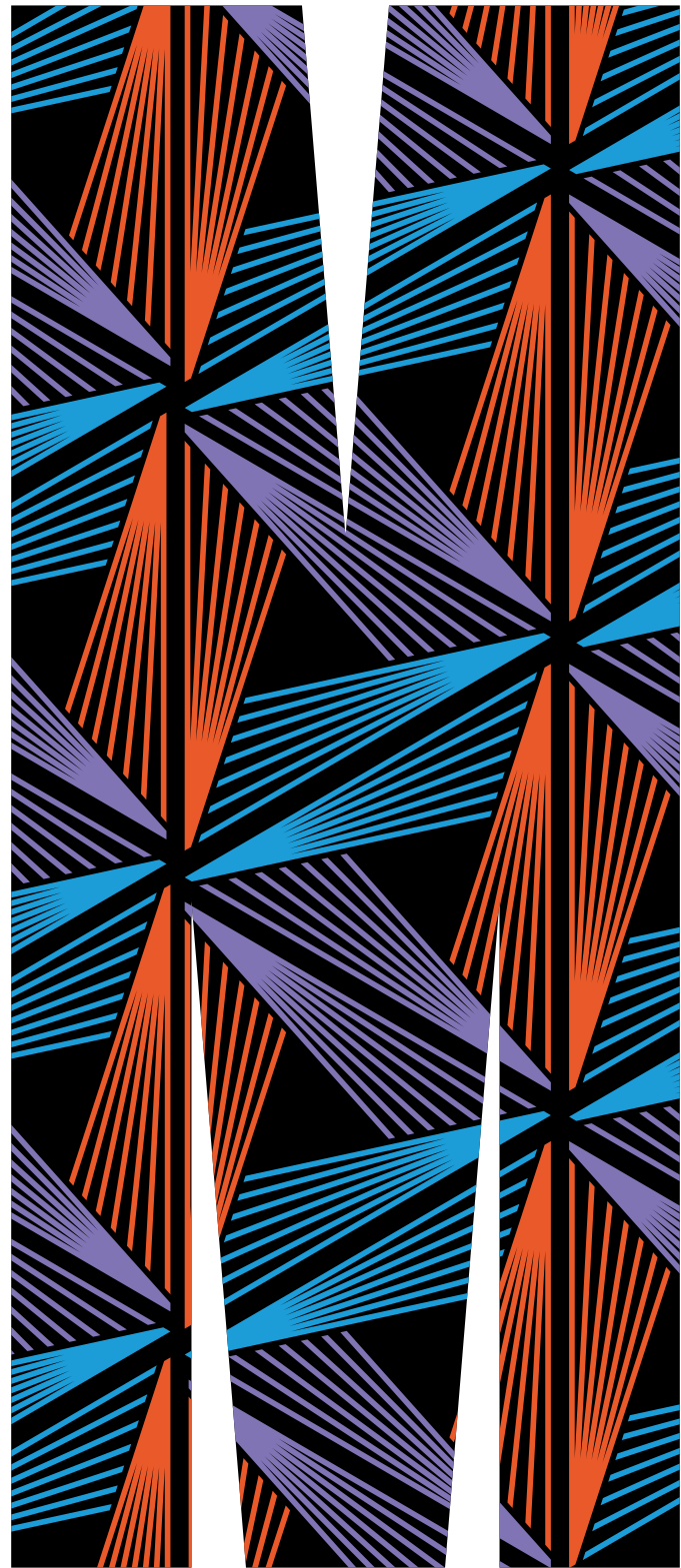


GENDER RESPONSIVE ALTERNATIVES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

A COUNTRY REPORT
ON CAMBODIA

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CC	Climate change
CCA	Climate change adaptation
CCCSP	Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHDR	Cambodia Human Development Report
CWDCC	Children and Women Development Center Cambodia (Kampot)
DDR	Disaster risk reduction
DIPECHO	Disaster Preparedness ECHO programme
FGD	Focus group discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GRACC	Gender-Responsive Alternatives on Climate Change
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IO	International organisation
LDCs	Least developed countries
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs (Cambodia)
MPGCC	Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change
NCDDS	National Committee for Sub-National Democratic Development (Cambodia)
NCDM	National Centre for Disaster Management (Cambodia)
NGO	Non-government organisation
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation
RFCD	Rural Friend Community for Development (Pursat)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNSC	UN Security Council
WPS	Women, Peace and Security

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Chbeab srey	The traditional code of conduct for women in the family and society
Sangkat	A type of small or basic, village-level administrative unit in Cambodia

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The complex consequences of climate change demand an approach that encompasses the interaction effects of different risks and hazards across multiple scales and aspects of human life; and how environmental degradation is entangled with other crises such as armed conflicts, health pandemics, and economic recessions. However, natural and social sciences research approaches still predominantly examine one or a few impacts which yield partial, if not, increasingly incorrect assessments of the global processes surrounding climate change. Without explicit focus on integrating changes occurring as a result of multiple risks and hazards intersecting, we are yet to gain insights on whether and how various adaptation and mitigation strategies produce positive outcomes by reinforcing or amplifying one another; or negative outcomes through counteracting or cancelling gains in other areas.

The same siloing is also evident in the implementation and monitoring of indicators for global agendas particularly on disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate change, sustainable development goals (especially SDGs 5, 13 and 16), and on women, peace and security (WPS). Responses to hazards and risks are separated under different policy goals and

priorities which in turn has implications for coordinating leadership and agencies, and mobilisation of resources for programs. An integrated framework therefore has broad and wide-ranging implications for systematically addressing climate change and interlinked crises in ways that effectively respond to the comprehensive security needs of the most marginalised and climate-affected populations particularly women and girls.

This report presents country-level findings for Cambodia which examine the potential of everyday and traditional knowledge, participation and collective action in climate change-affected communities. Based on collaborative research conducted by Monash University's Gender, Peace and Security Centre in partnership with ActionAid Australia and ActionAid Cambodia, the research aims to develop a global framework that shall serve as a starting point for integrated, gender-responsive policy solutions and agendas across climate governance, sustainable development and crisis or emergency response. Drawing on evidence collected through field research and secondary analysis, the research findings illustrate how a gender-responsive alternative approach to climate change strengthens integration among existing policies on climate change, gender equality, and peace and sustainable development.

KEY FINDINGS IN CAMBODIA

Addressing gender inequality reflected in societal norms and institutions is fundamental to any gender-responsive approach to climate change and especially apparent in Cambodia. With limited access to decision-making, women are often invisible in policy-making. Without adequate representation of women in these discussions, the default approach is techno-centric and ignores the realities of climate change and disasters for women, which include the changing burden of unpaid work and food insecurity, increased prevalence of gender-based violence, and institutionalised marginalisation of women's voices and leadership. Women's knowledge, participation and collective action strengthens the resilience of communities. It is a potentially transformative basis for climate policy-making that promotes gender equality and addresses related crises. Crucially it avoids adaptation to climate change that violates women and girls' human rights, undermining their ability to participate in – and benefit from – crisis responses.

1 Women's Everyday and Traditional Knowledge


Cambodian women are in possession of important everyday, localised knowledge about their environment and the impact of disasters and climate change. This knowledge can enhance scientific knowledge, assessment and monitoring of multiple risks, and the resilience of communities. Women from Kampot and Pursat, both remote, rural communities, relayed their experiences of severe, intermittent and frequent disasters alongside a continuous cycle of poverty, natural resource depletion and lack of state assistance. In these two provinces, a well-defined gender division of labour has led to gender-differentiated environmental knowledge. Traditionally, farming was done as a community with both men and women learning methods of planting and harvesting. However, women as caregivers have developed additional knowledge due to their role in securing alternative sources of food and traditional medicine necessary for the survival of their families and communities during crises. Communities

increasingly rely on this everyday knowledge of the natural environment for survival. However, this knowledge is in danger of being lost as women forego farming to migrate to the highly-feminised garment factories in the capital, Phnom Penh, for more predictable incomes. It is crucial therefore to integrating local knowledge and scientific knowledge and equally value women's cumulative, customary knowledge in order to promote transformative climate policy-making that addresses both crises and gender inequality.

