

*Making Gender and Generation Matter for Sustainable  
Development*

IIED

GENDER, GENERATION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND  
THE MEDIA

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# **Raising the profile of Gender and Generation: The role of the Climate Change Media Partnership**

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*"I write stories with women struggling and telling me rain patterns have changed. So what? Kenyans think it's a way of life."*

Female CCMP journalist from Kenya

*"I have never felt the need to consciously add the gender dimension because it's there at the centre of it. Your human interest story will automatically be the woman's story."*

Male CCMP journalist from India

*"We need to demystify this aspect that gender issues are best reported by women. We've come to understand that gender includes men and women, and there are also issues that affect men that need to come out in the newspapers."*

Male CCMP journalist from Uganda

*"We really need to establish how it is that climate change is going to affect women in a different way than it is going to affect men."*

Female CCMP journalist from Jamaica

This case study describes how the Climate Change Media Partnership (a joint project of IIED, Panos and Internews) has integrated gender and generation in its activities through a step-wise process of action, learning and improvement.

## **THE CLIMATE CHANGE MEDIA PARTNERSHIP – WHAT AND WHY?**

December 2007 was a key milestone in the international climate-change negotiations. The 192 governments that are party to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) had gathered in Bali to agree a timetable to hammer out a global deal to tackle climate change.

With so much at stake, journalists from the world's wealthiest countries were there in force. Yet of 1,500 journalists who applied for accreditation to attend the summit, just 9 percent were from non-industrialised countries other than the host Indonesia (Fahn, 2008). A much smaller percentage actually travelled to Bali and there was zero media representation for nearly the entire UN list of 50 Least Developed Countries.

This meant that only a minimal number of reporters from the nations most vulnerable to climate change were present to interpret the developments and relay the relevant news back home. To address this gap, IIED, Panos and Internews formed the Climate Change Media Partnership (CCMP).

This initiative brought 37 journalists from 17 developing countries to Bali and provided them with a 10-day programme of support. Without the CCMP, many

countries — such as Jamaica, Kenya, Laos, Myanmar, the Philippines, Sudan and Uganda — would have had no media presence at the conference.

The reporters received editorial support and daily briefings on the negotiations. They also attended the CCMP's day-long Media Clinic. At this, 18 specialists took part in panel discussions and took questions from the journalists on issues such as biofuels, deforestation, carbon trading and adaptation to climate change.

The partnership also provided a service linking reporters to key sources of information relevant to their audiences back home. They met and interviewed negotiators, scientists, government ministers, NGO representatives and indigenous people.

Many media-support initiatives concentrate solely on workshop-based training, but the journalists in Bali were both learning and doing, actively reporting from the conference on a daily basis. During the meeting, they produced an average of 18 stories each for print, online, radio and TV outlets in their home countries.

The CCMP has run programmes every year since 2007, and has provided a total of 144 fellowships for journalists from 49 developing nations to attend one or more of the UN climate change conferences in Bali (2007), Poznań (2008), Copenhagen (2009) and Cancún (2010), as well as key interim meetings. Among the many refinements that the CCMP team has made to its programme over the years is a greater focus on gender and generation.

## **GENDER, GENERATION, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE MEDIA**

Climate change is the defining issue of the 21st century yet its gender and generation dimensions — in terms of contributions to the problem and vulnerability to its effects — are still being explored. What is clear is that women, children and the elderly have weaker voices than middle-aged men in the science and politics of climate change. The media therefore represents a key channel for striking a finer balance.

*“Women make up approximately 70% of the world's poor, are highly dependent on local natural resources for their livelihood, and face historical disadvantages that include limited access to decision-making and economic assets; all of these factors make them disproportionately susceptible to the effects of climate change.”*

Global Gender and Climate Alliance (2010)

*“The women ... seemed to cope better with the impacts of changing circumstances than the men, by exploring opportunities that enable them to cope better. Women are also repositories of knowledge about crops and climate, the environment, natural resources, food preservation techniques, etc. (rather than men) and are seen to be such by men. This knowledge does not however make women less vulnerable. For instance they are not typically empowered in policy making processes that in turn impact their operational capacity and ability.”*

Petrie (2010)

When asked if he wrote about women's or men's experiences in his climate change reporting, one CCMP fellow replied that climate change was a poverty issue, not a gender issue, and that the media should be careful not to construe it as a women's issue because climate change affects the poorest and most vulnerable people in developing countries regardless of gender.

