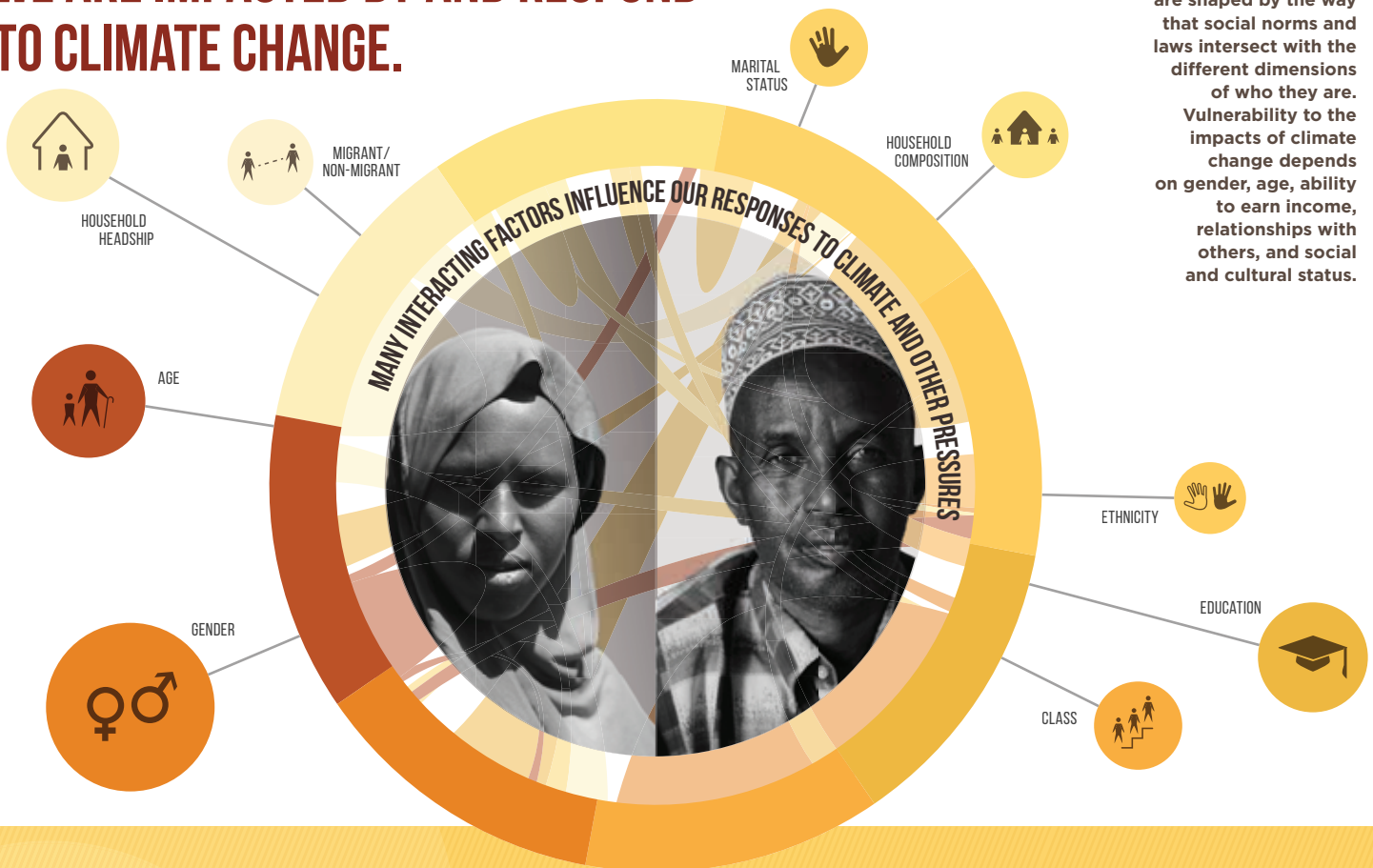


IN SEMI-ARID REGIONS, GENDER AND HOUSEHOLD RELATIONSHIPS SHAPE HOW WE ARE IMPACTED BY AND RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

MEN AND WOMEN ARE NOT HOMOGENEOUS CATEGORIES.

Rather, people's experiences are shaped by the way that social norms and laws intersect with the different dimensions of who they are. Vulnerability to the impacts of climate change depends on gender, age, ability to earn income, relationships with others, and social and cultural status.



IN SEMI-ARID KENYA, PERSISTENT DROUGHT HAS MADE MEN'S INCOME FROM PASTORALISM INSECURE.