2 Women's Participation

Women's participation and representation in governance is limited in Kampot and Pursat. Communities are not expected to seek assistance or raise concerns to their local authorities. Women reported they are less likely than men to be invited in commune or sangkat decision-making. Their involvement is limited to attendance serving as place-holders for their husbands who are unable to attend and to whom the women are expected to relay information. Moreover, gender inequalities within decentralized political and governance systems impede efforts to implement gender mainstreaming across all national policies. In order for women to actively participate in national community efforts to address climate change and reduce disaster risks, there is an urgent need to overcome these barriers. In addition to the decentralized political system, common challenges including social and cultural norms, gendered divisions of labour and burdens of care (paid and unpaid), gender-based violence, and access to resources

Despite these barriers and significant changes still required, women's participation is progressing in Cambodia. Among the key entry points are women-only groups or networks such as the Women DRR and CC champions networks that provide intergenerational and peer mentoring. Women champions report that working collectively helped them to better articulate their own needs and knowledge as well as serve their communities. Another important entry point for the women is men's support for their participation.



Finally, women have been able to participate in training sessions and programs by government and NGOs abetted by gender-mainstreaming efforts at the national level. However, we find that for women's inclusion to truly count, their participation must involve the capacity to define agendas, frame issues especially beyond traditionally identified as 'women's concerns', and implement outcomes.

Women's networks in climate-affected areas in Cambodia, seek to link their crisis response and long-term sustainable development and peace actions. For instance, they identified migration and agricultural issues and their disproportionate impact on women as interconnected with climate change and disasters. Government policies on agriculture, urban migration and climate need to be connected from a gender perspective. For example, urban migration is a climate change issue caused by the destruction of land and unsustainable agricultural practices. It pushes women to move to the city and seek out precarious work leading to significant new insecurities and vulnerability to gender-based violence.

3 Women's Collective Action

When women come together to discuss concerns and experiences of disaster, climate change, violence, and development, they frame them not as 'single issues' but as interrelated crises that require flexible, joined-up responses. The collective action of women DRR and CC champions in the country is an example of how support for women's participation can be scaled up through women's alliances inside and outside of government structures. Women's networks can help bridge government and civil society by facilitating more regular and sustained democratic participation beginning at the commune council decision-making. In a society still characterised by gendered division of labour and unequal gender norms that expects women to be 'shy' and 'quiet', women's groups are vital training grounds for sustained participation where women's authority can be recognised as relevant before, during and after crises. DRR and CC champions are a crucial entry point for women's collective action in Cambodia, that seeks to transform norms and increases community participation in order to come to terms with – and respond to— significant survival challenges.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Cambodian women, especially those on the frontline of multiple crises, should inform how, when and where gender-responsive policy interventions can integrate action on interlinked climate-induced crises. Cambodia has highly relevant national frameworks such as the Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change that can be strengthened through gender-responsive and integrated implementation. Government and non-government actors should:

- Prioritise the **development of commune and sangkat level implementation plans focused on access to services, IT and women's livelihoods and participation** in climate change preparedness and adaptation, consistent with the national Master Plan.
- Promote **national-level coordination to identify areas of synergies or trade-offs among the goals espoused** under the national Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change (MPGCC) 2018-2030, Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) 2014-2023, and Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management 1996 among key frameworks.
- Develop **integrated early warning mechanisms for disasters at household and village levels**, incorporating women's knowledge within networks of climate change and disaster risk reduction champions.
- Value **women's everyday knowledge by facilitating spaces for this knowledge to influence the**

agenda and solutions within commune development planning process at village, sangkat and national administration levels.

- **Strengthen women's capacity at the community level to contribute their knowledge** into reporting formats for forecasting and risk analysis, and to access relevant technologies.
- **Strengthen technical capacities of commune local officials to respond to gender-specific needs in risk-prone areas** such as Kampot and Pursat and subsequently, provide gender-responsive climate change policy training and support.
- **Establish women-friendly spaces and gender-based violence protection mechanisms** in drought or flooding response
- **Ensure access to justice, protection mechanisms, and compensation for loss and damages** due to localised land rights conflicts, and displacements as a result of fires, flash flooding and other rapid-onset disasters.
- **Support women's networks and enable gender-balanced representation** in governance institutions as part of the decentralisation process in Cambodia.

Climate change can no longer be denied or simply ignored. It is real, it is happening now, and it is as much a human development issue as it is an environmental issue.¹

INTRODUCTION

This report presents the approach and findings from a research project conducted by Monash University's Gender, Peace and Security Centre in partnership with ActionAid Australia and its partner, ActionAid Cambodia.² Drawing on feminist approaches to global peace, development and security, it examines the potential of everyday and traditional knowledge, participation and collective action by women in climate change-affected communities as key pillars to developing an integrated risk assessment and global response to human insecurities.

Climate change is an urgent, interlocking and cross-cutting issue.³ By 2100, climate change will constitute a major threat to all main domains of "human health, water, food, economy,

infrastructure and security".⁴ However, how multiple risks and hazards intersect or compound one another is yet to be addressed in an integrated manner in both policy and research. Examining one or a few impacts risks partial, if not, increasingly incorrect assessments of the global processes surrounding climate change. Without explicit focus on integrating changes occurring as a result of multiple risks and hazards intersecting, we are yet to gain insights on whether and how various adaptation and mitigation strategies produce positive outcomes by reinforcing or amplifying one another; or negative outcomes through counteracting or cancelling gains in other areas. Therefore, developing an evidence-base that can inform policy solutions is needed to begin mapping climate change impacts as they occur in a continuum with other drivers of social, political and economic insecurities; and consequently, to comprehensively address them.

In Cambodia today, climate change manifests in severe, intermittent and frequent disasters. Among the top recorded disasters in the country are: flooding, fires, drought, storms, and lightning. Health-related disasters such as pest outbreak and epidemics were also identified as disasters exacerbated by climate change.⁵ According to data which mapped the impacts of these disasters from 1996-2013, deaths and damages to property and livelihood are markedly seasonal. Disasters peaked in September and October and again from March to May.⁶ However, as our research shows, these impacts of climate change cannot be separated from the daily impacts of gender inequalities within households and communities in Cambodia. These inequalities are also shaped by other social cleavages according to geographic location, ethnic or tribal identities, patronage, and human development levels among others. Climate change interacts with and will be more salient in driving protracted displacements in the face of rapid urbanisation and land and resource-based conflicts. These hazards put certain groups of women and girls at heightened risk of exposure to violence and deterioration in well-being. Women's experiences especially in remote or rural communities are thus part of, rather than separate from the environmental crisis that drives conflicts, political disenfranchisement, and unequal distribution of natural resources. Promoting gender equality in climate governance can be forged within and be leveraged to deepen post-conflict reconstruction and transitional justice in the country.

This report has three main sections. The first section provides a brief background on climate change impacts in Cambodia and existing national policy frameworks. Gender mainstreaming and broadening of active participation among women are recognised as important to addressing climate change. The second section presents our key research

findings to argue that there is a need to examine climate change and related crises from women's standpoints in order to better understand their gendered and multi-scalar impacts. The research findings illustrate how a gender-responsive alternative approach to climate change further strengthens integration among existing policies on climate change, gender equality, and peace and sustainable development. Finally, the third section of the report discusses the conclusions and offers recommendations toward enhancing women's collective action to address climate change.

RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The overall aim of this research project is to develop an evidence-based, gender-responsive framework that can strengthen women's voices and leadership in responding to climate change and related natural disasters through the recognition and support of their localised knowledge of how multiple risks and hazards are interlinked.

The approach of the study builds on feminist scholarship which considers the ways in which climate justice may serve as one entry point for promoting gender equality, as much as gender equality is a prerequisite for climate justice.⁷ To examine how responses to climate change can promote both climate justice and gender equality we use the concept of "gender-responsiveness" which means "[I]nformed by gender-sensitive analysis and/or agreement, gender-responsiveness as a concept and a practice seeks to enable operational and practical capacity to address gender inequalities, exclusions and differences through action or implementation efforts that are feasible, monitored and evaluated" (see Annex 1).⁸

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

The following key research questions informed the research:

1. What distinct 'early warning' signs do women observe for environmental change and its impacts?
2. What is the extent of women's and men's awareness of climate change programmes, information and related policies? Do they participate in their implementation?
3. How are women represented in different governance levels, processes and institutions where climate decisions are made?
4. What contributions does women's knowledge, participation and leadership offer for climate governance, and why do they matter?