A female CCMP journalist stated: "I am not fully convinced that women in my country are more affected or differently affected than men by climate change... In the most recent typhoon that hit [my country], equal numbers of men and women were killed."

These comments reveal the media interpretations do not always tally with what researchers and nongovernmental organisations say about gender and climate change. While there is some truth in these journalists' comments, the UN Development Programme (2009) concludes that most of the world's poorest people — and those most vulnerable to climate change — are women, children and elderly people.

Women produce between 60-80% of food in developing countries (IUCN, 2007) and when erratic rainfall, floods or droughts destroy crops, many women struggle to feed their families. When climate-related disasters strike, men are much more able to move to safer locations than women, children and the elderly, whose immobility or social roles as carers means they must stay at home (UNICEF, 2009). The changing climate is already affecting these groups' security, and coping mechanisms are becoming a part of everyday life.

Although people's contributions to climate change are linked heavily to their wealth and consumption patterns, there are important differences between men and women, and people of different ages — both in the kind of emissions they are responsible for and in their potential roles in and responsibilities for reducing the problem.

The media is in a privileged position to reflect these differing vulnerabilities and responsibilities, and to portray vulnerable groups not only as victims, but also as agents of change.

*"[I don't try to incorporate gender issues into my climate change reports]... I would interview the community overall and just include the more interesting quotes, regardless if they were by a woman or man."*

Female CCMP fellow

*"Women play a vital role in the development of any society therefore gender issues should be included into climate change stories. They are also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change just like the children."*

Female CCMP fellow

CCMP research (detailed below) has shown that although most CCMP fellows of both genders were likely to acknowledge a need to include women's views in their reports, they lacked the resources, tools and knowledge to do so.

A possible contributing factor to this is the low profile of gender in UNFCCC processes and in the climate change debate more generally. At a meeting during the 2007 Bali summit, South Africa's Deputy Minister of Environment called for more women ministers to be involved in the Network of Women Ministers and Leaders for Environment, in order to give women a greater voice in the UNFCCC and other

global environment negotiations (WEDO, 2008). Yet, at the UNFCCC meeting in 2008 only a third of national negotiators and 15% of delegation heads were women (GenderCC–Women for Climate Justice, 2010).

Women are also under-represented in the world's leading body of climate-change researchers — the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) — whose reports inform the UNFCCC negotiations. Only five of the 31 members of the panel's senior management (the IPCC Bureau) are women. Among the most senior roles, the IPCC chair, three vice-chairs and eight of nine working group co-chairs are all men (IPCC, 2010). Of the IPCC's 600 lead authors for its Fourth Assessment Report (published in 2007), just 16% were women (IPCC Secretariat, pers. comm.)

This lack of female representation in the two main global bodies that exist to tackle climate change can limit the extent to which policymaking reflects the differences between men's and women's views and experiences. The UNFCCC conference in 2007 saw progress with the formation of the Global Gender and Climate Alliance, and an increase in activity specifically on gender and climate change has raised the level of awareness within the UN negotiations (UNDP, 2009). The appointment in May 2010 of a woman (Christiana Figueres) as the new head of the UNFCCC raises the prospect that gender may have a higher profile in the coming years, but this will not necessarily happen.

There is a correlation between low numbers of women participating in policymaking bodies and gender being sidelined in policy decisions. This in turn is a barrier to accurate coverage of how different population groups contribute to and are affected by climate change.

