



CLIMATE CHANGE THREATENS GIRLS' RIGHTS

GIRLS ARE PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE – AT THE SAME TIME, PROMOTING THEIR RIGHTS IS CRUCIAL TO TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE



With support from
Finland's development
cooperation

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FINLAND SHOULD...

- ✓ **reduce its net emissions quickly in accordance with the objectives of the Paris Agreement.** Finland should immediately update its emission reduction commitment, spanning to 2030, to at least 65 % compared to the emissions level of 1990. Finland aims to reach negative net emissions by 2030.
- ✓ **promote the same ambitious emission reduction targets and measures in the EU.** The EU must achieve carbon neutrality by 2040 and net-negative emissions after that.
- ✓ **support the actions of developing countries related to climate change mitigation and adaptation.** Funds to international climate finance must be allocated additionally so that they do not come out of Finland's development cooperation appropriations and the amount must correspond to the commitments of international climate agreements. Finland's international climate finance must be increased to EUR 200 million a year by 2020. The funding must be equally directed towards both climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- ✓ **take into account the rights and special needs of girls in its climate financing and also promote the equality perspective at an international level.**
- ✓ **aim actively to promote taking climate resilience and sustainability into account in development cooperation and directing all public finance flows towards advancing climate resilience, sustainability and emission reductions.**
- ✓ **promote fair and safe means of supporting people who have had to leave their homes due to reasons related to climate change and the environment.**



**MITIGATES THE IMPACT OF CLIMATE
CHANGE ON GIRLS' RIGHTS AND EQUALITY**



**SECURES GIRLS' RIGHTS IN
ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE**



**MAINTAINS THE PRECONDITIONS FOR THE CONTINUED
REALISATION OF GIRLS' RIGHTS IN THE FUTURE**

CLIMATE CHANGE IS ALREADY MAKING LIFE DIFFICULT FOR GIRLS



Not a single state or individual is spared from the consequences of climate change. The global average temperature has already increased by nearly one degree Celsius, and the concentrations of carbon dioxide accelerating climate change in the atmosphere are at their highest in recorded history. Nevertheless, climate change has different impacts in different areas of the world and on their populations, as the available means of survival differ greatly.

Climate change has the most significant impact on the people who are the least responsible for causing the problem. These people also have the least chance to protect themselves from and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The people who are marginalized by multiple factors and are in many ways in the most unequal position, are the most vulnerable. Consequently, it is vital to identify and consider the factors behind inequality and discrimination when addressing climate change.

The goal of the Paris Agreement agreed upon in 2015 is to keep the increase in global average temperature below 2°C and to aim to limit the increase to 1.5°C. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the half degree difference in warming has a significant impact on the consequences of global warming, such as sea level rise and food production. If the rise of global average temperature is kept at 1.5 degrees, millions of people will be saved from a shortage of water, and people living in coastal regions will not have to leave their homes.¹ Regardless, the global average temperature continues to rise. Without quick and ambitious action in various sectors of the society, the world will be threatened by a temperature rise of at least three degrees above the levels of the pre-industrial era.

Climate change is a huge obstacle for the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). It can also cause setbacks in several development results that are already achieved. Millions of people are in danger of falling back to poverty by 2030 if climate change is not addressed appropriately. The impacts can already be seen. After years of positive development, the number of people suffering from hunger has taken an upturn in recent years. Climate change is one of the key factors affecting food security.

The aspect of intergenerational justice is often brought up in the discussions around climate change. Nevertheless, climate change is already affecting people and deepening inequality. Climate change threatens to further diminish the position of girls and undo positive developments towards gender equality and ensuring girls' rights that have already taken place.

Girls living in marginalized conditions in developing countries face multiple discrimination and, in turn, they carry a disproportional burden from the consequences of climate change. If climate change is not addressed and the unequal structures that cause girls to be especially vulnerable for climate change are not deconstructed, the effect of climate change-related impacts currently faced by women will increase when the current generation of girls grows older. The realisation of girls' rights are also central in the fight against climate change.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Ossi Heinänen'.

Ossi Heinänen

National Director of Plan International Finland

¹. Warming of 1,5 Celsius -report. IPCC, 2018.



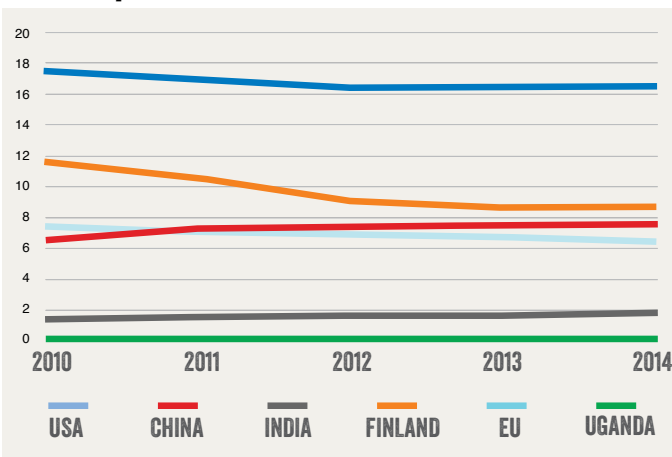
**"AN INCREASE OF 1.5 DEGREES
IN THE GLOBAL AVERAGE
TEMPERATURE WILL MAKE
350 MILLION MORE PEOPLE
SUSCEPTIBLE TO FATAL
HEAT WAVES BY 2050"**

CLIMATE CHANGE AFFECTS THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE

The impacts of climate change are already destructive and will only grow stronger over the next decades. An increase of 1.5 degrees in the global average temperature will make 350 million more people susceptible to fatal heat waves by 2050.² The most vulnerable people in developing countries who are the least responsible for the problem are particularly affected by the impacts of climate change, such as increased flooding, storms and periods of drought.³

The most significant historical reason for climate change is the greenhouse gas emissions of wealthy industrial countries. Wealthy countries, such as Finland, have used more of the shared atmosphere than is their fair share.⁵ For this

Annual CO₂ emissions (metric tons per capita)⁴



reason, wealthy countries must take on a larger share of the responsibility of resolving the climate crisis.