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Research data was collected through a mixed-methods, participatory research design in collaboration with ActionAid Cambodia and ActionAid Australia (see Annex 1).⁹

Primary data

Primary collection of qualitative data was through key informant-interviews and focus group discussions. Field research was conducted from 24 May to 6 June 2018. The research sites were Phnom Penh, Kampot, Pursat and Siem Reap. Kampot and Pursat were selected purposively to ensure that the research supports ActionAid Cambodia's programming on local women's capacity and leadership for developing gender-responsive alternatives on climate change.¹⁰

Secondary data

The research used qualitative and quantitative data from the baseline study conducted by a team led by Dr Sreang Heak in March 2018. The baseline consisted of household survey data from 380 respondents, 206 females and 174 males. Data collection also included key-informant interviews with local authorities from Disaster Management Committees and focus group discussions among the selected community women in Kampot and Pursat.

The analysis focused on capturing processes and interactions across individual women, households, and communities and situating these at the national level within existing policies and frameworks. First, desk research was undertaken to analyse existing national reports and policies in Cambodia. Country-specific key issues, themes and actors were then identified on gender, climate change and security issues. Second, the baseline study yielded data specific to Kampot and Pursat communities. We used the findings to refine our own field research questions and also to guide our analysis of the existing literature and national policies. Finally, our field research was crucial in collecting narratives and stories from women and men relating to their everyday climate change adaptation and the cultivation of civic and political participation in a post-conflict environment. We placed our field interviews and focus group discussions in Kampot and Pursat communities in dialogue with evidence from secondary sources including national-level analysis. Multiple sources of data therefore served to corroborate, add depth to and/or critique how existing national frameworks and dominant understanding of climate change as a security issue are responsive to women's context-specific knowledge and experiences within their households and communities.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Research Participants	Total	Location	Composition
Key-Informant Interviews	16	Phnom Penh (7), Kampot (2), Pursat (4), Siem Reap (3)	<i>Gender</i> 4 females, 12 males ⁶⁹ <hr/> <i>Affiliation</i> 8 government 8 non-government (both local and international)
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	10	Phnom Penh (1), Kampot (5), Pursat (4)	<i>Gender</i> 3 (women only), 2 (men only), 5 mixed group <hr/> <i>Affiliation</i> 5 groups of commune and/or village residents 5 groups of commune/sangkat and provincial representatives

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The country is located in the Asia Pacific region, specifically Southeast Asia. The region is considered crisis-prone because no other region in the world has the most number of vulnerable people exposed to multiple hazards and recurrent displacements.¹¹ Disasters, particularly flooding which is the deadliest for Cambodians, also result in indirect harms through a deterioration in the quality of life and economic hardship. In 2016, the country suffered its worst drought in decades which affected approximately 2.5 million people across the whole country and fuelled a national crisis.¹² Still, these climate risks are not evenly distributed and may be varied with some communities bearing the brunt of multiple crises.¹³ People in climate risk prone areas such as Siem Reap deal with cycles of successive disasters from flooding, droughts, typhoons, and lightning storms on an annual basis.¹⁴ This means that their communities are predictably inundated by disasters which have made it difficult to recover or even 'build back better'. Disasters are experienced as even worse and more intense when affected communities have yet to rebuild from the previous crisis.

Vulnerability is in part shaped by geography due to direct exposure to specific types of disasters such as coastal zones and slow-onset sea level rise; but also nationally, because of high dependence on the environment for survival and daily life. Approximately 80 percent of Cambodians reside in rural areas. It is estimated that "almost two-thirds of Cambodia's population depend on agriculture, forest products and fisheries for their livelihoods".¹⁵ In the face of extreme weather, the country is also undergoing rapid change and push for economic growth and development.¹⁶ Climate change impacts reflect present and future burdens on sustainable development. Especially for least developed countries (LDCs) such as Cambodia, adapting to climate change itself is a burden to improving development. According to the Global Climate Risk Index which measures fatalities and economic impacts of extreme weather events sustained in a single year and over a 20-year period, Cambodia did not rank very highly in 2016 because its climate risks were spread out. When compared from longitudinal data, Cambodia ranked 15th globally despite lower economic losses and fatalities due to small population size. This is corroborated in a study conducted by the Asian Development Bank.

The report concluded that "relatively frequent, lower-impact 20-year natural hazard events would place the greatest burden on Cambodia, causing losses equivalent to up to 3.6% of its GDP and 18.3% of its annual government expenditure once every 20 years".¹⁷

With rapid urbanisation and climate change, Cambodia is projected to be among the top countries that will likely have urban displacements.¹⁸ Majority of the urban population live in slums and thus this constitutes precarious living conditions that will be exacerbated by extreme weather. Without foresight in urban planning and design, cities will face distinct climate risks that can lead to deaths and a range of indirect harms such as health complications and disease outbreaks. Flooding can cause many slum dwellers to be displaced for extended periods of time and will require tailored humanitarian assistance. Greater frequency of disasters increases pressures on state infrastructure, especially in urban areas where garment factories, predominantly sustained by Cambodian women workers, are working and living in unsafe and substandard conditions. Many of these women come from rural areas to Phnom Penh, and are supporting families in their villages. Climate-induced losses, damages and displacements have the potential to negate advances in human development and interventions need to address how climate risks in urban and rural areas are interconnected.

Disasters will occur and their impacts will intensify more so because of pre-existing conditions of political instability and state fragility in the country. The country is considered on 'high warning' and characterised as less peaceful (see Table 2). Climate change in Cambodia exacerbates violence surrounding unequal governance of natural resources in the country. For example, the country was among the places in the world that have had cases of violence and killings occurring in the context of environmental protection and land rights. This violence has been attributed to illegal loggers and local corruption practices.¹⁹ A rapid push for economic growth drives the intensification of mining and other extractive industries in Cambodia. However, with state fragility and weak democratic processes, communities residing in resource-rich areas may not even equally benefit from the promise of economic growth. Instead, they are on the frontlines of environmental destruction, compounded disasters, exploitation and violence.

Climate change impacts in Cambodia has implications for regional security. Because of the geography of Cambodia, the challenges of resource governance in the context of climate change transcend territorial borders. In the Mekong river, a number of countries – Viet Nam, Thailand and Lao PDR²⁰ – together with Cambodia have been sharing the lower river basin for hundreds of years. In 1995, the four countries agreed on regional cooperation for the sustainable development of the Mekong, which subsequently established the Mekong River Commission.²¹ Regional cooperation among them is being challenged, however, by several sections of the river that have been and are planned to be partitioned for constructing hydropower dams.²² The construction of these dams displaces communities and once they are built, they continue to generate insecurities through loss of land and livelihood. Poor construction has resulted in dam collapse that affects neighbouring countries.²³ Flash floods from these dams lead to deaths when waters are released without due notification to nearby communities. In one of the sites for our research, participants reported instances of flash flooding in their low-lying village which they eventually traced back to a dam in their mountain. They received no prior information on the releasing of water by the dam company. Hence, they were unprepared and suffered damages to property and physical injuries. There were reportedly children that died of drowning.²⁴

Crucially, these dams have been scientifically shown to lead to the depletion of fish species by curtailing normal migration patterns and altering the river's shape and structure – all of which are necessary for healthy river ecosystem and renewing fish stock. Cambodia is projected to be hardest hit by these ecological impacts. In Cambodia, these dams are ostensibly built to power economic growth but they directly contribute to poverty and insecurity for surrounding communities. Evidence indicates that dams built in the Mekong will likely continue to undermine river health, fish habitats within the river itself, and the ecosystem in general unless measures are put in place to address environmental and human impacts.²⁵ In the Tonle Sap Lake which receives water from the Mekong, surrounding communities are already experiencing multiple impacts. Many are

forced to resort to illegal fishing in protected areas because of overall decline in fish stock attributed to the Mekong dams upstream.²⁶ Food and water shortages drive affected households into drought-related debt, labour exploitation and human trafficking.²⁷ Affected populations try to adapt but the options available for them are very limited and expose them to different harms. This is thus a clear example of the interconnected security issues across multiple scales from individuals to ecosystems, and how climate change and state fragility exacerbates this.

NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS FOR GENDER, CLIMATE CHANGE AND RELATED CRISES

Cambodia has relevant national frameworks that can be strengthened through gender-responsive and integrated implementation. First, the Cambodian Constitution, as the highest law of the land, guarantees both gender equality and protection of the environment. Specific articles stipulate the importance of women as equal members of the Cambodian society and contributors to development. For example, Article 36 states: “[T]he work by housewives in the home shall have the same value as that which they can receive when working outside the home”.²⁸ This article, in principle, recognises that women's roles are not confined within the household, and that importantly, care and domestic work are as valuable as paid work.

