

BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH FAMILY PLANNING AND ADAPTATION FINANCE

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Less-developed countries identify population growth as a factor exacerbating climate change impacts.

Family planning is a building block of resilience to climate change impacts.

Expanding access to FP/RH is a critical component of women's empowerment that can have a meaningful role in adaptation efforts.

The impacts of climate change—climbing temperatures, extreme weather, drought, shifting rainfall patterns, and rising sea levels—are intensifying around the world. These impacts threaten to undo development progress in poor and vulnerable communities. Access to voluntary family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) services can empower women and strengthen communities' abilities to adapt to climate change (see Box 1, page 2). This brief outlines strategies that the family planning policy, advocacy, and practitioner communities can use to advance women's FP/RH through projects that receive multilateral funding for climate change adaptation in low- and middle-income countries around the world.

Family Planning Contributes to Climate Change Adaptation

Population dynamics—in particular, trends in population growth, high fertility, and family planning—play an important role in climate change adaptation. Regions of high population growth, high fertility, and high unmet need for family planning overlap with regions of high vulnerability to climate change. Ongoing unmet need for family planning in these regions can exacerbate vulnerability and make it more difficult for individuals, households, and communities to adapt. The links between FP/RH and climate change adaptation are documented in research and policy, as noted in recent scientific and policy-relevant documents (see Box 2, page 3).

Meeting women's needs for FP/RH has multiple benefits for climate change adaptation efforts, including:

- Women and their children are healthier—a fundamental building block of resilience to climate change impacts.¹
- Women become more empowered, opening up greater possibilities for them to effectively engage in adaptation efforts.
- Couples who are able to avoid unintended pregnancies tend to have smaller families, limiting household demand on climate-sensitive resources like food and water.
- Slower population growth reduces pressure on the local natural resource base and results in fewer people exposed to climate hazards.²

BOX 1

What Is Adaptation?

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change defines adaptation as “adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climactic stimuli and their effects or impacts.” This includes “changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change.” More policymakers, development practitioners, and donors are recognizing the value and importance of adaptation as part of the global response to climate change, and they are increasingly engaged in adaptation plans and strategies.

Source: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), “FOCUS: Adaptation,” accessed at <http://unfccc.int/focus/adaptation/items/6999.php>, on Dec. 5, 2017.

Adaptation Finance Offers Untapped Opportunities for Family Planning

Multilateral finance institutions’ support for climate change adaptation activities is growing globally.³ Institutions such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Adaptation Fund are among the key multilateral providers of finance to support activities and programs designed to help vulnerable populations adapt to climate change impacts.

As financial support for adaptation grows, questions have risen about what kinds of activities count as adaptation. While climate-proofing infrastructure and climate-smart agriculture are the kinds of interventions typically found on the front lines of adaptation action, strengthening development outcomes—in everything from health to education to poverty reduction—can also contribute to reduced vulnerability and enhanced resilience.

With a growing evidence base linking women’s met needs for family planning with reduced human vulnerability and enhanced resilience in the face of climate change impacts, expanding women’s access to FP/RH is a critical component of women’s empowerment that can have a meaningful role in adaptation efforts. To date, however, none of the main multilateral adaptation funds have supported family planning efforts within their portfolios. Their investment frameworks contain no explicit prohibitions against doing so, and with the right justification, new partnerships could be formed that contribute to positive impacts in both the health and environment sectors.

Build Resilience by Developing Prospects for Family Planning in Adaptation Finance

Four key strategies can develop prospects for FP/RH policy, advocacy, and practitioner communities to include family planning in adaptation strategies in ways that build resilience, improve health, and enhance women’s economic empowerment.

STRATEGY 1: DRAW THE CONNECTIONS AND BUILD THE EVIDENCE BASE

Funders and potential partners in the climate change community require evidence-based justifications of programmatic approaches in their funding proposals. By developing messages and knowledge products that highlight the research findings in Box 2, page 3, FP/RH policy, advocacy, and practitioner communities will be better equipped to build the case for including family planning in multisectoral adaptation approaches.

The FP/RH community can also continue to document—qualitatively and quantitatively—the vulnerability-reduction benefits that come with greater access to voluntary family planning. This documentation would be particularly compelling in integrated projects where voluntary family planning has contributed to broader development outcomes such as improved health, food security, natural resource management, or poverty alleviation. Many adaptation funders are now recognizing the value of gender-responsive adaptation approaches, so documenting the ways in which family planning links to women’s empowerment could be particularly valuable in helping the FP/RH community make the case that access to voluntary family planning can contribute to adaptation efforts.

Finally, continuing to document this evidence base in peer-reviewed literature is critical to further legitimize the benefits of family planning for climate change adaptation. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) prepares to publish the Sixth Assessment Report in 2020/2021, its working groups will scan the peer-reviewed literature for the state of the science.⁴ If the issue of family planning is to remain in the IPCC’s outputs, it is important that additional research on these links be published.