The amount of consumers' climate emissions is also in strong correlation to the available wealth. The actions of the richest 10% of the world's population account for about a half of the global private consumption emissions.⁶ The decreasing population of industrial countries produce multiple amounts of emissions compared to the heavily populated areas of developing countries. Because of this, the emission reductions of wealthy industrial countries are vitally important and cannot be compensated for, for example, by controlling population growth in developing countries.

The hazards caused by climate change are not distributed regionally or socially evenly or equally. Instead, inequality increases vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.⁷ People in already unequal positions, such as girls, women, children, elderly people, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples in developing countries are at a heightened risk. People belonging to these groups are particularly susceptible to the impacts of climate change and they experience serious difficulties in coping with and adapting to them.⁸

Girls living in marginalized conditions in developing countries face discrimination due to their gender, age and poverty. Because of these factors, they are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Climate change and poverty are strongly interlinked global issues. In addition to making people more vulnerable to climate change, there is a risk of poverty spreading and deepening due to the impacts of climate change.

2. Warming of 1,5 Celsius -report. IPCC, 2018.

3. Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. WG II. Summary for Policymakers. IPCC, 2014; Warming of 1,5 Celsius -report. IPCC, 2018.

4. CO₂ emissions (metric tons per capita). World Bank, 2018. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/EN.ATM.CO2E.PC> (12.2.2019)

5. Historical Responsibility for Climate Change – from countries emissions to contribution to temperature increase. Cli-mate Analytics.

6. What does the Paris Climate Agreement mean for Finland and the European Union? Climate Analytics, 2016; Extreme Carbon Equality. Oxfam, 2015.

7. Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability. WG II. Summary for Policymakers. IPCC, 2014; Climate Change, Young Women, and Girls: Vulnerability, impacts and adaptation in Northern Thailand. Plan International, 2018.

8. Climate Change, Young Women, and Girls: Vulnerability, impacts and adaptation in Northern Thailand. Plan International, 2018.

GIRLS LIVING IN MARGINAL CONDITIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FACE MULTIPLE OPPRESSION



GENDER

Girls comprise the largest discriminated group of people in the world. They are discriminated against and abused due to their gender and age. In addition, poverty, ethnic background and disabilities can multiply the challenges and discrimination faced by girls.

Girls and women experience the impacts of climate change differently than boys and men. Although climate change has a strong impact on girls and women, they often have the least chance to adapt to the changes. Girls and women are typically not granted with power or the required resources, such as funding or technology.



AGE

Climate change compromises the realisation of children's rights. In vulnerable countries, where the realisation of human rights is challenging, the rights of children and young people are often the last realised. Children and young people are discriminated in relation to adults due to their lower social status. Children and young people depend on adults and, due to their age, they do not often have the chance to influence society. Nevertheless, children and young people should have the right to both physical and mental care and safety.

Childhood often entails several risks related to nutrition, clean water and diseases. Climate change makes children more susceptible to these risks. Children are much more likely to die in natural hazard caused by climate change than adults. The trauma of disasters can also have a long-term effect on the child's mental well-being and development.



POVERTY

Poverty has a significant impact on preparing for and adapting to the consequences of climate change. More than half of people living in extreme poverty are children, and the majority of them live in sub-Saharan Africa. Child poverty is most common in rural areas. Approximately 105 girls per 100 boys live in extremely poor households, and the economic inequality between the sexes increases with age, especially in Africa.⁹

Girls living in poor conditions in developing countries often have weak capacity and non-existent support from society for coping with changes in their environment and natural hazard. In the midst of crises and scarcity, girls' chances of utilising natural resources and getting the services they need grow even weaker.

Climate change and poverty are strongly interlinked global issues. In addition to making people more vulnerable to climate change, there is a risk of poverty spreading and deepening due to the impacts of climate change.



WHY GIRLS?

Girls comprise the largest discriminated group of people in the world. Girls living in marginalized conditions in developing countries face multiple oppression due to their gender, age and poverty. The unequal treatment of girls is a violation of human rights, and it must be stopped.

Girls' rights are also key to addressing the intergenerational transmission of poverty. The positive affirmation of girls' rights increases the well-being of entire communities and societies. Girls' chances to gain an education and a livelihood and to decide on their own lives are key in the context of addressing global issues, including climate change.

Climate change might compromise the already established achievements in gender equality. It would be unsustainable to lose these results because climate change is not addressed fairly and seriously enough.

9. New Estimates of Extreme Poverty for Children. Policy Research Working Paper 7845. World Bank, 2016.

Besides mitigation, adaptation measures are also required

Mitigating climate change is key for preventing an increase of 1.5 degrees in global average temperature. However, it must also be recognised that the current level of warming already changes living environments, makes life particularly difficult to people in the most vulnerable position and affects societies and social relations.

In addition to mitigation, adaptation measures are also desperately needed. These measures must reach the most vulnerable people who need them the most. In addition to developing technological solutions and infrastructure, a broad perspective that encompasses the structures that make girls and women particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change must be adopted. Poverty, the inequality in education and employment and the lack of social safety nets undermine the capacity to face the impacts of climate change – which is why these issues must also be addressed.

