



Kaschak Institute
SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

Climate-Care Nexus

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Context

Climate change, biodiversity loss and environmental degradation accelerated and intensified into interlinked crises

The IPCC estimates that 10% of all plant and animal species face a high risk of extinction from global warming. This loss of ecosystems and biodiversity imperils human survival, threatening food, water, and air sources and endangering human health and safety, especially in countries of the Global South



Context

Although significant progress has been made in addressing some of the structural challenges of gender inequality in research and policies on climate change, a comprehensive understanding of the linkages between climate change and women's and girls' unpaid care, domestic, and communal work is urgently needed

Context

The Multilateral Environmental Agreements do not mention the issue of care, including in their GAPs. Neither the co-responsibility for care is addressed in recent MEA publications

Similarly, country reports to CEDAW do not mention the relationship between care and the environment, except for a few instances regarding water



Two entry points

- Climate change and environmental degradation lead to an increase in women's and girls' unpaid care, domestic and communal work
- Gender-responsive climate action towards a low-carbon, climate-resilient economy offers opportunities for achieving the recognition, reduction and redistribution of unpaid care work



Relationship

1. Reduction in natural resource availability affects women's and girls' unpaid work

- Between 1983 and 2009, about 454 million hectares, experienced yield losses induced by meteorological drought. Due to the lack of availability of natural resources, women take on a more significant share of unpaid work by working longer hours, undertaking more tasks, and engaging children in economic activities



Relationship

2. Gendered impacts of fragile food systems

- Many poor households reduce the number of meals daily or favor some household members over others. Many societies distribute food according to sex, age, and status. The gap in food insecurity between men and women widened from 1.7 percentage points in 2019 to 4.3 percentage points in 2021



Relationship

3. Health impacts of climate change and environmental degradation

- The growth of climate-sensitive, food-borne, water-borne and vector-borne diseases
- A spike in population exposed to heat waves
- A rise in mental health impacts is expected from exposure to high temperatures, extreme weather events, displacement, malnutrition, conflict, climate-related economic and social losses, and anxiety, distress about climate change



Relationship

4. Water availability

- In 2023, some 380 million women and girls live with high or critical water stress, which is estimated to go up to 674 million by 2050
- During droughts, the work of “caring for others” is expressed by standing in queues for water and walking long distances to collect water
- 1.8 billion people worldwide rely on drinking water from supplies off-premises, with women and girls primarily responsible for collecting water in seven out of ten households





Relationship

5. Environmental care can add to women's and girl's unpaid care workloads

Unfortunately, many projects related to climate change, such as reforestation, land rehabilitation, waste management, among others, count on women's and their unpaid labour as “sustainability saviours”



Emerging efforts

Gender in NDPs

- 48 national NDPs were analyzed
- 9 NDPs are on the forefront, including references to care work and droughts
- Two acknowledge a relatively new topic: the psychological burden of drought on women
- Incorporation of gender in NDPs is mainly because the UNCCD Secretariat has incorporated clear and precise gender criteria that should appear in a NDP
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Final thoughts

- Advise of the risks of increasing women's and girls' unpaid care and domestic work in mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, or disaster risk reduction programs and initiatives
- Solutions must reduce, not increase, women's and girls' unpaid care and domestic work
- Increase investment in labor-saving sustainable infrastructure systems and the improvements in service provision to reduce women's and girls' unpaid care and domestic work



Sustainable development policies and initiatives **should build on** efforts to recognize **care as a public good**, universal right, and essential building block for the **well-being** of societies, economies, and environments



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Gracias