With men struggling to earn money, amid heightened conflict over pasture and water resources, women are increasingly taking on new jobs to survive, engaging with trade, farming and independent enterprises. While this brings in extra income it adds to women's workload. With growing responsibilities for taking care of households and earning money, and little state support, women expect greater contributions from men. This dynamic is changing household structures and leading to ever greater diversity of gender and generational relationships.

RECOMMENDATIONS

01



Gender and other socio-cultural factors influence people's vulnerability and their ability to respond to climate change and other pressures. Policies need to be more sensitive to the gendered nature of everyday realities and experiences.

02

The vulnerable may not be who we think, so the approach to building resilience should be contextual and socially differentiated.



03



Households should not be treated as homogenous units. Researchers, practitioners and decision-makers should recognise the diversity of ways in which power and responsibilities are shared within households. Efforts should be made to strengthen cooperation between men and women and in turn adaptive capacities.

04

Women are not necessarily victims or powerless. Livelihood diversification can enhance women's agency but does not always lead to enhanced resilience or wellbeing. Support mechanisms and safety nets should accompany women's efforts to diversify livelihoods.



05



We need to recognise and support women's aspirations by working with them - and jointly with men - to challenge social norms and patriarchal traditions that hold them back.



CASE STUDY 01



FACTORS LIKE GENDER, MARITAL STATUS, HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION AND HOUSEHOLD HEADSHIP CAN HAVE WIDE-REACHING EFFECTS ON MANAGING RISK

Ayah is 50 years old and from Isiolo in Kenya. At 18, she became the second wife of a curio seller. The first wife, Hasana took her in like a sister. Their children grew up together and they shared farming work and domestic chores until Hasana died. Things then became more difficult as Ayah struggled to provide for her children whilst keeping up with her farming duties. Although her husband is well off and owns 300 goats, he stopped looking after her and her four children once they were old enough to marry. He is closer to Hasana's children and has refused to treat all his children equally or to give Ayah a share of the property. After a series of disagreements Ayah requested a divorce, which he refused to allow as this would mean paying a divorce settlement. Today they are separated and the land she once farmed is lying idle. Ayah now lives with her daughter and helps to look after her grandchildren. In the future Ayah would like to start a clothing business but knows she will need capital for this.

CASE STUDY 02



WOMEN WANT MEN TO DO MORE, AND WHEN THEY DON'T COUPLES MIGHT SEPARATE

Musa, a divorced man from Nairobi, Kenya, has returned to his home village. His wife left him as he could not support her with his miraa business. "She was so demanding, but my heart was broken because I did not have anyone to lean on," he says. Today, he lives with his 77-year-old widowed mother and his sister's three children. He is jobless and despondent. He cannot farm as there is no rain. They have little support so look to God for divine intervention. In times of hardship they call upon neighbours or distant relatives for help, but don't do this regularly. Musa thinks life was better when he was young and his parents were farming as water was flowing nicely from upstream.



CASE STUDY 03



RECOGNISE AND VALUE PEOPLE'S CHANGING ASPIRATIONS

22-year-old Zahira is disappointed that her parents did not let her study and withdrew her from school. Now she is entirely dependent on her husband, who can't provide for her adequately. She is humiliated if she asks for money, even for setting up a business. She feels she would have had more freedom and opportunity to pursue education or find a job if she had not married. She wants to educate her children and make sure they have a better life. 30-year-old Samwel, a young separated man, is also resentful about the lack of moneylenders or credit agencies to provide support to him. He is desperate to get a loan to buy and sell livestock.



*Names used in case studies are pseudonyms.

CASE STUDY 04



LIVELIHOOD DIVERSIFICATION DOES NOT ALWAYS LEAD TO ENHANCED RESILIENCE OR WELLBEING

25-year-old Bira lives in peri-urban Isiolo, Kenya. Her mother sells miraa in the market and from her earnings buys food for the family. Bira has a small kiosk outside their house. Her mother helped build the structure, but as the location is remote, and there are now several such kiosks in the vicinity, what she buys from the wholesaler in town lasts for over a month. Sometimes the wholesaler might extend a small amount of credit, up to 200 - 300 KES, but there is not the kind of trust for it to be more. She is only running the kiosk because it is better to do something rather than nothing. Her brother died the previous year and now she takes care of his children alongside her daughter. While Bira enjoys having autonomy and voice, taking on another job has contributed to her feeling overwhelmed and stretched for time. It has changed her life, adding on her young shoulders the responsibility to feed the family well. Her mother is her only support.

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The five-year ASSAR project (Adaptation at Scale in Semi-Arid Regions, 2014-2018) uses insights from multi-scale, interdisciplinary work to inform and transform climate adaptation policy and practice in ways that promote the long-term wellbeing of the most vulnerable and those with the least agency.