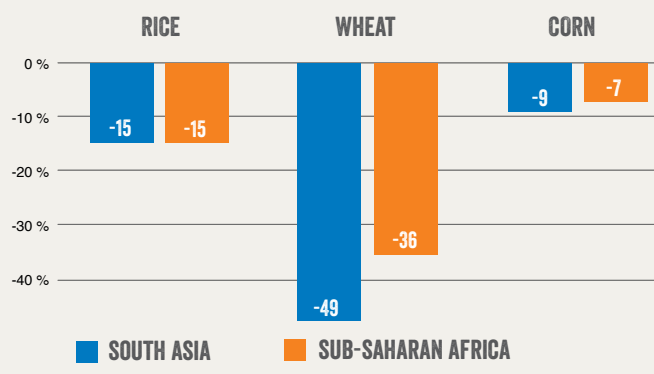
CLIMATE CHANGE COMPROMISES GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY

Climate change has already had an adverse effect on the harvests of crops in many areas. Global food security is compromised when the effects of climate change weaken the availability, quality and distribution of food. In 2016, more than 815 million people were undernourished, and 11% of the world's population had experienced recent decreases in food security. The highest percentages were in Africa (20%), South Asia (14%) and the Caribbean (18%).¹⁰

Food security is expected to decrease significantly more if the global average temperature rises more than 1.5 degrees. The more intense climate change is, the more powerful are its effects on arable land, the number and nutritional values of harvests and livestock and fish populations.¹¹

The impacts of climate change on arable land, pest infestations and the price, production and distribution of food undermine reaching the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, including eradicating poverty and reducing inequalities.¹² Decreased food security is particularly worrisome in the current era of global population growth.

It is estimated that climate change will have reduced the production of the most important crops in the world by 2050 as indicated here:¹³



10. Warming of 1,5 Celsius -report. IPCC, 2018.

11. Warming of 1,5 Celsius -report. IPCC, 2018.

12. Warming of 1,5 Celsius -report. IPCC, 2018.

13. Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNWomen, 2018.

Seeds distributed by Plan increase food security and provide additional income

Plan is boosting food security in Bugna, Ethiopia, a district that has experienced a severe drought. Drought tolerant crops yield a better harvest than common crops, which can also mean additional income for the families who cultivate them.

Frequent droughts and harsh conditions make agriculture difficult in the remote mountain villages of Bugna. The fields on the steep mountain slopes look more like screes than arable land. Fertile soil has been washed away by accelerated erosion due to climate change and cultivation. Earning a living is typically very difficult.

The onions, cabbages, tomatoes and mangoes Tiruye grows in her backyard are important sources of nutrition. Tiruye is a single mother of three, and she has received the seeds for these plants from Plan. Plan's support has changed the daily life of Tiruye's family remarkably.

"I didn't have the money to buy food from the market, so we didn't get the vitamins we needed. Now, my children can go to the garden for a snack, and I don't need to worry anymore. I have also sold some of the tomatoes at the market. My income will increase when the mangoes are ready to be harvested", says Tiruye.

Plan gives families with undernourished children or pregnant or breastfeeding mothers seeds of drought tolerant vegetables, fruit and crops.



Tiruye (on the left) and her daughter tend to the small plantation in their backyard.



GIRLS FACE SPECIAL CHALLENGES

Climate change is a human rights issue. The impacts are extremely serious for all of humankind, but especially for poor and vulnerable residents of developing countries, such as girls and women.¹⁴ Girls living in marginal settings in developing countries suffer from a lack of proper education, child marriages, violence, human trafficking and early pregnancies. Climate change threatens to further diminish the position of girls and undo steps towards gender equality that have already been taken. At the same time, girls and women play a crucial role in, for example, global food production. This makes them vulnerable to changes in their living environment. On the other hand, they are in a key position when we are trying to find solutions for adapting to and mitigating climate change.

CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS THE LIVES OF GIRLS

The consequences of climate change affecting girls' lives include:

- changes in agricultural conditions
- shortage of food and water
- natural hazards and environmental crises.

Scarcity and disasters also increase instability and compromise social peace, which may cause and aggravate the issues faced by girls.

Climate change in girls' daily lives and livelihoods

Globally, girls and women usually have the primary responsibility for household chores, such as cooking, cultivating vegetables in home gardens and fetching water. The division of labour is based on social norms, according to which women are responsible for household chores. Unstable weather conditions, such as droughts and floods, directly affect the food and water situation of families and, in turn, the workload of girls and women. As the workload of women increases, girls take on a larger role in helping their mothers.

The work and livelihood of women often depend on agriculture. According to the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), women produce more than half of food globally and play a key role in food security.¹⁵ Women account for 48% of the agricultural workforce in developing countries. Especially in Asia, women work significantly more commonly in agriculture than men. In Africa, the share of women working in agriculture is also emphasised. In addition, women play a notable role in the small-scale fishing industry. Agriculture and fishing are fields based on local natural resources and are thus susceptible to climate induced disruption and changes.^{16,17}

Although girls and women have a key role in agriculture and food security, they are more likely to suffer from under-nourishment than boys and men. Feeding customs often favour boys and men, and women do not have the similar access to resources that increase productivity as men, such as the latest technology, varieties of crops and fertilisers.¹⁸ Decreased production and crop failures thus affect first and foremost the nourishment and income of girls.

More time must be spent on obtaining water for daily use during a drought, which means that girls can spend less time on studying and free time. In Mozambique, for instance, girls' time spent on fetching water has increased from two hours to six hours a day due to a prolonged drought, resulting in girls' increased absences from school.¹⁹ The long journey to obtain water also makes girls more vulnerable to other hazards, such as sexual violation and violence during the trips.

Girls and women are particularly vulnerable to the health hazards caused by climate change. The lack of clean water increases the pressure to use different lower-quality sources of water for cooking, washing and laundry. As girls are responsible for most household chores, they are also more exposed to the health hazards caused by dirty water. In addition, the lack of water causes hygienic issues, particularly during menstruation and pregnancies.²⁰

¹⁴ Shock Waves: Managing the Impacts of Climate Change on Poverty. Climate Change and Development Series. World Bank, 2016.

