, they fluctuated from year to year with sharp differences between estimated and actual budgets.

This makes the planning and implementation of gender issues extremely challenging. Furthermore, the gender activities planned and implemented at district and sub-county levels were largely informative such as the celebration of International Women's Day.

Bigger budgets, better planning

Gender awareness among policymakers and practitioners across levels is vital. And so the researchers undertook intense sensitisation and dissemination activities. In February and March 2017 the researchers conducted a total of six different gender and climate change workshops in Uganda and four in Tanzania.

The workshops in Uganda targeted members of Parliament, national policymakers and districts officials. The workshops in Tanzania were more targeted towards district and ward officials.

Many of the study results were acknowledged by the participants. These included inadequate funding, lack of capacity and poor attitude towards gender issues. Poor coordination among policy actors was also frequently mentioned.

The two countries need to streamline gender integration from a national to local level. This includes an increase in budget allocation and better planning to focus on gender transformation.

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