



## Key messages

- A research study looked at whether gender-sensitive approaches to climate compatible development are being adopted in urban areas of Peru and if so, whether these approaches influence development outcomes for men and women.
- The study assessed gender awareness and action in two of Peru's Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation Networks (known locally as GRIDES), whose main achievement has been to integrate disaster risk and climate adaptation measures in local government plans.
- The study found that where women played a leading role in the GRIDES, local government proposals include an implicit gender approach.
- However, 'gender' issues tend to be regarded as 'for women only' and somewhat theoretical. The lack of a more explicit position or understanding of gender among the agencies concerned means that the interventions described in the local plans lack concrete measures for tackling gender inequality.
- A very wide range of actions are recommended across society, including among central and local government agencies, civil society organisations and academia, to increase awareness and understanding, develop the potential of gender-sensitive approaches, and so improve development outcomes for urban women, men, girls and boys.

### Authors:

María Teresa Arana (PAC), Alicia Quezada (PAC)  
and Rebecca Clements (PAC)

## How do gender approaches improve climate compatible development? Lessons from Peru

### 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 Peruvian case study examined the experiences of the Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation Networks (known locally as GRIDES) in the Peruvian cities of Cajamarca and Huaraz and found that the gender approach was primarily understood and promoted as the participation of women in decision-making spaces. As a result, the gender approach was

discussed during GRIDES meetings and in local development planning. Recommendations include promoting a more transformative gender approach so that women's voices continue to be heard in spaces of power, while at the same time concerted efforts are made to reduce distinct vulnerabilities and gender gaps, thereby reorienting and

strengthening development processes. 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.

## Peruvian case study: The GRIDES

The Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation Networks (known locally as GRIDES) are formal mechanisms that bring together non-governmental organisations (NGOs), civil society groups (CSOs), including urban women's groups, universities and research institutes, as well as local and regional decision-makers to exchange knowledge and experiences around disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. The GRIDES were initiated in the 1990s in response to extreme climatic events arising from the El Niño. Their establishment was driven by the Latin American office of Practical Action, a UK Registered Charity, with support from other civil society organisations and donors, including Oxfam, Labor, Minga and Predes.

From 2014 onwards, the GRIDES began to incorporate issues related to climate change adaptation. The main aims of the GRIDES are to strengthen the capacity of member organisations in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation, to influence regional and local policy and to raise

awareness amongst the general public around these issues. The GRIDES also contribute to the recovery and integration of traditional and local knowledge into these processes. In total, 15 GRIDES have operated since the 1990s, depending on the availability of external and institutional support. Today seven GRIDES are active in the coastal, mountain and jungle regions of Peru, including in the Andean cities of Cajamarca and Huaraz, the case studies for this research project.

## Key findings

### What does a 'gender-sensitive' approach to climate compatible development mean in Peru's urban context?

Although no explicit attempt to incorporate a gender approach into the GRIDES was identified, this appears to have come about, to some degree, thanks to the participation of certain members with their own understanding of gender issues, as well as through some capacity-building initiatives. Among members of the GRIDES, gender equality is considered to mean offering equal access to education and decision-making capacity to both men and women. Although members of the GRIDES have tried to influence local and regional policy with these issues in mind, in general the presence and participation of women in the activities of the GRIDES is considered by informants as constituting a gender approach.

Only a minority of GRIDES members consulted recognise that men and women experience different vulnerabilities to climate change and disasters. This includes the perception that women are more vulnerable due to their reproductive and home-keeping roles and owing to the precarious location of many urban households. For example, women bear greater responsibility for family health, which is reported to be affected in urban areas by stronger solar radiation. Thus women must ensure that children in particular are well protected. Another example is that houses located on riverbeds are exposed to greater risk from flooding produced by heavy rains. Given their role as housekeepers, women are not only expected to clean up and make repairs, they are also more exposed to injury and illness because they spend more time in and around the home.

In general, urban residents recognise they are affected differently by climate change and disasters; however, this perception is mostly based on the understanding that rural areas are the most vulnerable, rather than awareness of any specific factors that drive climate vulnerability in urban areas.