^{15, 16} FAO: www.fao.org/gender/background/en/; Gender Equality and Food Security, Women's Empowerment as a Tool against Hunger. FAO, 2013; World Employment Social Outlook. Trend for Women 2017. ILO, 2017.

¹⁷ Even though Plan and other agents of gender equality are working to make the economic structure of developing countries more diverse and equal, a large share of girls around the world will be working in agriculture in the future decades. They are the ones who will continue to face the challenges posed by climate change to agriculture.

¹⁸ Gender Equality and Food Security, Women's Empowerment as a Tool against Hunger. FAO, 2013; World Employment Social Outlook. Trend for Women 2017. ILO, 2017.

¹⁹ Turning Promises into Action: Gender Equality in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UNWomen, 2018; Hope dries up? Women and Girls coping with Drought and Climate Change in Mozambique. CARE, 2016.

²⁰ Climate Change, Young Women, and Girls: Vulnerability, impacts and adaptation in Northern Thailand. Plan International, 2018.

Ayni, 13, is like any other adolescent girl from the Ethiopian district of Habro. She is responsible for her family's household chores, the most important of which is fetching daily water. It is also the most difficult chore. Climate change has increased the prevalence of droughts and poverty and decreased food security in Habro.

Ayni spends several hours every day obtaining water, just like other girls of her age in the area. When she finally reaches the river, she has to wait long for her turn to lift water with a bucket from the nearly dried-up river. Then she carries the heavy tanks of water all the way back home.

Before, she was able to get water from a nearby river, but the drought has forced her to go further away from home.

"I go get water every morning and evening", says Ayni.

As most of her days are spent on fetching water, Ayni is often absent from school. She fears that she might have to quit school altogether.

"I'm only in the second grade, even though I should be attending the fourth grade by now", says Ayni.

"Obtaining water is harder as the river is drying up. A lot of my friends have quit school because they have to spend so much time on obtaining water."

The length of the journey to get water and the time spent on them are not the only issues faced by girls. Along the way, they are also exposed to sexual violation and animal attacks. Carrying the heavy water tanks is also physically exhausting.

Ayni looks forward to a rainy season. Then she will not have to go to the river for water, as it can be collected from the roof of her home.

"I hope that the river will also be full of water once again", she says.

DROUGHTS CAN COMPROMISE GIRLS' SAFETY AND EDUCATION



Ayni, 13 years old, fears that she will have to quit school due to a drought.

Increase in gender-based violence and abuse

Climate change increases the sexual violation and violence faced by girls. For instance, girls become more vulnerable to these actions in their daily lives if their water collecting journeys become longer due to a drought. In the middle of crises and instability, the abuse and sexual and other violence faced especially by adolescent girls increases.

The number of child marriages has increased in several countries as a consequence of climate change. Girls may have to resort more to transactional sex to acquire money and food due to deeper poverty and decreased income and food security. These acts may result in early unwanted pregnancies, STDs and stigmatisation.^{21, 22}

Girls in the middle of natural hazards and crises

Climate change increases the likelihood of natural hazards. In the 1970s, the number of natural hazards totaled about 90 a year, and the current annual average may already increase up to approximately 450. Nine out of ten natural hazards occur in developing countries, and 95% of the casualties of disasters are residents of developing countries.²⁸

The risks are not the same for everyone, as disasters increase the vulnerability of discriminated people, especially girls, children, women and people with disabilities. According to estimates, women and children are more likely to die in a natural hazard than men.²⁹ Observations from developing countries also indicate that in the financial slump following a natural hazard, the infant mortality of girls is substantially increased compared to that of boys.³⁰

Women and children are often overrepresented among those who have to leave their homes due to a sudden natural hazard or a prolonged crisis, such as drought.^{31, 32} Girls who become climate refugees and migrants are exposed to human trafficking and kidnapping in the absence of safe means of migration even when migration is an unavoidable solution for finding a livelihood.³³ A safe route of becoming a climate migrant would reduce the risk of especially adolescent girls becoming victims of human trafficking, kidnapping and gender-based violence.

Not a lot of statistical data exist on the status of girls. Nevertheless, it is obvious that no one's human rights are realised in poorly functioning societies that are going through crises. Adolescent girls are at a heightened risk and often do not receive the kind of humanitarian aid they would need. In the middle of crises and instability, gender-based violence and abuse faced by girls is increased. Adolescent girls are often required to take on a larger responsibility of themselves and others than what would be reasonable at their age.³⁴

The vulnerable position of girls is partly explained by their low involvement in the public life of their communities and the desire to keep girls at home.³⁵ This is thought to protect girls when, in fact, it puts them at a larger risk. Uneducated girls may have non-existent or weak knowledge on how to survive in the event of a natural hazard. Girls may not be familiar with the emergency plans or alarm systems of their surroundings, for example.³⁶ Most girls do not know how to swim, either.

CLIMATE CHANGE EXPOSES GIRLS TO CHILD MARRIAGE



For families, arranging a marriage for a daughter might serve as a mean of survival in a situation where their food security has been weakened or the surrounding society has collapsed. Marrying off a daughter means a dowry for the family and the marriage may be seen as a way of ensuring that the daughter will get fed by her husband's family.