There are also barriers to effective reporting in the media outlets themselves. This is not solely the responsibility of the reporter. Editors are key to improving coverage of gender-related issues. Research by the CCMP sought to identify whether or not media houses perpetuate or break down gender barriers and the extent to which newsroom dynamics could affect the quality and number of gender perspectives included in climate change reporting.

We found that many of the CCMP fellows work in newsrooms with a fairly balanced ratio of men to women. While most male journalists felt this applied throughout their company, from reporters to high-level editorial positions, most of the female journalists said men hold more high-level positions, such as editors in chief or senior editors. "There's no single lady in the senior management or editorial team. There are two female deputies out of 15 [and of] five directors, not a single one is a lady," stated one female CCMP fellow from Zambia.

Most CCMP journalists said their editors seldom offered training opportunities, to either male or female journalists. Others disagreed. "In my country... it's difficult to train for one or two years if you're a woman who marries. The husband needs the wife to take care of the family," noted one CCMP journalist. This journalist's media house is reluctant to provide any training to women that requires time spent abroad or away from the home.

Several Asian and African fellows agreed that cultural and ethnic norms impede women's ability to obtain the same level of training as men. On the other hand, several African journalists felt that women are encouraged more than men to participate in training workshops, but as one journalist said, the issue is not whether men or women are favoured for training, but who utilises the knowledge and applies it in their stories.

## **ADDRESSING GENDER AND GENERATION AT THE UN CONFERENCES (COPs)**

From the outset, the CCMP management recognised the importance of gender in the climate change debate and in the media coverage of this subject. We made gender a priority issue, not only in our selection of fellows, but also in the overall principles, design, implementation and monitoring of the fellowship programme (as outlined below).

In selecting fellows, in addition to striving for an equal gender balance, we considered geographic balance, level of skill and previous training, motivation for applying, the letter of recommendation from each journalist's editor and two examples of published work. In years in which we were not able to achieve a 1:1 ratio of men and women among the selected fellows, the gender balance was always far more equitable than found in the pool of journalists who applied for a fellowship.

### **2007 – COP13 in Bali, Indonesia**

The journalists (46% women; 54% men) and CCMP staff attended various side-events and official meetings that focused on gender, sharing the information from these sessions during each morning's briefing meetings with those who were not able to attend.

These events included a meeting of the Network of Women Ministers of Environment and various gender and environment organisations. At these meetings participants discussed proposals for negotiating text that parties to the UNFCCC could submit in order to raise the profile of gender dimensions of climate change. Another event highlighted the different impacts of climate change on men and women in local communities in Indonesia.

One female journalist from Kenya used the gender-related side events to gather material for a feature story on the effects of climate change on women in her country. This formed the basis for one of the daily morning briefing sessions. Fellows discussed how the story was linked to topics being discussed at the summit. During the field visit to a land reclamation project on Serangan Island, several journalists interviewed local women and men about how environmental changes had specifically affected their lives in different ways.

There were also many opportunities for journalists to report on climate change from a generational angle, thanks to the large numbers of youth groups who staged daily demonstrations. These protests appealed to news-desks and made for visually arresting stories. CCMP journalists produced stories with headlines that included: "Children in Bali: please leave us a future" and "Young generation not involved in UN Climate Summit".

The monitoring and evaluation survey at the end of the fellowship asked whether the journalists had "*attended any events, made any interviews or written any stories which shed light on the role of gender in the climate change debate*". Only 35% of the journalists said they had.

One replied that they had written about women and children because they "*are the most vulnerable population and don't have spaces in media*". By contrast another reporter said: "*No, I never attended gender and climate change discussions. I think*

*climate change affects everybody in this planet, so the gender issue can confuse us. We must be careful if we want to talk about gender.”*

### **2008 – COP14 in Poznań, Poland**

After assessing the gender components of the 2007 programme the CCMP developed and published a gender policy<sup>1</sup> that describes our commitment and aim to integrate gender more consistently in the future.