STRATEGY 2: REACH OUT TO YOUR COUNTRY’S DESIGNATED AUTHORITY

FP/RH experts seeking specific opportunities to engage in climate change adaptation proposal development should identify main climate adaptation actors and decisionmakers at the national level. Identifying the Designated Authority (DA) and the accredited National Implementing Entities (NIEs) is key to understanding how adaptation finance flows, particularly for funds such as the GCF and the Adaptation Fund. The names and contact information for DAs and NIEs are available on the GCF and Adaptation Fund websites.

DAs serve as the GCF and Adaptation Fund’s main points of contact in each country, and they are typically based within

BOX 2

Family Planning and Climate Change Adaptation: Integrating Evidence Into Policy

The Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) enumerates the value of expanding FP/RH services. In Working Group II's chapter on health, the IPCC states that meeting the need for family planning services in areas with both high fertility and high vulnerability to climate change (such as the Sahel region of Africa) can reduce human suffering as climate change proceeds.¹

In preparing National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs), 37 least-developed countries highlighted population growth as a factor that exacerbates the impacts of climate change. Yet only a small number (six) identified investing in family planning programs as a priority to address that challenge, and none of the NAPAs have channeled investment in family planning.²

An expert working group convened by the Worldwatch Institute and Population Reference Bureau examined the evidence linking population dynamics and climate compatible development. They concluded that reducing unintended pregnancies would result in multiple health, education, and economic benefits for women and their households, and that these benefits could potentially reduce human vulnerability to climate change impacts. The expert group recommended an increase in financing available for both climate change and family planning, and the creation of innovative financing for family planning within climate compatible development plans.³

In *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming*, editor Paul Hawken draws attention to the value of expanding access to family planning. While the book focuses on (and quantifies) the potential reduced emissions that would result from slower population growth, it also acknowledges that meeting women's reproductive health needs can contribute to resilience.⁴

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- 1 Kirk R. Smith et al., "Human Health: Impacts, Adaptation, and Co-Benefits," in *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. Part A: Global and Sectoral Aspects. Contribution of Working Group II to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*, ed. C.B. Field et al. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- 2 Karen Hardee and Clive Mutunga, "Strengthening the Link Between Climate Change Adaptation and National Development Plans: Lessons From the Case of Population in National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs)," *Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies for Global Change* 15, no. 2 (2009).
- 3 Population Reference Bureau, "Making the Connection: Population Dynamics and Climate Compatible Development Recommendations From an Expert Working Group," (Sept. 2014), accessed at www.prb.org/pdf15/population-climate-full-paper.pdf, on Nov. 13, 2017.
- 4 Paul Hawken, ed. "Women and Girls: Family Planning," in *Drawdown: The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming* (New York: Penguin Books, 2017).

the environment, planning, or foreign affairs ministries. DAs play the critical role of gatekeeper in proposal development and approval, ensuring their quality and alignment with government priorities.

NIEs are those institutions—typically government agencies, academic institutions, or trust funds—accredited by the GCF and Adaptation Fund to submit proposals and receive funding. Most countries have only one NIE. They select partners, or executing entities, to implement projects. Executing entities can be government agencies, community organizations, or the private sector. They do not need accreditation by the GCF or Adaptation Fund, but should be in good standing with both the NIE and the DA.⁵

STRATEGY 3: ENGAGE IN YOUR COUNTRY'S NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANNING PROCESS

Climate change impacts differ from location to location, and vulnerability to those impacts is context-specific. The major adaptation finance institutions' governing instruments provide broad guidance for the proposal development process, but recognize that adaptation should be a country-driven process. They seek to be responsive to what countries put forward as their adaptation needs. NIEs developing adaptation proposals are required to undertake extensive stakeholder engagement processes to identify country-driven adaptation priorities.

Given the growing evidence base that links family planning to resilience and adaptive capacity, the FP/RH community would be well-positioned to participate in national-level processes designed to identify adaptation needs and priorities. The National Adaptation Plan process (see Box 3, page 6) is a key opportunity for engagement. FP/RH practitioners can inquire with their country's environment ministry to learn more about the status of national adaptation planning. Family planning practitioners and advocates—from civil society as well as ministries of health and gender—participating in stakeholder engagement processes can help optimize opportunities for integration.

STRATEGY 4: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTNERS

FP/RH experts interested in contributing to adaptation proposals could consider partnering with others in developing multisectoral proposals and helping to implement them. Learning about current adaptation initiatives underway in your country is a useful first step in this process.

The Designated Authorities (described above) can be a good source of information on institutions engaged in adaptation efforts. Additionally, the GCF and Adaptation Fund websites include detailed information on adaptation projects in each country they serve. Reviewing these publicly available documents can provide an overview of the institutions involved, the roles they play, and the potential for partnership.

The following exercise uses an Adaptation Fund project in Rwanda with potential for including family planning as part of a multisectoral adaptation project to show how these four strategies can be applied.

APPLY STRATEGIES TO INCLUDE FAMILY PLANNING IN AN ADAPTATION INITIATIVE

In 2013, the Adaptation Fund approved a USD\$10 million, four-year grant for rural development in Rwanda. Entitled “Reducing Vulnerability to Climate Change in North West Rwanda Through Community Based Adaptation,” the project does not contain a family planning component, but exemplifies the kinds of climate change adaptation strategies that could be strengthened if one were included. This example highlights the ways in which the key strategies outlined in this brief could help explore the potential for integrating family planning into the project’s multisectoral approaches.