In Mozambique, the number of those marrying under the age of 18 is estimated to increase by 16% by 2020 in areas suffering from drought. Most of the girls are under the age of 15. Only 11% of the married girls in the area have access to contraceptives. Even fewer intend or are able to continue their education.²³

Malawi, a country dependent on agriculture, has for decades suffered from natural hazard. The floods of 2015 made the situation even more difficult. The drought that followed the floods particularly hindered food security. The

poverty deepened by extreme weather has resulted in an increased number of child marriages. According to estimates, 30–40% of child marriages in Malawi are the result of the impacts of climate change.²⁴

Nine out of ten countries with the highest child marriage rates are fragile or extremely fragile states.²⁵ These countries are susceptible to social unrest and conflicts, and they are poorly equipped to respond to natural hazards. There is no direct and linear relationship between climate change and violent conflict, but under certain circumstances climate-related change can influence factors that lead to or exacerbate conflict.²⁶ Climate change is also causing extreme weather conditions, scarcity of natural resources and natural hazards that destabilise the societies of fragile states, in particular.

The increased number of child marriages is particularly linked with natural hazards, conflicts and migration. Such circumstances increase uncertainty within families and weaken their social support networks. Marrying off a daughter may be seen as a way of protection against violence and poverty by the family.²⁷

21. Ks. esim. Hope dries up? Women and Girls coping with Drought and Climate Change in Mozambique. CARE, 2016; Brides of the Sun: www.bridesofthesun.com.

22. Transactional sex and HIV risk: from analysis to action. UNAIDS 2018.

23. Hope dries up? Women and Girls coping with Drought and Climate Change in Mozambique. CARE, 2016.

24. Brides of the Sun: www.bridesofthesun.com.

25, 27. Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings. Girls Not Brides, 2018.

26. The relationship between climate change and violent conflict. Green Tool Box/Peace and Security Tool Box: Working Paper. Sida, 2017.

28. The State of the World's Girls -report. In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disasters. Plan International, 2013.

29, 30. The State of the World's Girls -report. In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disasters. Plan International, 2013.

31. Women and Climate Change, Impact and Agency in Human Rights, Security, and Economic Development. Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2015.

32. Approximately 80% of climate refugees are women. <https://www.climateproject.org>



ADOLESCENT GIRLS NEED SPECIAL ATTENTION IN HUMANITARIAN CRISES

Adolescent girls are at a heightened risk and often neglected the humanitarian aid they would require. In a study conducted by Plan International,³⁷ adolescent girls in the middle of the most severe crises in the world ³⁸ explained their situation as follows:

Girls live in fear

Adolescent girls told of a fear caused not only by the constant presence of armed men, but about gender-based violence within families, including child, early and forced marriage, which puts their health, their education and general well-being at risk.

Girls want more control and power over their lives

The inability to control their lives to be consulted about decisions that affect them is reflected on by adolescent girls in all three research areas: adolescent girls cannot choose to carry on with their education, or whether, when or whom to marry, nor are they able to pursue livelihood opportunities that might give them a measure of independence.

Girls want to go to school

Adolescent girls everywhere express a passion for study and a disappointment that their current situation, often combined with pre-existing discrimination, prevents them from attending school or gaining access to vocational training. Fear keeps them at home, as does family poverty, but often also there are no schools or training centres for them to go to, they are too far away or they have missed so much education that they struggle to catch up.

Girls' lives are restricted

Adolescent girls lack freedom of movement: over protective parents, a heightened fear of violence and increased domestic chores confine them to the home and severely limit their opportunities. Adolescent girls cannot go to school, they cannot make friends and they cannot contact health services.

Girls struggle to stay healthy, both physically and mentally

Adolescent girls lack proper nutrition, have little or no access to information about sexual and reproductive health, and, particularly in the area of mental health, have extremely restricted access to health services. All of which will have a long-term destructive impact on their lives.

GIRLS ARE 2.5 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO BE OUT OF SCHOOL THAN BOYS IN CONFLICT-AFFECTED SETTINGS. ³⁹

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE ACCORDING TO THE GIRLS:

- Increase **participation** of adolescent girls in decision making
- Ensure adolescent girls' **education** does not suffer
- Prioritise provision of adolescent girl-friendly **health** information and services, to include mental health issues and sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Tackle gender-based violence in all its forms to improve **security** for adolescent girls

Girls must be listened to in order to provide them with the services they require. The information required for targeted aid must be disaggregated according to age and gender, and all crisis response efforts must mainstream gender aspects into overall response.

³³. Women and Climate Change: Impact and Agency in Human Rights, Security, and Economic Development, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, 2015.

³⁴. The State of the World's Girls -report. In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disasters, Plan International 2013.

³⁵. Girls with disabilities especially are often kept at home.

³⁶. The State of the World's Girls -report. In Double Jeopardy: Adolescent Girls and Disasters, Plan International 2013.

³⁷. Adolescent Girls in crisis: experiences of risk and resilience across three humanitarian settings. Plan International, 2018.

³⁸. In South Sudan, Lake Chad and the Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh.

³⁹. Adolescent Girls in crisis: experiences of risk and resilience across three humanitarian settings. Plan International, 2018.

DROUGHT AFFECTS GIRLS AND WOMEN PARTICULARLY



Sebontu, 14, from Ethiopia,
carries water home on her head.



SPECIAL CHALLENGES FACED BY GIRLS

Climate change in girls' daily lives and livelihoods

- » Decreased production and crop failures affect first and foremost the nourishment and income of girls.
- » The time girls spend on household chores increases as a consequence of drought and other extreme weather conditions. This means that girls have less time available for attending school and on their free time.
- » Girls are more exposed to the health hazards and poor hygiene caused by dirty water.

Increase in violence and abuse faced by girls

- » The poverty deepened by extreme weather conditions explains, in part, the presence of child marriages and their increased numbers.
- » Girls may have to resort more to transactional sex in exchange for food or money due to deepened poverty.
- » In the middle of crises and instability, the gender-based violence and abuse faced by adolescent girls, in particular, is increased.