The policy pledges to use a gendered approach that “includes examining the ways in which women and men engage with the CCMP journalists, climate experts, locals and other stakeholders; and assessing the gender-specific barriers that prevent men and women from equally engaging with the CCMP’s work and within the media sector generally; and the ways in which the CCMP programme impacts women and men.”

In selecting our fellows for the 2008 programme we broadened our scope to include journalists whose media outlets serve women or youth audiences. The selected fellows (38% women, 62% men) included one from a radio station run by the Women's Media Centre of Cambodia, one from a TV show aimed at children in Peru, and one from a Jamaican radio station that largely targets urban youth.

At our annual Media Clinic event, the CCMP fellows and other journalists interacted with panels of experts which, for the first time, included gender and youth specialists — Deepa Gupta from the Indian Youth Climate Network and Ulrike Rohr from the non-governmental organisation GenderCC – Women for Climate Justice.

Another first was the inclusion of four gender and three youth specialists on the CCMP Roster of Experts — a list of people and their contact details available for media interviews. We provide this resource to CCMP fellows and circulate it electronically to thousands of journalists. In 2007 there were no gender or youth specialists on the roster.

We also ran focus groups on gender for the first time – one each for male and female CCMP fellows. We used these to improve our understanding of gender dimensions of climate-change reporting and to encourage journalists to think about gender in new ways.

Journalists were asked about the gender ratio in their newsrooms and among senior management, and what training opportunities and support they got from their editors. Discussions also focused on their experiences to date of linking gender and climate change in their reporting and what tools and resources would help them to draw these links.

The focus groups revealed that working opportunities for men and women journalists vary greatly between countries and media outlets, as do conceptions of gender (as described above).

Among the stories that CCMP fellows produced in 2008 were the following: *Women take the lead in adaptation projects* (male journalist from Cambodia); *Does the UN climate convention ignore gender?* (female journalist from Suriname); *Women demand a voice* (male journalist from Uganda); *Where are the women?* (male journalist from Peru); *Liberia leads on gender and climate change* (male journalist from Liberia).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.climatemediapartnership.org/about/genderstatement/>

## **2009 – COP15 in Copenhagen**

Of the 586 journalists who applied to the 2009 programme, 33% were women. This was a higher proportion than found in the 3,880 journalists who registered to attend COP15 (only 29.7% were women). Despite the lower number of applications from women, the CCMP came closer than ever before to recruiting an equal number of male and female journalists, with 21 men (52%) and 19 women (48%). The CCMP management team was itself more evenly split between men and women, and had more female editors than in previous years.

By 2009, the printed Roster of Experts had developed into an online social network, accessible any time and with many more members. This new version of the roster lists 30 gender specialists, and special groups for gender- and youth-focused discussions.

Our annual Media Clinic's panel included Martha Chouchena-Rojas from the Global Gender and Climate Alliance who spoke, among other things, about how some parties to the UNFCCC wanted to remove any references to gender from a final treaty text.

Even when gender was not the focus of a CCMP event we strove to redress the imbalance of female representation by ensuring that the CCMP fellows got to meet, hear and interview high-profile women speakers. These included Ambassador Dessima Williams (lead negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States), Vicky Tauli-Corpuz (chair of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues), Meena Rahman (Third World Network) and Wangari Maathai (Nobel Peace Prize winner).

After the 2009 programme ended we asked the 40 participating fellows to complete an evaluation questionnaire which included questions about gender. When asked "How important do you think it is to include gender issues into climate change stories?", 72.5% of journalists said very important or important. Most journalists explained this importance in terms of women's vulnerability, marginalisation, dependence on natural resources for livelihoods, and their roles in household economies (often in relation to broader issues of poverty and development). As such most focused on women rather than gender, and on problems rather than solutions and coping strategies.

Of the remaining journalists, 20% were not sure about the importance of gender and 7.5% said it was not important. As one put it: "*This issue should not be coloured with whether or not one gender group is more affected than the other. Everyone is affected. The inclusion of gender politics will only serve to muddle an issue that is already muddled left and right.*"

Overall, before joining the CCMP programme 67.5% of the journalists said they had never incorporated gender issues in any stories on climate change. Of these, about half (44%) said the CCMP had given them the tools they need to incorporate gender issues into climate change stories.