How Could the Family Planning Community Engage?

The project’s objective is “to increase the adaptive capacity of natural systems and rural communities living in exposed areas of North Western Rwanda to climate change impacts.”⁶ Strategy elements include flood prevention and protection measures, as well as a host of interventions aimed at building the adaptive capacity of farmers in the region and supporting alternative livelihood development.

APPLY STRATEGY 1:

Draw the connections and build the evidence base.

- Are you able to demonstrate that unmet need for family planning is high among women in communities targeted for this effort?
- Can you point toward your organization’s success in empowering women, enhancing their agency, and promoting livelihoods?
- What data or examples can you provide to help illustrate these connections?

The Adaptation Fund’s DA in Rwanda is Mrs. Fatina Mukarubibi, permanent secretary of the Ministry of Natural Resources. The project’s implementing entity is the Ministry of Natural Resources, and the executing entity is the Rwanda Natural Resource Authority.

APPLY STRATEGY 2:

Reach out to your country’s Designated Authority.

- Once you know the objectives and general activities of the project, you can request a meeting with the DA and the entities involved to share ideas on how your organization can contribute.
- Such a meeting could be even more meaningful before a project is awarded, creating potential for you to contribute to the proposal development process.

The Ministry of Natural Resources notes that the activities of the project are aligned with national and local climate change strategies, including the National Adaptation Programme of Action and the National Green Growth and Climate Resilience Strategy. In developing the proposal, the Ministry of Natural Resources reached out to a wide range of stakeholders, including local communities, local government representatives, relevant line ministries, local civil society organizations, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

APPLY STRATEGY 3:

Engage in your country's national adaptation planning process.

- Many countries have such climate change strategies and processes currently under development, and they rely on extensive stakeholder engagement to identify adaptation priorities.
- Inquiring with the relevant ministry to learn how you can engage as a stakeholder can help get family planning incorporated from the start.

As a result of its outreach, the ministry identified many barriers to addressing the causes of climate change vulnerability in the region. These barriers include:

Traditional gender roles and patriarchal attitudes towards women in rural Rwanda mean that women have limited control over assets and decision making at the household and community level. This weakens their adaptive capacity and makes them more vulnerable to shocks and stresses linked to climate change. Women's involvement in certain livelihoods is also limited by gender

relations which limits the ability of women to take up certain off-farm livelihoods. The project has been designed to engage on these issues and will work in partnership with local NGOs that have expertise in this area.⁷

According to the project proposal, project activities are to be carried out by the implementing and executing entities, other government ministries, local government entities, and NGOs.

The multisectoral nature of the proposal and its objectives, in addition to the clear call for NGO partners with expertise in women's empowerment, creates an opening for family planning practitioners and advocates to explore partnerships in this project, as well as any planned follow-on activities.

APPLY STRATEGY 4:

Identify potential partners.

- Learn what you can about organizations that are leading the way in adaptation activities such as food security, water resource management, and disaster preparedness.
- Reach out to these organizations to explore common interests in holistic approaches to adaptation and to identify opportunities to partner in existing efforts or new proposals.

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BOX 3

National Adaptation Plan Process

Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) established the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process in 2011 as a way to support and conduct comprehensive medium- and long-term adaptation planning, particularly in least developed countries. NAPs are likely to grow in importance as a central, national-level process to channel adaptation planning and action, and they can be an important influence in directing finance to adaptation activities. Stakeholder engagement is central to the NAP process throughout planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. Gender sensitivity is also a key principle advanced through the NAP technical guidelines.

The UNFCCC suggests activities that could support integrating a gender perspective into the NAP process. Ensuring that women's needs for family planning are met can contribute to several of the UNFCCC's suggested activities, including:

- Harnessing women's potential as agents of change within their communities, and investing in this potential as part of the NAP process.
- Ensuring the participation of the most vulnerable groups, including women, in the NAP process.

Source: LDC Expert Group, "National Adaptation Plans: Technical Guidelines for the National Adaptation Plan Process," United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, Dec. 2012, accessed at http://unfccc.int/files/adaptation/cancun_adaptation_framework/application/pdf/napttechguidelines_eng_high_res.pdf, on Jan. 11, 2018.

Potential Exists for Family Planning to Be Included in Multisectoral Climate Change Adaptation Projects

The evidence base showing that access to voluntary FP/RH services empowers women and strengthens communities' abilities to adapt to climate change continues to grow. With the increased attention on climate change adaptation and the growing availability of international climate financing, numerous challenges and opportunities exist for the inclusion of family planning as part of multisectoral climate adaptation projects. Family planning has not yet been incorporated into projects funded by multilateral finance institutions, but a window of opportunity now exists for its inclusion. The FP/RH policy, advocacy, and practitioner communities can take key steps to identify opportunities and seek partnerships for proposals and projects that take a multisectoral approach—particularly concerning women's empowerment and participation—as part of a strategy to reduce vulnerability and strengthen climate change resilience.

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