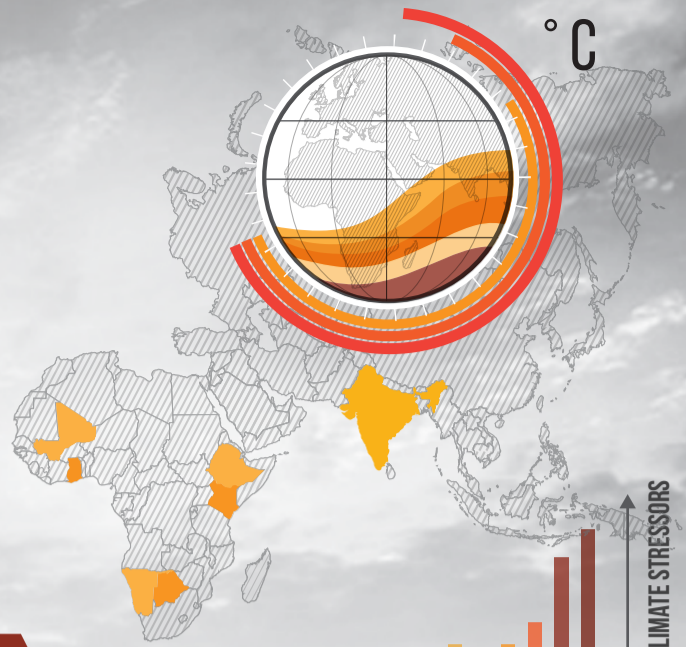


CHALLENGING ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT GENDER AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION

IT'S NOT ALWAYS WHAT, OR WHO, YOU THINK.

As the global impacts of climate change become more clearly understood, the need for people to effectively respond and adapt to these changes becomes critical.



HOME TO HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, THE SEMI-ARID REGIONS OF AFRICA AND ASIA ALREADY EXPERIENCE MULTIPLE PRESSURES. IN RECENT DECADES, THE FREQUENCY AND EXTENT OF CLIMATE STRESSORS HAVE INCREASED, EXPOSING PEOPLE TO MORE RISKS AND MAKING THEM MORE VULNERABLE.

1970 - 2018

EXPOSURE TO RISK

CLIMATE STRESSORS

How people experience and respond to risk varies, depending on factors like age, ethnicity, gender and class.

Such nuances are seldom considered, and decisions about risk reduction strategies and adaptation options are often based on assumptions about who is most vulnerable, how people respond, and what needs to be done.



AT ASSAR WE ARE WORKING TO CHALLENGE SOME OF THESE ASSUMPTIONS, AS WE'VE LEARNT THAT WHEN IT COMES TO VULNERABILITY, OFTEN IT'S NOT WHAT, OR WHO YOU THINK.

Gender is one of many factors that influence how we are impacted by and respond to climate change.



It is commonly assumed that women and men form homogeneous groups, with women at the losing end. Such divisions overlook the nuances brought on by age, household composition, ethnicity or marital status.

Interestingly, in many ASSAR countries, young men are often as or more vulnerable than women, as limited government support and persistent drought have led them to precarious livelihoods.

[Read more.](#)

Women are not necessarily victims or powerless; they are often diversifying their livelihoods and increasing their agency.



Typically, women are seen to be victims with little power. But in many instances they are diversifying their livelihoods which can lead to increased agency and income. But the outcomes are mixed. Sometimes men still control how income is used and what decisions are made.

Also, having multiple livelihoods can be overwhelming for women and men, with a disproportionate impact on women when domestic chores and parenting roles remain unchanged.

Vulnerable women and men need more support to deal with the multiple challenges they face. They also need to be provided with the skills, infrastructure and services they need to ensure they aren't driven to risky or illegal livelihoods out of desperation.

[Read more.](#)

Household relationships help determine whether and how we can - or can't - respond to pressures.



Different households, and the members within them, are affected differently by climatic and non-climatic stressors. To cope with these pressures, the composition and headship of households might change and people may migrate. Sometimes these changes impact dynamics of cooperation and conflict; households are where relationships are built, responsibilities shared and decisions negotiated.

Consequently households should not be treated as homogeneous units. Instead, we should recognise the diversity of each household, the ways in which power and responsibilities are shared, and how these factors lead to particular risk management outcomes and levels of wellbeing for different household members.

[Read more.](#)

Dreaming of a better life: Don't ignore people's changing aspirations.



Policy and decision-making processes seldom acknowledge people's aspirations, nor how these change over time.

Such changes are driven both by an increasing attraction to the opportunities associated with urban areas, and by the growing hardship tied to climate-impacted agricultural livelihoods.

Decision-making should be more responsive to people's needs and desires, and should consider these factors when designing adaptation options and risk management strategies.

[Read more.](#)

Unless we think things through, our interventions can lead to unintended consequences.



We rarely stop to consider the unintended consequences that our interventions may bring - the winners and losers, the unforeseen long-term effects, or the added pressures brought by a changing climate.

These consequences can vary among household members, and are crucial to examine.

[Read more.](#)

ULTIMATELY, IF ADAPTATION AND RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES CONSIDER GENDER AND OTHER SOCIO-CULTURAL VARIABLES IN THEIR DESIGN, WE CAN BETTER PROMOTE EQUALITY AND HELP TO IMPROVE PEOPLE'S WELLBEING.