Among these key frameworks are:

- **Neary Rattanak IV.** Gender mainstreaming and the inclusion of women across all areas of policy-making including development planning and implementation have been consistently promoted within the government's strategic plans on gender equality, called Neary Rattanak. The recent version identified two thematic priority issues: A) Women in Public Decision-Making and Politics; Gender Responsive Government Policies and Reform Programs; and B) Gender and Climate Change, Green Growth and Disaster Risk Management. According to the government plan, these two main themes should be incorporated in all areas of public policy-making.

- **National Action Plan (NAP) on Violence against Women (2014-2018).** The NAP on preventing violence against women expanded gender equality and is derived from the Constitution particularly, Article 45 on eliminating all forms of discrimination on women. The NAP sets forth a ‘multi-sectoral approach’ for three priority issues: domestic violence, rape and sexual violence, and violence against women with increased risk. The plan, however, has no specific provisions on displacement and the impacts of climate change on women’s security. Cambodia currently does not have a NAP on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (the ‘Women, Peace and Security agenda’).²⁹ The UN CEDAW committee expressed concerns that Cambodia’s post-conflict programmes have not effectively incorporated provisions of UNSC Resolution 1325. The committee also cited that the state lacks mechanisms of redress for victims of gender-based violence during the Khmer Rouge regime.³⁰ This is relevant in enhancing state commitment to preventing violence against women and strengthening human rights mechanisms in the country as part of DRR and CC agendas.
- **Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) 2014-2023.** Cambodia is a signatory to the Rio Declaration (1992) and Paris Agreement (2016). In line with its international obligations, the country has also developed national plans on DRR and Climate Change (Annex 2). Among the key priority areas included are the promotion of participatory approaches in reducing loss and damages, and the reduction of sectoral, regional and gender vulnerability and health risks to climate change impacts.³¹ The strategic plan is divided according to immediate, medium-term and long-term implementation phases. Within these phases are specific action points that call for the development of indicators for monitoring and evaluation, accreditation for the Green Climate Fund, and research and knowledge management among others.
- **Law on Administrative Management of Communes/Sangkat.** The Royal Government of Cambodia has been implementing Decentralization and Deconcentration (D&D) Policy since 2001.³² The policy is intended to give “local and rural

communities and commune/sangkat councils the power and ability to formulate and implement local development plans directly”.³³ Decentralisation has been a significant framework in driving local efforts for societal transformations in Cambodia. According to the Cambodian Human Development Report (2011) “[I]t is at the sub-national level that the potential is greatest for area-based planning and action, bringing different sectors together in an integrated development approach in line with local needs and circumstances”.³⁴ The commune is regarded as the frontline mechanism for effective governance and through which processes can begin to be gender-responsive. This is because the commune council is both the starting and end point for women’s and men’s participation in development planning. It is where solutions can be scaled up or down through coordination at provincial and regional levels.

- **The Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change (MPGCC) 2018-2030.** All agencies and line ministries are mandated to develop their own climate change plans in Cambodia. The government, specifically the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (2018), has stressed the need to better understand and respond to the gendered impacts of climate change. It has identified improving capacities in adaptation planning and investments at all levels, especially the subnational. Importantly, the plan calls for a “focus on in-depth research, learning and sharing the progress made, analyze the needs and gaps, and recommend the robust approaches for combating new forms of climate vulnerability and address disaster risks”.

In 2013, the UN CEDAW in its Concluding Observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports, recommended that the Royal Government of Cambodia:

“[F]urther ensure that women are actively involved in decision-making on the policies and programmes for disaster prevention and management, especially those relating to climate change adaptation and mitigation.”³⁵

Five years after, and with its 6th CEDAW periodic submission, the government responded by reporting on national strategies that are in place to mainstream gender within development, disaster resilience and climate change agendas. The government highlighted specific efforts that will promote community development and rural women's access to basic services, information technology, and livelihood, among others. The most recent of these frameworks is the Ministry of Women's Affairs Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change 2018-2030 which was launched in February 2018. The plan seeks to "institutionalize gender mainstreaming in climate change adaptation, mitigation and disaster risk reduction investments for contributing to equitable, climate resilience and sustainable society of Cambodia".³⁶ The country therefore has national frameworks that recognise climate change is a development and environmental issue and within this nexus, that gender equality is a necessary component. The challenge ahead, especially with implementation, is to translate broad gender-responsive policy commitments into specific gender-responsive practices, solutions and outcomes.

The next section presents our field research findings drawing on the knowledge and experiences of women from Pursat and Kampot. It demonstrates how starting from women's lives, we are able to identify how climate-induced risks are interlinked and consequently, how policy responses to these multiple, intersecting risks can be integrated under women's leadership.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

GENDERED DIVISION OF LABOUR AND WOMEN'S EVERYDAY AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

People's everyday and traditional knowledge are increasingly recognised for their value in global climate change and DRR agendas. New and emerging research studies have started documenting how this form of knowledge can:

- 1) Strengthen scientific information and technologies especially around monitoring and risk assessment;
- 2) Deepen or enhance the quality of resilience through shared lessons for adaptation; and as especially for indigenous traditional knowledge;
- 3) Serve as repository of accumulated knowledge relating to human interaction with the environment that can provide long historical perspectives that will sustain humanity in the future.³⁷

Our research with selected rural communities in Kampot and Pursat highlighted how gender divisions of labour affect women and men's distinct knowledge of the environment. In the baseline survey, only 10.3 per cent of all respondents reported awareness of programs on CC/DRR within their community or at the national level. A greater percentage of men reported awareness of CC/DRR programs than women (13.2 and 7.8 per cent respectively).³⁸ Despite their relatively low awareness—both men and women—were able to identify the range of climate-related risks and hazards they experience. They identified both rapid and slow onset disasters which they find increasingly hard to predict though primarily still seasonal (e.g. difficult for them to know how long droughts last or the frequency of lightning storms). This corroborates UNDP and NCDM research from 2013 which identified that for Pursat the top disasters are (1) floods, (2) drought and (3) lightning. In Kampot, they are ranked as (1) floods, (2) drought and (3) storm. Our respondents from both provinces stated that rapid onset disasters dominate much of their commune-level disaster response. The bulk of emergencies occur because of fire outbreaks due to intense heat or lightning strikes. They also reported what they observed as a growing frequency to Khyal

Kan Trak or Kyol Kan-Trak / ខ្យល់ភ្លៀងភ្លាញ which they described as a sudden and quick storm marked by strong winds with little to no rain. Yet it leaves great devastation to homes and their crops. Our respondents argued that this type of disaster is hard to predict yet Kyol Kan-Trak causes them immense insecurity just by not knowing when it will occur and what damages it might leave.

People's awareness on the impacts of climate change and related crises is shaped by gender. For example, more than 80 per cent of our baseline respondents reported that climate change affects their livelihood. In our own focus groups, the women relayed how their everyday understanding of climate change stems from the roles they perform for their families and in the community. One woman stated,

"We learnt how to farm from our mothers...what to plant depending on availability of water, how to tie rice stalks and harvesting. Our community practices collective harvesting." "This is changing now for our community, not many women want to become farmers...many women are now garment factory workers".³⁹

According to them, women in their farming communities are brought up since they were young to learn traditional methods of farming and this has meant access to knowledge on their environment and how to depend on memory for patterns and seasons to rice farming. In addition, farming as well as fishing are increasingly difficult livelihoods and that many of the women are foregoing farms for garment factories with more predictable incomes. However, this means leaving their villages and possible exposure to equally or even more intense work conditions. This economic pattern of highly feminized garment industries in Cambodia perhaps explain why our baseline research findings indicated more female respondents (33.5 per cent) reported that climate change affects their income earning activities than male respondents (17.2 per cent).