### A key opportunity for promoting a more effective, gender-sensitive approach

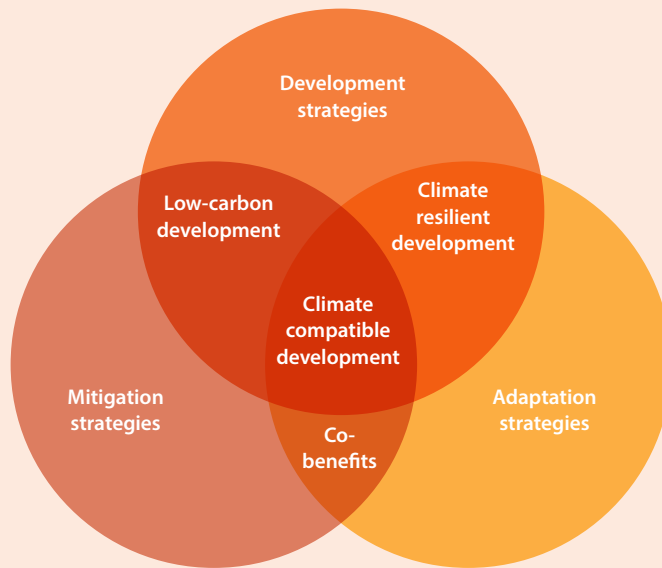
The main achievement of the GRIDES to date has been to ensure that disaster risk management and climate change adaptation are included in local government plans. This is highly relevant since, if the plans are correctly implemented, it may be assumed that they will contribute to climate compatible development in Cajamarca and Huaraz, Ancash. Where women have played a leading role in the GRIDES, it can be observed that local government proposals include an implicit gender approach.

---

**T**he GRIDES (implemented in Cajamarca and the city of Huaraz, Ancash) are inter-institutional networks that meet to discuss disaster risk and adaptation and to advocate for the inclusion of these issues in local and regional policy.

## 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.



On the other hand, the lack of a more explicit position or understanding regarding gender means that the interventions described in the plans lack concrete measures for tackling gender inequality. Likewise, limited perception of differentiated vulnerabilities between men and women means that, in general, the proposals emerging from the GRIDES do not attempt to transform gender relations. At the time of this research, regional and local government discourse and policy did not make linkages between climate compatible development processes and gender. Within this context, the GRIDES provide a suitable mechanism through which understanding around gender approaches can be promoted and improved amongst diverse institutions and sectors. In this way, the GRIDES can play a key role in supporting and overseeing the implementation of the National Gender and Climate Change Plan at regional and local level.

### Hurdles to gender approaches

Constraints to gender-sensitive approaches to climate compatible

development in Peru can be categorised as political, socioeconomic and cultural.

From a political perspective, the advantages of integrating gender and climate compatible development approaches are not considered tangible or visible and so lack traction. Even where champions for such an integrated approach exist, government agencies face various challenges in terms of incorporating a gender approach into climate compatible development processes, including:

- a general lack of political will
- the implementation of policy by different sectors of the government often lacks gender awareness or sensitivity and is disjointed
- civil servants display low competency and capacity relating to gender and environment issues
- low awareness of the available tools for mainstreaming gender into climate compatible development in a practical and coherent manner

- high rotation of staff means it is difficult to sustain progress and strengthen overall competencies relating to these issues.

From a socioeconomic and cultural point of view, the popular perception is that the presence and participation of women is synonymous with a gender approach: there is inadequate recognition of the power dynamics at play and the everyday impacts of gender inequality on issues such as education and decision-making capacity, which limit the ability of women in particular to respond to disasters and climate change. This is enforced by a general lack of environmental awareness and responsibility and a general notion that climate change affects everyone in the same way. Traditional chauvinist and patriarchal behaviours and beliefs continue to pervade the way the sexes relate to one another and make decisions. This can be seen in a lack of appreciation for women and their work as well as the pervasive issue of violence against women and girls highlighted in the report.

Unfortunately, few people feel responsible for approaching climate compatible development from a gender perspective and gender approaches are not included in academic or professional training, especially within the environmental sciences. In general, men and women both consider gender to be a 'women's' issue and highly theoretical.

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

Recognition that men and women are equally capable of contributing to development processes should help to promote women's participation as a first step towards implementing a more comprehensive gender approach. In the case of the GRIDES in Huaraz and Cajamarca, women's contributions were valued and various strategies were employed to promote their active participation. This was reported as improving the effectiveness of the GRIDES, since studies and discussions around climate change and disasters included women's perspectives and experiences, and, as such, shed light on the different vulnerabilities experienced by men and women. Documents collected from the GRIDES and the government agencies they interact with and try to influence provide evidence of some of the indirect impacts of the GRIDES on local climate change and disaster risk reduction policy, including:

- the recognition that men and women have the same rights, but different needs
- some plans begin to acknowledge differential vulnerability as well as the fact that climate change and disasters can have more acute impacts on women

Women are identified as key agents for transmitting knowledge related to disaster prevention.