As one female journalist from Tanzania said: "*[Since] the CCMP programme, whenever I write climate-change stories I think of women. For example the Maasai women are facing problems building their homes because of drought. Trees are dying and there is no grass and cow dung for roofing. Women are responsible for finding alternatives.*"



Another reported that: *“I have since covered several stories and included gender. For instance, stories like those that show how women are being affected by climate change emphasising that it’s the women who walk long distances to look for water and that unlike men who usually find it easy to relocate to urban settings in search of employment and livelihoods, the women are tied in rural areas taking care of families. I have also reported how local energy-saving stoves in Uganda are saving women from respiratory illness and rape while collecting firewood.”*

When we asked the journalists what would help them to report on gender dimensions of climate change they called for: more contacts, story ideas, case studies of real-life scenarios, and a specific training session on gender during the pre-conference orientation. These recommendations will inform future CCMP work, but as the analysis below shows, there are many other improvements that can also be made.

### **2010 – COP16 in Cancún, Mexico**

Although this case study does not cover the CCMP’s 2010 programme, it is worth noting that 57% of the selected journalists were women, and because four men were unable to attend, the final gender ratio was 65% women and 35% men.

## **ANALYSIS: THE IMPACT ON GENDER AND YOUTH WORK**

Until now there has been minimal analysis of how the media integrate gender and generation issues into climate change stories. The Climate Change Media Partnership has had a unique opportunity to both assess this and identify ways to ensure media stories accurately highlight these aspects.

One major achievement of the CCMP programme has been to link Southern journalists with gender and youth experts from academia, the public and private sector, as well as the negotiators themselves. Such experts have been key participants in the CCMP’s activities at the summits and our interactions with them have grown over the years.

The CCMP’s concerted effort to increase its work on gender at the 2008 Poznań summit and that year’s focus groups (see above) sparked strong interest amongst the journalists. Discussions highlighted the journalists’ eagerness to share experiences and learn from one another about gender and climate change, and how they reflect that thinking in their reports.

One apparent challenge that remains is how to integrate specific training on gender, age and climate change into the overall programme. There is a danger of gender issues being sidelined as a women’s issue which, as the CCMP has experienced, can alienate journalists from engaging with the topic.

*“It should not be a question of gender, I think. This is an issue that needs every individual’s stake and voice.”*

Male CCMP fellow from Uganda

There is clearly a disparate level of awareness amongst the CCMP journalists about how men and women of all ages are affected by climate change in different ways and about the need to report these differences. Although many journalists recognised the importance of acknowledging the gender dimensions of climate change in their reports, most referred to the impacts on women and did not acknowledge that men’s perspective and experiences were equally valuable. Only about 10 per cent of CCMP

journalists are acutely aware of the need to examine how both men and women are affected by climate change.

Our research indicates that both men and women lack awareness of how to approach gender issues in climate reporting. We found, however that more male journalists had a better awareness than the women journalists of how climate change impacts both men and women, whereas female journalists were drawn to looking at the ways in which women are affected. When discussing what actions can be taken to address climate change, both men and women journalists focused on women taking action and did not recognise the importance of men's perspectives and participation in identifying the impacts of, and solutions to, climate change.

*“It would be very important to have more information about how many women are affected...and why, why are they so vulnerable?.. It would be good to have more studies and statistical information on my own country, and from other countries, to include it in my climate change reporting.”*

Female CCMP fellow from Mexico

Another conclusion is that while we focus explicitly on gender in our work we pay relatively little attention to age (other than in the selection of journalists). This is an oversight given that most people's working definition of sustainable development talks explicitly about future generations. The 2008 programme was the first to invite a journalist who worked specifically for media outlet with an audience of children. His approach to reporting on the negotiations — such as visiting a Polish school to interview students there — was very different to that of the other reporters. It generated interest among the other journalists in how to present different angles of the same issue, as they were not used to producing climate change stories for younger audiences.

