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## How Gender Equality Can Transform Food Systems and Protect Us From Climate Change Disasters

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transform our food systems and create climate resilience for all. However, gender inequalities remain deeply engrained throughout these domains. Across our food systems, unwritten rules and norms have put men in charge of decisions and livelihoods, while many women carry disproportionate labor and care burdens. This inequality has been further entrenched by climate and weather shocks, the COVID-19 pandemic, political dysfunction, and civil unrest and displacement.

The intensifying impacts of climate change <u>disproportionately harm women</u> ♂ and expose

information, and early-warning systems. They are less able to adapt to climate change than

men and are therefore mistakenly stereotyped as victims of climate change impacts, while the

social and gender inequalities across the globe. Women have less access to resources,

decisions, and in the formulation of policies and institutions is essential to successfully

structural roots of gender inequalities ♂ that cause vulnerability are ignored. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021 & estimated that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic increased the time required to close the global gender gap by a generation, from 99.5 years to 135.6 years.[1] We know that upending the unwritten rules that exclude women from equal and fair participation in food systems can boost resilience among women @ and that supporting women to adapt \( \mathcal{C} \) to climate change can lead to greater climate resilience for entire

communities. Research by CGIAR and others on the gender dimensions of poverty,

malnutrition, and food insecurity has shown that progress will stall without significant

tolerant crops or weather index insurance, are not adequately designed or bundled with

complexity, they are also not scaled at the pace or volume required to achieve real change.

By the same token, social protection programs — including national programs targeting cash

and food transfers to the poor — reach billions of resource-poor women globally, but they are

social innovations that overcome barriers to their adoption by women. Due to their

Making climate solutions work for women Evidence gaps on gender equality's scale, causes, and solutions are one reason for our lack of progress. For example, technological innovations targeting climate resilience, such as stress-

advancement in bolstering gender equality.

resilience to climate change.

to climate change disasters.

diversity in gender norms exist.

Gender and social equality for climate resilience

often not designed to address the constraints faced by women or with a climate lens. Evidence that these programs <u>help women build savings and assets</u> ♂ suggest the programs also have substantial untapped potential to support women in mitigating the effects of climate change, but more research is needed. Finally, the institutions in which decisions are made and implemented tend to significantly

disfavor women, perpetuating their lack of access to the resources and services that support

Initial endeavors to put gender research at the heart of <u>CGIAR</u> raised awareness of the importance of the gender dimensions of technological, behavioral, and social innovations. But there is still an <u>undersupply of strategic and transformative gender research</u> & that could otherwise enable women — alongside their husbands, partners, and communities — to adapt

CGIAR is proposing a new Initiative, <u>Harnessing Gender and Social Equality for Resilience in</u> <u>Agrifood Systems (HER+)</u>, that aims to foster climate-resilient food systems by identifying effective innovations to overcome restrictive social norms, promote women's access to technologies and resources, and ensure that policies bolster gender and social equality.

No other global consortium has the breadth and depth of expertise to tackle gender

inequalities and boost climate resilience. CGIAR is uniquely placed to lead the HER+ Initiative

in collaboration with partners from Ethiopia, Mali, Nigeria, Bangladesh, and India — five core

countries for HER+ research that face significant climate challenges and where substantial

The Initiative will set out to address four main dimensions of gender inequality in food systems, namely women's lack of agency to set their own goals and make their own decisions; women's lack of access to and control over resources; restrictive social norms that discriminate based on gender; and policies that fail to include and benefit women.

• Investigating how to combine — or bundle — socio-technological innovations that can

make women both partners and drivers of climate change solutions. For example, this

work will build on past efforts to make stress-tolerant varieties of crops and their seed

accessible to women, and to provide women access to climate information and digital tools.

Key aspects of the HER+ Initiative include:

- Engaging with social protection programs to understand how improved program design can support women to mitigate and adapt to effects of climate change and build resilience. • Addressing underlying gender barriers by engaging women and men together in gender-<u>transformative approaches</u> \( \mathcal{C} \) to tackle inequalities. In particular, these approaches will seek to shift constraining gender norms, a critical leverage point for enhancing gender equality. CGIAR researchers will build on existing expertise on gender-transformative
- Finding ways to boost women's voices in food system governance spaces, and identifying, testing, and scaling food system policies that effectively support women's resilience to climate change. Women as drivers of global resilience

A climate change solution that does not work for women is not a climate change solution.

Acknowledging this is a first step toward building resilient food systems.

approaches and collaborate with partners to identify ways to overcome the normative

constraints that limit women's capacities to build resilience to climate change challenges.

## With the HER+ Initiative, CGIAR will fill a critical evidence gap by identifying and testing climate solutions that *do* work for women. This will serve as a case study that can deliver proof of best

system.

Research Institute (IFPRI) ♂.

political empowerment.

way, HER+ will help generate the evidence needed to enable women to assume their rightful roles as drivers of resilience in global food systems.

practices and lessons learned for CGIAR and our research-for-development partners. In this

This initiative will complement the <u>CGIAR GENDER Platform</u> (2), which delivers expertise and leadership to maximize the impact of CGIAR's research on gender equality, youth, and social <u>inclusion</u>, and it will both learn from and inform gender research carried out by <u>other</u> <u>Initiatives within CGIAR's portfolio</u>. In combination, these efforts represent a substantial investment by CGIAR in rigorous, practical, and transformative gender research to foster new

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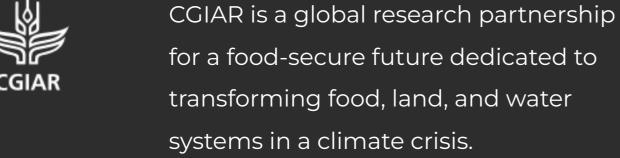
Learn more: <u>HER+: Harnessing Equality for Resilience in the Agrifood System</u>

programs, policies, and investments that strengthen gender equality in the global food

Header image: Husband and wife in India receive regular updates on weather and climatesmart practices via their mobile phones. <u>Photo by Prashanth Vishwanathan/CCAFS</u> 亿.

[1] The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index tracks progress in gender equality

in economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, and

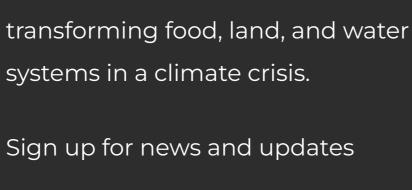


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