Adaptation and mitigation of climate change impacts may negatively affect both men and women though

these were shown to reinforce gendered roles. Our respondents stated that in times of disaster they are often left to fend for themselves. If they receive any assistance this usually comes from the Cambodian Red Cross which has been chronically insufficient due to recurrent disasters in their communities. Hence, they just try to go on with their lives without seeking help from government. An example shared to us was how the village collectively looks for water sources during droughts as a form of adaptation. Still, households where the men have migrated out of the village for work are at a disadvantage because their care obligations limit the ability to search and collect water which is increasingly time consuming. Those with income to pay, buy water instead from middlemen who collect them. Those without income to spare will have far limited options and in such cases, this may mean leaving children behind or restricting water intake. A key-informant further explained, "[M]en's and women's needs differ and we see this in how they use water. Women use more water in their daily lives, but end up eating less rice. Emergency planning needs to address this."⁴⁰ Because of the gendered division of labour, women in our research showed immense dependence on water availability for performing care and domestic tasks for the family. Yet, despite the labour women put in for the collection and use of water, they do not necessarily benefit from this labour and in some cases, are even allocated less when there is scarcity.

One participant in the baseline research stated: "The village chief sometimes has some support such as giving rice, fish sauce, noodle, etc. But some other times, they also do not have money to help us too. What they can help is only to tell us to be careful". When there is a gap between women and men's awareness of the available information and programs on DRR/CC, and their everyday and traditional knowledge, communities more intensely rely on this everyday knowledge of their environment for survival regardless of whether it is incomplete or inaccurate. One male elderly focus group participant told us: "[T]he change in weather has been hard for our [farming] community. Even with our traditional knowledge, we find it hard to predict or identify pattern. I just feel scared [for the future]".⁴¹

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN CLIMATE GOVERNANCE

Kampot and Pursat are officially identified as disaster-prone provinces by the Cambodian government and by aid organisations such as ActionAid Cambodia. Hence, some of our respondents reported that it was common for villages in their areas to have had DRR/CC programs. Not all of our respondents have directly participated in any programs whether through initiatives by the government or NGOs. However, those that have been involved, predominantly reported attending 'awareness raising' and 'planning' or 'consultation' activities. In our baseline research, respondents from Pursat province were more likely to report that they engaged in CC/DRR planning than respondents in Kampot (28 percent and 12.9 percent respectively). Gender relations proved important in understanding women's experiences of inclusion and exclusion in climate governance and, more broadly in community decision-making.

EXCLUSIONARY FACTORS

In addition, CC/DRR is largely focused on technical or bureaucratic solutions and does not value or take into account women's cumulative, everyday knowledge.

1 Unequal gender norms and divisions of labour begin in the household

According to the baseline research, the top reasons among women in Kampot and Pursat on why they have not participated in DRR/CC planning are first, that they received no invitation from their local authority. Second, that they do not have the time for participation. We examined these responses further in the context of political transition in Cambodia where especially in rural areas, people are still trying to develop practices and institutions to implement the decentralisation of government.

First, only 22.9 percent of our participants reported raising issues related to CC/DRR to their local authority (e.g. village chief and/or commune chief) in the baseline study. The majority of participants did not raise any

concerns to the local authority. More female respondents (34.5 percent) than male respondents (19.2 percent) reported that they were not invited by their local authority to discuss DRR/CC issues of their communities. This highlights that men are expected to have access to decision-making because of their social networks more than the women and this is linked to commune or village chiefs being predominantly men. The gender-balanced composition of commune councils thus matters because it reflects and helps reproduce stereotypes and beliefs that constrain women's participation.

Second, women do not really have time to even participate in civic and political life of their community because of their mounting care obligations. This is particularly acute for households where the men have migrated for work, or for both men and women with children left to elderly grandmothers to take care of. According to one of our key-informants, "[D]roughts are lasting longer and longer. In one commune, we found that men were not as impacted because they migrated for work. Women stayed at home and had to take care of children, finding food, and water collection. So the impacts were different between men and women."⁴²

In our research, our women respondents explained how during disasters especially droughts, children and the elderly are left in the villages, leaving the bulk of household response and coping in the hands of women. The insecurity compounds and intensifies because droughts and flooding also trigger the spread of illnesses among children and the elderly. When children or grandparents get sick, this also means loss of income because someone has to stay at home and take care of them. Women are predominantly caregivers and without necessarily addressing their rising care and domestic responsibilities, governments and NGOs cannot expect to see broader groups of women participating in CC/DRR or general commune decision-making, let alone be able to build experience to participate in provincial and national governance. Programs whether by the government or NGOs that push for participation of women need to be attentive to how they fuel new expectations on women that only add to and therefore worsen the quality of time left for the women to meet their own personal and familial needs.

2 Continuum of violence against women and girls

The research provides evidence that vulnerability to physical insecurity before, during and after crises is affected by structural inequalities, which together create barriers to women's participation in climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction. Our baseline research indicated that nearly half (47.6 percent) of all female respondents said they do not know how to cope with disaster, they stay at home or do nothing when they occur. 32 percent of female respondents reported that climate change – as in extreme weather – affects their health or makes them feel sick compared to 11.5 percent of male respondents. This was further examined in focus group discussions around the intensification of care burdens that women experience during and after disasters. Women reported physical exhaustion which makes them more vulnerable to getting sick, especially when they evacuate to makeshift shelters during flooding. They are also primary caregivers of children and elderly which exposes them to infections or diseases more than the men.

In another area, they reported climbing nearby mountains in search of bamboo and vines as an alternative source of income during droughts.⁴³ This practice they said was done for many years and passed on by their elders in that community. Both men and women know how to forage for bamboo. This form of livelihood is very dangerous however according to them because it involves trekking long distances and even swimming across a waterfall. Some have heard that women who climb on their own have encountered sexual violence from unknown men so they try to go with their husbands. 'Self-help' in these contexts does not necessarily translate into positive forms of adaptation. Rather, they reflect how households and communities respond to the economic and environmental conditions that they are faced with in detrimental ways precisely because of the absence of alternative livelihood safety nets. For women, these physical and economic insecurities are exacerbated by threats of violence from men.

Furthermore, comprehensive protection measures for women's and men's distinct vulnerabilities in the

face of climate change is linked to people's level of access and capacity to translate or process technical information regarding climate risks and reporting. Our research findings suggest the importance of ongoing sustainable development work to address particularly poverty, education and health. According to a key-informant,

"Knowledge on climate change is new even for local authorities. They don't understand but if you talk about natural disasters they understand. So, we start with why disasters are occurring more frequently, about rain patterns...we start with their local knowledge first. How fast they understand depends on their level of education and ability to process technical information."⁴⁴

This is very relevant for poor, remote areas with commune councils and leaders also needing assistance in order to implement the demands of their communities. Commune-level governance requires economic support and often there may be awareness on DRR/CC but there is a lack of budget despite being the first responders from the government. As pointed out by a male informant, "[T]here is a need to strengthen role of all four levels – national, provincial, district and communes. We need to define what each one's roles are when disaster occurs."⁴⁵ In our focus group with a number of local commune officers, they expressed how they felt that they have to prioritise needs because there are not enough resources to meet both emergency response and development planning. When they develop commune plans, some needs are eventually left out including lack of gender-specific assistance on preventing violence against women in times of disasters and displacements. Our respondents added further, if there is any budget at commune level, this is spent towards those with immediate needs such as families whose houses have been destroyed by rapid-onset disasters such as fires (due to lightning or during dry seasons), and by Kyol Kan-Trak. When emergency assistance runs out, people – even the commune leaders themselves – are forced to find ways to cope because they are used to not having access to development or emergency assistance. This then makes them even more vulnerable to successive and recurrent disasters.

One informant stated “even if we seek support from the commune, they cannot help anyway – they are in the same situation as us. The officers are also struggling”.⁴⁶

Lastly, access to land and natural resources is a key determinant of structural inequality and increasing physical insecurity. Interviews with a local NGO and ministry representatives indicated the political issue of land rights are extremely dangerous in the country and especially in high-risk areas. Informants shared that many communities have been forcibly displaced due to land grabbing and illegal logging. In addition, those tasked with protecting the environment end up being at the frontline of threats of violence. For example, environment officers, as part of their conservation roles, often face risk to their lives in patrolling forests and capturing illegal loggers. One male informant stated that their job is high-risk which explains why no woman would join this profession, and that even in their office, women comprise the minority. Another group at high-risk are indigenous peoples who have been reportedly experiencing threats from both logging companies and the dominant ethnic groups in Cambodia. One of our male informant who represented an NGO for indigenous people explained, “[I]f I protect the forest, this does not just benefit the IP [indigenous peoples] community but the benefit is for the whole of Cambodia”.⁴⁷ According to him, IP in Cambodia have been portrayed as anti-development because of their efforts to protect specific lands from deforestation. He also stressed the need to

better protect the rights and needs of IP communities over ancestral lands in order to better promote environmental goals of the country. This is because they have deep knowledge of these lands and have distinct insights on how to maintain and govern these resources for generations.