Girls in the middle of natural hazards and crises

- » Girls and women are more likely to die in a natural hazard than men. Especially uneducated girls might have a weak capacity to survive in the event of a natural hazard.
- » Women and children are often overrepresented among those who abandon their homes due to a sudden natural hazard or a prolonged crisis.
- » Girls are exposed to human trafficking and kidnapping when they abandon their homes.

GIRLS ARE PART OF THE SOLUTION

While women and girls in developing countries face the severe impacts of climate change, they are under-represented in decision-making, in the labour markets and in the conference rooms where mitigating and adapting to climate change is discussed and decided on. Climate change challenges all of humankind and society as we know them. Girls and women should be included in the discussions already for the sake of democracy, but it must be said that omitting the expertise and experience of half of the world's population in addressing an issue of this magnitude would be highly counterproductive. Real solutions cannot be achieved without them.

Girls are not only the victims of climate change, but they are also genuinely interested in it ⁴⁰ and having an impact on their own lives and communities and societies in general.

Knowledge of natural resources

The extensive local-level knowledge on the sustainable use and management of natural resources and adaptation to risks possessed by girls and women must be taken into account when adaptation to climate change is discussed. Strong knowledge of local environments and often ecological cultivation practices applied by women can be extremely valuable when adaptation strategies are formed. The knowledge possessed by girls and women is often ignored or disregarded, or women do not possess or are not granted decisive power over issues related to natural resources.

Local knowledge alone does not provide sufficient capacity to adapt to the grave impacts of climate change, but the rights and capacities of girls and women must also be promoted and improved. Studies show that gender equality increases communities' food security, for example. It has been estimated that productivity could be substantially increased in a number of developing countries by giving female farmers the same opportunities and premises as men. At its best, this would mean that 150 million people would be spared from undernourishment in these countries.⁴¹

In addition, if the rights and special needs of vulnerable groups, such as girls, are not considered and supported in addressing climate change, it can further increase their vulnerability. With climate change, it is more important than ever that the rights of women to own land and use climate-resilient crops, cultivation technologies and fertilisers are promoted.



Education

Girls are not only entitled to high-quality education, but their education also supports mitigating climate change significantly.⁴² Also, every additional year a girl spends attending school improves the country's resilience, i.e. ability to adapt to climate change.⁴³

Education, climate change and gender equality are interlinked thus they should be considered in unison.⁴⁴ Girls' education improves gender equality, which in turn supports climate change mitigation and improves societies' ability to adapt to it. Girls' education also promotes mankind's ability to develop different technological, social and societal solutions for climate change. It also reduces inequality that causes girls and women to be more vulnerable to climate change. On the other hand, girls' education also requires promoting gender equality. As the impacts of climate change worsen the gender equality situation, climate change must be mitigated and adapting to its impacts ensured.

Education improves girls' capacities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Education increases girls' awareness of the sustainable use of natural resources and about improving food security in changing conditions. Educated girls have better knowledge about how to protect themselves from natural hazards and how to act when one occurs.

In order to avoid catastrophic climate change and limit global warming to 1.5 degrees, our economic system must become carbon free and environmentally sustainable. This means that we must be able to create climate-resilient industries, livelihoods and jobs at a global level. At the moment, only about one fifth of jobs in the green tech and energy industries are occupied by women.⁴⁵ The number of women in these future industries will continue to fall if the inequality in girls' education is not eradicated. However, it is not enough to simply increase the number of girls in the current system, but they must also have decisive power over what are the goals and how they are to be achieved.⁴⁶

Education also boosts girls' and women's possibilities of participating in decision-making processes. In order to reach democratic, meaningful and sustainable solutions, the decision-making processes need a pluralistic approach and participation. It is imperative that girls' voices are heard.⁴⁷

Girls' education supports climate change mitigation and adaptation in a variety of ways. Their own capacities to adapt are improved, and sustainable solutions are more likely to be discovered.

40. Climate Change, Young Women, and Girls: Vulnerability, impacts and adaptation in Northern Thailand. Plan International, 2018.

41. Gender Equality and Food Security, Women's Empowerment as a Tool against Hunger. FAO, 2013.

42. Project Drawdown: <https://www.drawdown.org/solutions/women-and-girls/educating-girls>

43, 44. Three platforms for girls' education in climate strategies. Brookings Institute, 2017.

45. Making climate finance work for women: Overview of the integration of gender equality in aid to climate change. OECD DAC Network on Gender Equality, 2015.