A strong and growing youth movement is taking charge of the task of bringing its concerns to wider attention. At the UN climate-change negotiations we are blessed by the presence of energetic and impassioned youth groups who rightly bemoan the threats to their future security — and do so in a way that creates an appealing and often very visual story for the news media.

For the other end of the age spectrum though, there is virtually nothing going on. In terms of information, insight and media storytelling this is a big omission. The older generation's knowledge of what the world was like decades ago is valuable in constructing a narrative for climate change but this knowledge is disappearing fast.

On the whole, however, the CCMP has focused its efforts on raising the awareness of gender issues, rather than generational issues. This is largely due to the level of gender expertise currently within the CCMP staff structure. Youth experts participate in CCMP summit programme activities and generation issues are touched upon, however, much more needs to be done to actively engage the journalists on this issue and challenge them to consider the impacts of climate change on the youth and elderly in their reports.

## CONCLUSIONS AND BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

*“Information is key. We don’t even know the numbers...if we could have a link with people who study climate change, the scientists themselves...that would make a lot of sense. Most women in arid areas, they fetch water and walk long distances, it’s been a story from the time I was born, so how are they able to see the difference?”*

Female CCMP fellow from Kenya

Journalists who report on climate change face a minefield disentangling climate science from the climate sceptics, government pledges from government action, and how local impacts of climate change relate to the wider international context. Understanding those differences whilst also recognising how gender and age are impacted by climate change can seem like an impossible task. However, the CCMP has identified several key areas that can improve the way these issues are covered by the media.

- **Understanding the issues.** The first step to reporting on gender and age as they relate to climate change is to have a thorough understanding of the terms themselves. This obstacle can be addressed through stronger communications between the media and relevant experts.
- **Spread the message.** One major challenge for journalists is a lack of accessible statistics and scientific research on how men and women of different ages are affected differently by climate change. Research can also be laden with jargon that is difficult to understand and apply in another context. Summarising research in clear language would enable journalists to understand its meaning.
- **Make the links between the local and global contexts.** The UN summits provide an exceptional international policy context to discuss climate change, but many journalists face challenges in making the links between international discussions and the realities of how climate change affects groups differently on the ground. Having access to information specific to their own countries as well as globally would help journalists to make the links between local impacts on men and women of all ages and how they relate to a wider national, regional and international context.
- **Gender is not just a women’s issue, and youth is not the only age-group that matters.** The notion that women are best placed to address gender issues must be challenged. Men’s pro-active engagement with the issues and their perspectives, in this instance on climate change, are critical in identifying differences in the ways in which people are affected. Journalists can improve their reporting by actively engaging with both men and women of all ages. This will help ensure a range of perspectives and experiences are considered when reporters write about the impact of climate change, coping mechanisms and solutions in climate stories, and in turn lead to an enriched level of debate.
- **Specific training on reporting gender, generation and climate change.** Dedicated sessions can provide platforms for journalists to share experiences and information with one another and learn how to approach writing on issues in a way that informs climate change stories, rather than shifts the focus to being a gender or age issue.

Climate scientists warn that a global temperature increase of more than 2 degrees Celsius could have irreversible and damaging impacts on human development and environmental sustainability.

Within this wider context it is imperative that those most impacted by climate change are at the forefront of developing mechanisms for adapting and coping with the changes they experience. This requires both men and women of all ages to speak out about their own vulnerabilities and actively engage in identifying how their different experiences and perspectives can be fed into efforts to find real, practical solutions at the local, national and international levels.

Climate change is among the greatest threats to poverty reduction and sustainable development, as articulated in the Millennium Development Goals (UNDP, 2009). To this end, action on climate change must be as coherent, scrupulous and inclusive as possible. This action together with rigorous media reporting will raise awareness and encourage positive changes in human behaviour.

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