INCLUSIONARY FACTORS

1 Importance of women’s networks and working in women-only groups

An important factor is the formation and strengthening of women-only groups. Women working specifically with other women enable them to feel secure and comfortable to speak up. This is basic because as one of our informants stated, for many Cambodian women, cultural norms really influence their ability to speak and make decisions:

“For many traditional Cambodian women, they keep many of their ails as secret. They will not tell this to other people even their own husbands. They will feel comfortable to discuss with a woman doctor. This is really a challenge in Cambodia and many of our health centers still don’t have women staff”.⁴⁸

TABLE 2. WOMEN WORKING TOGETHER IN AND OUTSIDE OF GOVERNMENT

Women DRR/CC Champions and Grassroots Women	
Location	Kampot and Pursat Provinces, Cambodia
Year of Origin	2016
Membership	27 (14 ‘grassroots or community’ women and 13 government ‘champion’ counterparts)
‘Catalyst Issue’	<p>This group was formed as part of a DIPECHO DRR project (2016) based on project learnings and recommendations from previous DIPECHO projects to enhance women’s leadership in DRR.</p> <p>ActionAid Cambodia previously conducted research studies on the impact of disasters on women and found that women are often left out of DRR planning and decision-making, despite being at high-risk during disasters.</p>

Our research with a specific network of women DRR champions in Kampot and Pursat strongly indicated how the women find the network useful for promoting their leadership in their community. They aspire to eventually influence decision-making at provincial and national levels. First, because the network allows them to discuss shared experiences that only women go through in their community. Second, in spaces that are male-dominated, coming together helps validate their concerns when they do speak up because then the issues are not only about them as individuals. And third, because some of the women we met are strongly driven by their interest in the affairs of their community and including helping them prepare for the impacts of climate change. The network is composed of women from both government and community who form alliances in learning about DRR/CC and how to advocate for the needs of their community directly.

According to one young woman DRR grassroots leader,

“I observed our community has limited knowledge on public services in general not just DRR. So I want to improve the knowledge. I am planning to develop a proposal in my community to organise a public forum not just on DRR/CC awareness but also information on accessing public services”.⁴⁹

This young woman is an example of how through the network she was able to actively reveal the connections between DRR and long-term development of the community which is dependent on awareness and access to public services. They expressed a strong need to better understand extreme weather changes they are experiencing but also feel their communities do not have the capacity for disaster response because they lack technical knowledge.

In our focus groups, majority of our women respondents narrated how coming together helped build confidence and gain practical experience in working for their communities. Many are committed to promoting the interests and needs of their community and through their network they make sure they do not miss out on DRR/CC information. They are using the network as a specific platform to build expertise in public service and leadership.

2 Men's support for women's participation

While women-only groups serve specific aims, our respondents and key-informants also stressed how indispensable men's contributions are for promoting women's participation and leadership. For example, one informant pointed out, “[A]griculture in Cambodia is very feminised. Women work in farms more and for longer periods even in context of labour migration”.⁵⁰ For women farmers to be able to influence agricultural policymaking and in making farming for their communities more climate-resilient, a starting point is in ensuring gender-balanced decision-making at the household and community levels. An example on how this works was shared by a female informant regarding the public-private partnership to develop ‘women-led and women-only’ farmer groups in Preah Vihear province. This project was initially planned to promote women's role in the community. However, the women-only farmer groups initiative was not successful because it led to women having more responsibilities to do on their own. Farm maintenance required hard labour and some of the women really could not do this. The women eventually decided to engage the men (their husbands). Gender equity in the roles among farmer groups was seen as more effective for promoting the needs of the women.⁵¹ This situation even helped create a platform on which to discuss the division of labour and the need for men to support changes in the household and community.

Another female informant who was a ministry official stated that their formula is to ensure 60 to 70 percent representation of women in all agricultural programs to reflect the reality that most women work in the farms and fish ponds. They also know that the women they train always share lessons with their husbands.⁵² Hence, investing in capacity-building of women was seen as an investment to the community as a whole. While this may indeed occur in some cases, it will be a difficult rule to apply in all programs. For instance, in the case of crisis management, men and women do need to be participating equally. One male informant stressed, “it is important that they join together in disaster response”.⁵³ The change has to happen among men too: “[F]irst we need to have women who

want to do it, then we build their capacity, and third we give them role and position. However, women need to ask permission from their husbands first before they can work on these things”.⁵⁴

In Cambodia, our research participants noted that misconceptions about what ‘gender’ means in practice are prevalent. One of our focus groups raised this point,

“Men are not engaging with promoting women’s rights. They think this is just for women. This is an important barrier. They need to know how promoting women’s rights equally benefit them. They need to know it starts in their homes and community”.⁵⁵

Therefore, unless the men themselves understand the value of supporting the causes of women, they will remain a fundamental barrier that keeps women excluded in civic and political life. Both government and NGOs have a role in communicating and practicing gender inclusivity among women as much as the men. The women leaders in our research said that addressing such misconceptions is part of what they do when they engage men in their communities in DRR awareness-raising: “[W]hen they hear ‘gender’, they just throw it to the women. I tell them not just women but also men”.⁵⁶

TRANSFORMATIVE COLLECTIVE ACTION AND MAKING WOMEN’S INCLUSION COUNT

Bringing together insights from Cambodian women’s knowledge and participation yields a model for transformative collective action wherein women can directly enable gender-responsive mechanisms that actively integrate security issues and agendas; with the intention to extend crisis response to long-term development; and to promote the progressive inclusion of other marginalised groups or sectors in ways that strengthen and diversify expertise from villages to the global level.

Our research among women in Kampot and Pursat underscored the importance of making women’s inclusion count in order to go beyond participation as simply consultation and into women’s collective action where women’s groups and networks receive ongoing training and support.

Gender-Responsive Alternatives to Climate Change: Critical Actions



TEXT BOX 1. INTERGENERATIONAL AND PEER MENTORING

One woman from the Cham Muslim minority group we met narrated how participation in DRR training initially took a lot of negotiation with her husband. She estimated that it had taken around five years to change his perception and gain support. It was difficult because they have religious and traditional beliefs that a woman should not travel by herself but this was needed in order for her to attend trainings. Other men tried to influence her husband saying that if they were the husband, they would not allow her and that a man’s income should be enough to support her. Eventually she convinced him and now he fully supports her.

A younger woman from the same ethnic group affirmed the barriers in their own community. Yet, according to her, because of the pioneering work of this other Cham woman, she has inspired young women like her to follow suit. Now they have her as a role model. The younger woman stated that she faced less barriers and found it much easier to convince her parents (it did not take five years). They are not so worried about her because they also know and trust the older Cham woman champion she is with.

Our research identified that there have been positive impacts of gender mainstreaming that speak to national plans such as Neary Rattanak and climate change agendas in the country. In the specific communities in Kampot and Pursat we worked with, deliberate efforts to include women were reportedly starting to benefit the community. A project to raise awareness on a hotline number where community can get information to prepare for disasters had women as key users.

“More women attend awareness raising seminars, more women connect through the ‘hotline’. Men don’t usually attend because they are working even at night, so they want to sleep during the day. Sometimes, the men would just send the women to attend as the family representative”.⁵⁷

Another indicator for the gains of gender mainstreaming is the importance of women’s engagement at commune councils. As explained by one informant, “If we want to increase women’s role in disaster, development, CC, it starts at increasing women at committee and commune levels. When women’s roles increase, they have a strong voice in development of all plans because they know the needs of women”.⁵⁸ However, our focus groups also examined that participation can often be reduced simply to consultation where the women are taught or ‘given’ information rather than also about how women can set agendas and define outcomes. One informant from an NGO stated that communes are yet to engage communities meaningfully: “[C]onsultation process is only done once a year. We are consulted but then they do not do anything for the issues we raise. So, the following year, we were less interested to participate”.⁵⁹ Hence, gender-responsive participation is about “how women influence the process matters for the implementation of projects”.⁶⁰

In one of the women’s network focus groups we conducted in Kampot, the women told us: “[t]hey say women are shy and unable to speak up. This is not true for our group. We know the barriers are just there”.⁶¹ For them, they stress that being referred to as ‘shy’ is not always about individual characteristics but rather, how structures and practices reflect and reproduce their exclusion. They added further how for them women enjoy talking and have many opinions which they have always openly expressed within their own networks. Driven to participate in the affairs of their

commune, these women are challenging cultural norms on the role of Cambodian women in their society that expect women to remain docile and deferential to the men in their family and community.⁶²

Key-informants affirmed that communes/sangkats play an important role. Women’s participation in DRR/CC decision-making can help nurture and deepen civic and political participation for instance because “[C]ommunity-risk mapping is an entry point for communities to analyse and act on their climate and disaster resilience priorities”.⁶³ In Cambodia, one informant stated that commune investment and development plans “are entry points. They can help NGOs design program and projects that will reach the grassroots”.⁶⁴ Women’s equal contribution in developing these plans are therefore vital in ensuring their knowledge and needs are incorporated. These plans are also where important continuum can be strengthened between long-term DRR development plans with minimum standardised relief assistance in emergencies.⁶⁵ However, at present the interconnected security and development concerns of vulnerable communities are grossly neglected because men and especially women from the wider community are excluded in commune development planning. Even when solutions are in place they reflect a prioritisation of ad hoc disaster response at the expense of long-term preparedness and redistribution of capacities to mitigate risks because commune governance itself is not adequately resourced in rural and remote areas.