46. Green skills for girls in a green economy. Education plus Development blog. Brookings Institute, 2017.

47. Beijing Platform for Action. Chapter IV. G. Women in power and decision-making.

Population growth

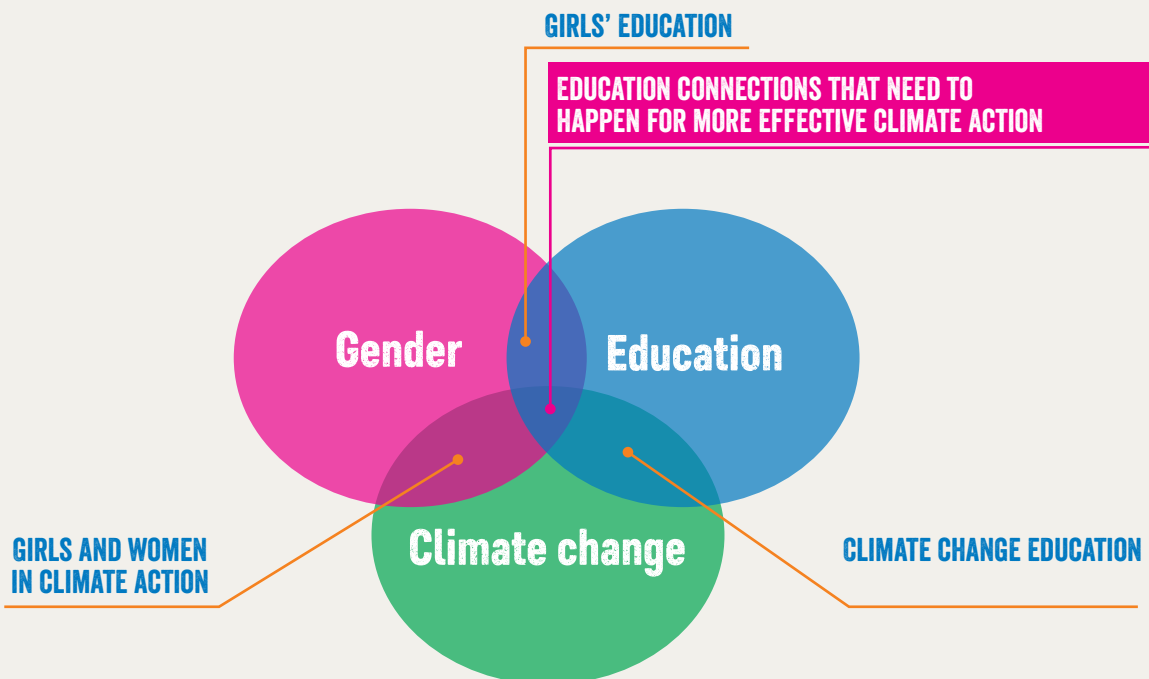
Approximately 214 million women do not have access to the kind of birth-control they wish for. The right of women and girls to retain the right to their own bodies and decide how many children they have is a human right. Girls' and women's sexual and reproductive health and rights must be ensured everywhere in the world. The right of women and girls to retain the right to their own bodies also promotes the ability of families and communities to adapt to climate change and helps in adapting to and mitigating climate change by limiting population growth.⁴⁸

The global population increases by about 75 million people each year and, according to the World Bank, there will likely be more than nine billion people on the planet in 2050. Population growth poses major challenges to food production, sufficiency of clean water, safe urban planning and the environment, especially as climate change is making some areas unfit for cultivation and human dwelling.

Controlling population growth is a valuable mechanism for responding to the inevitable consequences of climate change. Nevertheless, population policy must be based on human rights and girls' and women's ability to decide on their body and number of children. Regarding curbing emissions, the smaller populations of industrial countries produce multiple amounts of emissions compared to the heavily populated areas of developing countries. The average emissions per capita in Finland amount to 9.3 tonnes, whereas the corresponding figures of India and Uganda are 1.9 and 0.1 tonnes, respectively.⁴⁹ Because of this, the emission reductions of wealthy industrial countries are vitally important and cannot be compensated for by controlling population growth in developing countries.



Education, gender equality and solving climate change are interlinked.⁵⁰



48. WHO statistics 2017; Adding it up: Investing in Contraception and Maternal and Newborn Health. Guttmacher Institute, 2017.; Project Drawdown: <https://www.drawdown.org/solutions/women-and-girls/family-planning>

49. EDGAR: Fossil CO₂ & GHG emissions of all world countries, 2017.

50. Three platforms for girls' education in climate strategies. Brookings Institute, 2017.

Shahanaj

Shahanaj was able to transfer what she learnt in school to her parents, giving her entire family the knowledge and skills to prepare for and respond to floods

The frequency of natural hazards is increased due to climate change, which jeopardises children's right to education. Girls, in particular, are in danger of not being able to attend school, as these disasters expose them to gender-based violence, for example. In the event of a natural hazard, child marriages, human trafficking and abuse experienced by girls may force them to quit school completely.

Plan's goal is to ensure girls' ability to attend school even if a natural hazard occurs. Plan International's Safe Schools Programme includes a model that consists of safe school facilities, risk reduction and resilience education, and disaster management. The model helps girls and school communities to prevent and mitigate the impacts of natural hazards on their lives and act during a disaster.

Flooding in Bangladesh has affected over a third of the country's population and left many children out of school. In Lalmonirhat District, a Plan International Safe Schools project has prevented displacement of children and community due to floods through specific initiatives.

Working with schoolchildren, teachers, parents, and local government in this region, the project builds the resilience of the education system, the school and ultimately the children. It does this through teaching them what to do before, during and after disasters and actively involving them in decisions and actions.

***Shahanaj** is one of the students from a government primary school that has implemented safe school measures. She and her classmates learnt what to do during different disasters through evacuation drills, drama shows, in lessons and through peer to peer learning. Now she shares that knowledge to her family.*



Shahanaj attends a school that applies Plan's Safe Schools measures.

ADVANCEMENT OF GIRLS' RIGHTS AND SOLVING THE CLIMATE CRISIS SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER

The unequal treatment of girls is a violation of human rights. Climate change makes the position of girls even worse, which is why it must be mitigated. At the same time, structures and norms that cause girls to be in the most vulnerable position and enable their abuse must be reshaped.

The improved status of girls and women will also boost efforts against climate change. Climate policies and efforts that take the rights and special needs of girls into account can also challenge the current unequal structures and norms and promote gender equality. Climate action that does not pay attention to gender inequality is not fair or functional.

The members of Plan International Guinea's Children's Board promoting girls' rights.



Girls in international climate discussion

Gender equality must be promoted and taken into account in all climate action. One way of ensuring this is to draw up a gender action plan. The action plan must be based on the concerns and needs as well as the skills and knowledge of girls and women.

The interlinked nature of gender equality and climate change has been the topic of recent international climate negotiations. The action plan for advancing gender mainstreaming into all elements of climate action accepted at the 2017 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Bonn, Germany reflects the increased awareness of the topic's importance. According to the plan, the role of women must be recognised not only when preparing for the effects of climate change, but also in decision-making processes concerning climate change.⁵¹

Unfortunately, the action plan is not binding, which undermines the decision to promote gender equality in efforts against climate change. Finland, along with the EU, must develop and finance the gender action plan and its implementation in international climate agreement processes. The action plan must also be complemented with specific goals and monitoring and inspection methods.