## Recommendations

### General

- Social development processes, including climate compatible development initiatives, are not external or disassociated from gender issues. Consequently, climate compatible development initiatives must be designed in consideration of how they transform power relations and reduce vulnerabilities and gender gaps, from the baseline study to the evaluation stage.
- The gender approach needs to be 'de-womanised' and understood more accurately as a process that concerns both men and women.
- Climate compatible development initiatives in urban areas should be strengthened by mainstreaming a gender approach. In order to achieve more effective policy and plans, better information and training is required around the relationships between gender and climate compatible development in urban areas, especially for practitioners and policy-makers.

### Central government

- Promote the National Gender and Climate Change Plan of the Government of Peru at all levels. Integrating gender into climate compatible development initiatives is a matter for public policy and should be addressed at this level since nothing is gender-neutral. Straightforward management tools and impact indicators should be developed to support the

mainstreaming of gender into environmental issues and according to regional requirements.

- Promote internal knowledge management practices in order to maintain and increase institutional capacity relating to gender and social development.
- Strengthen capacities and skills among civil servants to analyse, programme and evaluate policies and strategies relating to climate compatible development and their impacts on the lives of men and women living in urban areas. Furthermore, these skills should be basic requirements for certain jobs.

### Local government

- All regional and local development initiatives should contemplate the Gender and Climate Change Plan, which is being promoted by the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry for Women and Vulnerable Populations.
- It is not the case that special agencies are required for overseeing the integration of gender approaches into development initiatives, rather improving access to and use of appropriate tools to support the design, implementation and evaluation of concrete, practical measures. Recommended materials include conceptual frameworks and tools provided by the United Nations at international level and those developed by the Peruvian Ministry for Women and Vulnerable Populations.
- Spaces for developing plans and projects provide an excellent opportunity to delivery training on the links between gender and

climate compatible development issues, for example those documented in existing literature around rural areas and the findings and recommendations of this research.

### **Civil society and donors**

- Develop a good understanding of government processes in order to complement and strengthen these efforts by proposing viable projects that are well-aligned with national and regional plans, especially the Gender and Climate Change Plan. In doing so, practical measures can be promoted to reduce vulnerability towards climate change in urban areas and to mainstream gender into climate compatible development processes.
- Promote the participation of existing women's groups in climate compatible development initiatives in urban areas. Women's access to spaces for political participation in urban contexts, such as the GRIDES, should be strengthened. Likewise, participation of women's groups, such as the 'ronda feminina',

should be encouraged in design, planning, decision-making and evaluation processes related to urban policy and programmes.

- Donors should establish explicit requirements for gender approaches to be integrated into the climate compatible development interventions they fund. Likewise, they should play an active role in the design, planning, execution and monitoring the results of these processes in order to understand how they contribute to climate compatible development and gender equity.
- Continue to support the GRIDES in order to capitalise on progress to date and to strengthen their approaches and actions from a gender perspective, including ensuring at least 50% membership and leadership by local women. Evaluate the impact of the regional policies that have been influenced by the GRIDES and assess their workplans to ensure that they integrate and evaluate gender-related objectives and indicators,

thereby strengthening the capacity of GRIDES members as representatives of civil society.

### **Academia**

- Gender approaches should be included in university courses and research agendas related to social and environmental sciences in order to improve understanding around the causes of vulnerability and the context of inequality which often limits the effectiveness of climate compatible development.
- Areas for further research include: analysis of differential vulnerability in urban areas; identifying the characteristics of climate vulnerable populations in peri-urban areas; post-disaster gender violence; the impact of climate compatible development projects on power relations between men and women and on gender gaps; impact analysis of female participation in local development planning and policy; and gender gap trends in cities that are highly vulnerable to climate 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.

### *For further information*

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



Funded by:



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

[www.cdkn.org](http://www.cdkn.org)

[e: enquiries@cdkn.org](mailto:enquiries@cdkn.org)

**t: +44 (0) 207 212 4111**

This document is an output from a project commissioned through the Climate and Development Knowledge Network (CDKN). CDKN is a programme funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) for the benefit of developing countries. The views expressed and information contained in it are not necessarily those of or endorsed by DFID, DGIS or the entities managing the delivery of the Climate and Development Knowledge Network, which can accept no responsibility or liability for such views, completeness or accuracy of the information or for any reliance placed on them. This publication has been prepared for general guidance on matters of interest only, and does not constitute professional advice. You should not act upon the information contained in this publication without obtaining specific professional advice. No representation or warranty (express or implied) is given as to the accuracy or completeness of the information contained in this publication, and, to the extent permitted by law, the entities managing the delivery of CDKN do not accept or assume any liability, responsibility or duty of care for any consequences of you or anyone else acting, or refraining to act, in reliance on the information contained in this publication or for any decision based on it. Management of the delivery of CDKN is undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, and an alliance of organisations including Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano, LEAD Pakistan, the Overseas Development Institute, and SouthSouthNorth.