Last, once women start participating in commune and provincial decision-making, the support from various actors especially the national government need to be consistent and sustained. The women DRR champions explained their need for ongoing capacity and economic support in order to undertake community work. While women are gaining experience in networks and leading collective action, they are constrained by the need to financially support their families. One woman stated that her family was sometimes resentful when she attends trainings, “They say I miss out on my responsibilities at home and that I don’t even get paid for these trainings.”⁶⁶ As one informant stated, “[B]uilding capacity and experience of women to take on management roles are an issue. When they are in position, they struggle to become good leaders because what support are available?”⁶⁷ It is not enough that women are included in decision-making, their inclusion must count.

CONCLUSION

The major findings of this research project have significant implications for gender-responsive alternatives to climate change in Cambodia. They provide evidence that identifying women's distinct knowledges and experiences is a necessary strategy to comprehensively understand the consequences of climate change and to reveal its direct and indirect impacts. For chronically affected communities, such as those whose traditional livelihood depend on farming and fishing, successive crises erode any gains in human development. This impact can then push communities into forms of negative adaptation, such as, when women put up with poor health conditions, endure hunger, or migrate to Phnom Penh even at the cost of being deeply indebted. The effects of multiple disasters add further strain to state infrastructures across both urban and rural areas. Gender-responsive programmes therefore need to comprehensively address protection risks especially for women as a result of their climate-induced mobility.

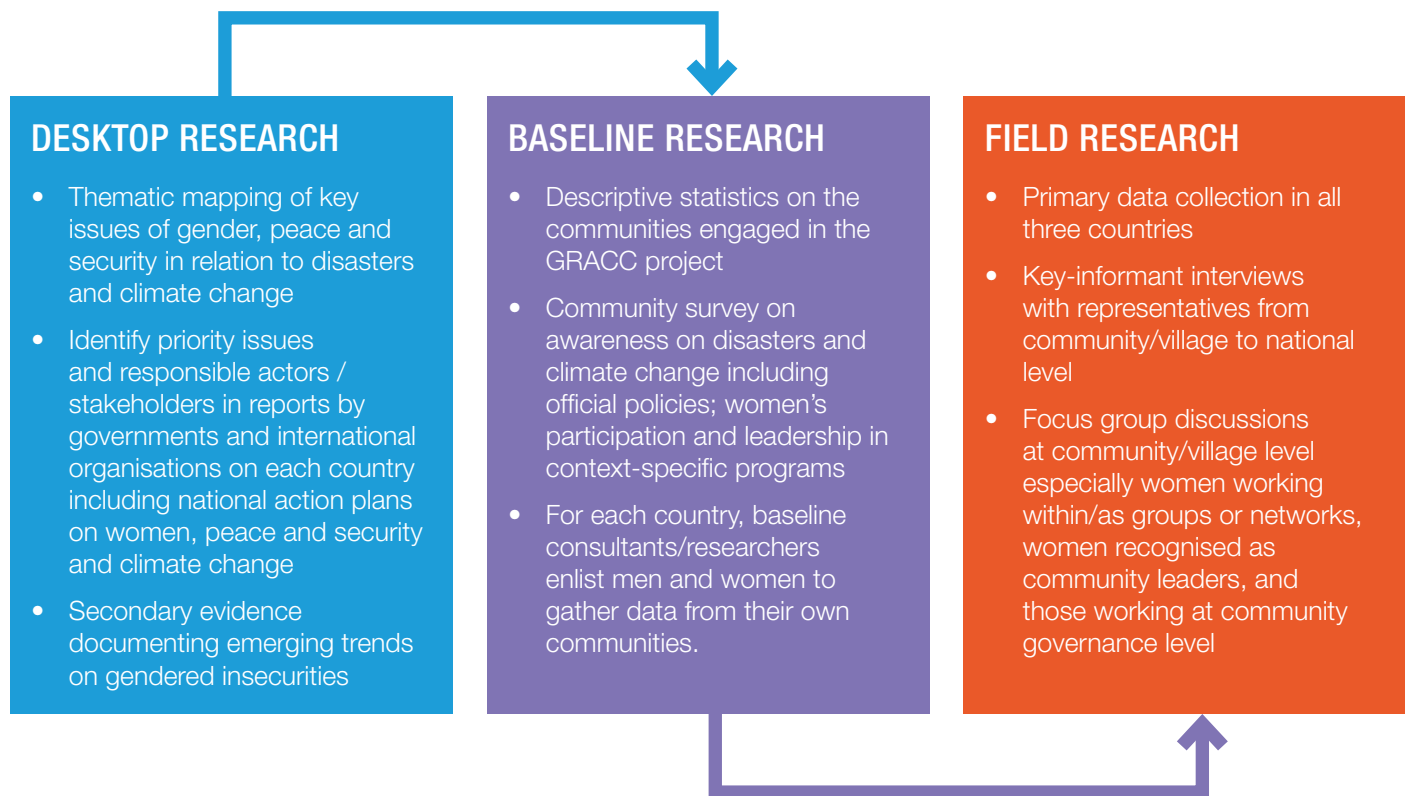
Women DRR and CC champions in Cambodia and alliances among them within and outside of government are a positive example of support for women's collective action to address climate change. Creating decision-making spaces for women in commune councils as well as climate resilience programs can bridge government and civil society and enable greater participation from the broader community. Promoting gender equality in climate change adaptation is part of long-term recovery from conflict in Cambodia and building state institutions and practices that are inclusive and responsive to the needs of all of the people.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

Cambodian women, especially those on the frontline of multiple crises, should inform how, when and where gender-responsive policy interventions can integrate action on interlinked climate-induced crises. Cambodia has highly relevant national frameworks such as the Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change that can be strengthened through gender-responsive and integrated implementation. Government and non-government actors should:

- Prioritise the **development of commune and sangkat levels implementation plans focused on access to services, IT and women's livelihoods and participation** in climate change preparedness and adaptation, consistent with the national Master Plan.
- Promote **national-level coordination to identify areas of synergies or trade-offs among the goals espoused** under the national Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change (MPGCC) 2018-2030, Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) 2014-2023, and Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management 1996 among key frameworks.
- Develop **integrated early warning mechanisms for disasters at household and village levels**, incorporating women's knowledge within networks of climate change and disaster risk reduction champions.
- Enable the **integration of women's everyday knowledge with technical knowledge to shape the agenda and solutions** within commune development planning process at village, sangkat and national administration levels.
- **Strengthen women's capacity at the community level to contribute their knowledge** into reporting formats for forecasting and risk analysis, and to access relevant technologies.
- **Strengthen technical capacities of commune local officials to respond to gender-specific needs in risk-prone areas** such as Kampot and Pursat and subsequently, provide gender-responsive climate change policy training and support.
- **Establish women-friendly spaces and gender-based violence protection mechanisms** in drought or flooding response
- **Ensure access to justice, protection mechanisms, and compensation for loss and damages** due to localised land rights conflicts, and displacements as a result of fires, flash flooding and other rapid-onset disasters.
- **Support women's networks and enable gender-balanced representation** in governance institutions as part of the decentralisation process in Cambodia.

ANNEX 1. THE RESEARCH PROCESS



ANNEX 2.