This will ensure that the actions taken to mitigate cli-

mate change do not increase gender inequality, but rather contribute to the advancement of gender equality. Gender equality supports mitigating climate change and adapting to its consequences significantly.

In its current form, the action plan does not address age or the combined effect of age and gender sufficiently. That is why girls are not included in the scope of the plan. In addition to gender, data must be collected and disaggregated according to age so that the double discrimination faced by girls is addressed and their situation can be improved.

Climate change is not properly addressed as a human rights issue in the climate agreement processes of the United Nations, for instance. In addition to girls, other children and young people are underrepresented in these discussions, and the process has failed to safeguard their rights as well.

Improving the rights, status and participatory capacity of girls and women boosts the entire society surrounding them and advances the efforts to achieve all the sustainable development goals.

⁵¹ Decision -/CP.23 Establishment of a gender action plan. UNFCCC, 2017.

CLIMATE FINANCE FOR VULNERABLE AREAS AND GROUPS IS NEEDED

According to the 2015 Paris Agreement, developed countries reaffirmed the commitment to provide developing countries with USD 100 billion annually by 2020 for climate finance. The commitment spans to at least 2025. International climate finance not only supports the actions of developing countries to mitigate climate change, i.e. accelerating the reduction of their own emissions, but it also helps the most vulnerable people in the world to adapt to the impacts of climate change. Climate finance is vital for developing countries and for vulnerable areas and groups already struggling with the impacts of climate change.

Many countries, including Finland, provide climate funding from their development cooperation appropriations. However, the need to eradicate poverty and promote other development goals, such as gender equality, has not subsided. Climate finance takes up an increasing share of development cooperation appropriations globally.⁵² Nevertheless, the need for climate funding is already parallel and of similar extent to the need for international development aid⁵³, and it will only continue to grow in the coming decades. There is a deep financial gap between reality and the need for funding.⁵⁴

The financial gap is not the only cause of concern. How the funding is targeted is also problematic. The share of funding targeted to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) that are the most vulnerable and have the largest need for the funding is alarmingly low. In addition, most of the funding has been allocated for the mitigation of climate change instead of adaptation measures.⁵⁵ If the funding is targeted to the poorest countries and apportioned evenly for climate change mitigation and adaptation, it is possible to support those who are already struggling with the impacts of climate change.

International climate funding is only one tool in the battle against climate change. Even the impacts of sufficient and well-targeted climate funding are limited without political coherence in matters concerning the climate. Most of global cash flows lead to operations that accelerate climate change. In 2014–2016, the institutions and 11 Member States of the EU supported the use of fossil fuels by approximate €112 billion every year. The climate funding goal of developed countries could be covered by apportioning these subsidies elsewhere.⁵⁶ Finland also supported the use of fossil fuels by approximately €1 billion nationally in 2018 while it is at the same time actively pursuing the termination of similar subsidies in the international arenas.⁵⁷



CLIMATE CHANGE IS A QUESTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Climate change does not affect everyone in the same way. That is why fair solutions that are based on human rights are required. Climate change must be mitigated to ensure the realisation of girls' rights. Adaptation measures that do not endanger the rights of girls but take their needs into consideration and utilise the knowledge and skills of women and girls are also required. Girls must have an opportunity to influence the decision-making processes that concern them, such as drawing up climate policies.

Understanding climate change in the context of human rights is key for efforts. It encourages setting urgent and ambitious enough emission reduction goals. Adapting this perspective also ensures that climate action does not compromise or violate the human rights of anyone. Including the aspect of human rights in matters related to climate change also empowers and allows for the participation of groups of people whose voices are rarely heard, but on whose lives climate change and climate actions have an effect. This helps create democratic, fair and meaningful, i.e. sustainable and real solutions for climate change.

Finland is one of the wealthy industrial countries historically responsible for climate change. That is why Finland must accept its responsibility to reduce its emissions and support the climate action of developing countries with its fair share of international climate finance. Finland promotes human rights and gender equality. Thus, Finland must also highlight human rights and gender equality in international climate discussions. In addition, Finland must take girls' rights and special needs into account in its own climate efforts. Climate change is compromising our living conditions as we know them and people's right to humane life. Finland must do its fair share of mitigating climate change and limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees and demand the same from the EU.

52. The Climate Finance Shadow Report. Oxfam, 2016.

53. Approximately USD 143 billion in 2016; Climate funding and Finland. Kepa, 2017.

54. The Adaptation Gap report. UNEP, 2018.

55, 56 Climate funding and Finland. Kepa, 2017.

57. Development policy results report. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2018.

Louisa

Children and young people in the Philippines are taking action to reduce the impact of climate change by becoming voices of change and leading various environmental activities in their towns.

*"We are doing coastal clean-ups and planting mangrove trees on the beach and will soon be starting work on helping our barangay with solid-waste segregation this summer," says **Louisa**, 15, one of the climate change child activists from a town in Eastern Visayas that was badly hit by Typhoon Haiyan (known locally as Typhoon Yolanda).*

Louisa is just one of thousands of children who are dealing with the effects of climate change in the Philippines. "We experienced the typhoon in 2013 and now we fear losing our homes as the shore is slowly being eaten away by the sea. If we do not do something, we might be homeless in the future due to coastal erosion."

Louisa, 15, and her friends plant mangrove seedlings on beach to stop erosion.



About Plan International






We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. We recognise the power and potential of every single child. But this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it's girls who are most affected. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood, and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 75 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 70 countries.

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