FOUNDATIONS FOR GENDER-RESPONSIVE ALTERNATIVES TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Main Policy frameworks	Provisions, contents and entry-points
1 Cambodian Constitution	✓ Articles on gender equality and women's rights (31-36, 43-47); on environment (59), preserving national heritage and culture (69-71).
2 Neary Rattanak IV (2014-2018)	✓ Cambodian Gender Strategic Plan, government's efforts to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in Cambodia.
3 National Action Plan on Violence against Women (2014-2018)	✓ Builds on national laws on domestic violence and victim protection; and law against human trafficking and sexual exploitation. ✓ Framework can be leveraged to address how climate change is fueling different forms and risks for violence against women especially in crisis settings.
4 Strategic National Action Plan for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for 2008-2013	✓ Recognises women have disproportionate burden of coping with effects of disasters. ✓ Strengthening sub-national DRR capacity is recognized as priority. ✓ "Mainstream gender and cultural sensitivity training". ✓ Integrated and implemented at commune development plans.
5 Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) (2014-2023)	✓ Identifies 8 strategic priorities including raising awareness on climate change in the context of decentralisation.
6 The Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change (MPGCC) (2018-2030)	✓ Sets forth relevant actors and stakeholders for promoting gender equality within climate change. ✓ Creates entry-points for linking peace and security concerns including violence against women and sexual and reproductive health needs. ✓ Requires clearer implementation on specific steps to promote women's leadership and participation.
7 Law on Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Management (1996)	✓ Crucial starting point to address intersections of climate change and resource-based conflicts from a gender lens.
8 The Agreement on Cooperation for Sustainable Development of the Mekong River Basin (Mekong Agreement) (1995)	✓ Agreement for regional cooperation mechanism among the Mekong countries to govern access to the river and development planning. ✓ Climate change will test national and regional governance mechanisms built on partnerships with Cambodia's neighbours. ⁶⁸ ✓ Currently, no formal cross-border emergency communications systems are in place and the Mekong River Commission can be an avenue to facilitate this. The Mekong countries including Cambodia have yet to establish standards of protection and compensation for affected communities including when trans-border disasters occur such as when dams collapse.

ANNEX 3.

COUNTRY PROFILE ON GENDER, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY

Climate risk and fragility

2018 Global Climate Risk Index	111 out of 183 (2016) 2016 losses per unit GDP in % = 0.0099 2016 losses in million US\$ (adjusted by purchasing power parity) = 5.856
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2018 State Fragility Index	53 out of 178 countries (score, on high warning status)
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2018 Global Peace Index	96 out of 163 countries (score 2.101, 1 means most peaceful)
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Gender, Peace and Security

2017 WPS Index	95 out of 153 (score 0.66, 1 is highest)
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2017 Global Gender Gap	99 out of 144 (score 0.676, 1 means parity)
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2013 Environment and Gender Index	Not included
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SDG and Human Development

2018 SDG Index	109 out of 156 (score 60.4, 100 is highest)
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2017 Human Development Index	146 out of 189 (score 0.582, 1 is highest)
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ENDNOTES

- 1 Richard Friend & Try Thuon, *Cambodia Human Development Report 2011* (Ministry of Environment of Cambodia and UNDP Cambodia, 2011) https://www.preventionweb.net/files/21672_cambodiahumandevlopmentreport2011.pdf.
- 2 The project is part of a multi-country case study research examining gender-responsive alternatives to climate change in two other countries, Kenya and Vanuatu.
- 3 IPCC, *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. R.K. Pachauri and L.A. Meyer (eds.) (Geneva, Switzerland: IPCC, 2014), p.2.
- 4 Camilo Mora et al., "Broad threat to humanity from cumulative climate hazards intensified by greenhouse gas emissions," *Nature Climate Change* vol. 8, (2018): p.1062, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-018-0315-6>. See also Wolfgang Cramer et al., "Climate change and interconnected risks to sustainable development in the Mediterranean," *Nature Climate Change*, vol. 8 (2018): pp.972–980, <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41558-018-0299-2>
- 5 Cambodian National Committee for Disaster Management and UNDP, *Cambodia Disaster Loss and Damage Information System: Analysis Report 1996-2013* (2013), pp.5-6, <http://www.kh.undp.org/content/dam/cambodia/docs/EnvEnergy/Cambodia-Disaster-Loss-and-Damage-Analysis-Report%201996-%202013.pdf>.
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- 9 The research received Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee approval, project number 11825. Three main features of our collaboration involved community participation and specifically, women from the network of DRR champions: first, through direct participation and benefit as part of ActionAid program delivery which includes the production of a Women's Charter of Demands. Second, ActionAid Cambodia partnered with two NGOs in Kampot and Pursat that have had long-standing community development work. Children and Women Development Center Cambodia (CWDCC) (Kampot) and Rural Friend Community for Development (RFCD) (Pursat) directly helped in inviting participants for our interviews and focus group discussions including with government agencies. In so doing, the two organisations established new connections which can help further sustain their own government partnerships that can benefit the communities involved in our research. Third, indirect and regular consultations how the women champions understand the aims and questions of the project. Our collaboration facilitated this participation through a steering committee structure and during the actual field research data collection of interviews and focus group discussions.
- 10 The project is implemented in 27 villages across Kampot and Pursat Provinces. Through it, ActionAid Cambodia builds on its country expertise on implementing DRR/CCA projects through the EU-funded *Disaster Preparedness ECHO programme (DIPECHO)* since 2007, and on gender-based violence through their *Safe Cities for Women* project since 2014. These two strands of expertise were integrated in rendering visible the continuity between disaster resilience and climate governance and ensuring that women are free from violence in their everyday life particularly in the context of rural to urban migration as both economic and climate adaptation strategy.
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 - 40 Personal interview male informant, NCDM, Phnom Penh, 25 May 2018.
 - 41 Male elderly commune officer in FGD, Phnom Penh, 26 May 2018.
 - 42 Personal interview male informant, Phnom Penh, 25 May 2018.
 - 43 FGD, Kampot, 27 May 2018.
 - 44 Personal interview male informant, NCDD, Phnom Penh, 25 May 2018.
 - 45 Personal interview male informant, NCDM, Phnom Penh, 25 May 2018.
 - 46 FGD participant, 27 May 2018.
 - 47 Referring to REDD+, male key-informant from NGO, Phnom Penh, 6 June 2018
 - 48 Personal interview male informant, NCDM, Phnom Penh, 25 May 2018.
 - 49 Female FGD participant, Kampot, 27 May 2018.
 - 50 Female informant, 24 May 2018, Phnom Penh.
 - 51 Personal interview female informant, MOWA, Phnom Penh, 25 May 2018.
 - 52 Key informant Kampot, 28 May 2018.
 - 53 Personal interview male informant, NCDM, Phnom Penh, 25 May 2018.
 - 54 Baseline key-informant.
 - 55 FGD female elderly participant, Phnom Penh, 26 May 2018.
 - 56 Female commune officer in FGD, Phnom Penh, 26 May 2018
 - 57 FGD female participant, Kampot, 27 May 2018.
 - 58 Personal interview male informant, NCDM, Phnom Penh, 25 May 2018.
 - 59 Female informant from NGO, Siem Reap, 4 June 2018.
 - 60 Personal interview female informant, MOWA, Phnom Penh, 25 May 2018.
 - 61 Female FGD participants, Kampot, 27 May 2018
 - 62 This code specifically refers to Chbeab srey which remains taught in schools. See CEDAW report concluding observations. UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. 2013. *Concluding observations on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Cambodia*. 29 October. CEDAW /C/KHM/CO/4-5.
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 - 65 Personal interview male informant, NCDM, Phnom Penh, 25 May 2018.
 - 66 FGD participant, Kampot, 27 May 2018.
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 - 68 Friend & Thuon, *Cambodia Human Development Report*, 2011.
 - 69 This is based on official count of key representatives from the organisations we requested interviews from. However, it was common for our individual interviews to transform into a group interview with the main representative inviting colleagues to join. The total number became difficult to track but predominantly the main person talking was our key-informant. When appropriate, we attempted to open questions and invite others to speak (note that language translation is a primary barrier which could have limited broader group participation).

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Monash Gender, Peace & Security is a group of policy and community engaged scholars whose research is focused in the field of gender, peace and security. We seek to use our research to inform scholarly debate, policy development and implementation, public understanding about the gendered politics of armed conflict and the search for peace.

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