

From alarm bells to background noise? Challenging Gender-lite Approaches to Risk Mapping, Analysis and Response in the Asia Pacific

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Introduction

The importance of gender in international development and environmental research and policy-making is never more widely accepted than before yet mainstreaming efforts have not translated to transformations in the social, political and economic relations of women especially in areas facing multiple climate change, conflict and disaster risks. The lack of significant change manifests acutely in the continued gender imbalance in leadership and participation across all levels of climate governance and in protection gaps and failures that may compound gender-based violence in crisis settings.¹ In the Asia Pacific region, countries such as the Philippines, Cambodia and Vanuatu have instituted frameworks that incorporate gender equality goals within national climate change and disaster risk reduction agendas.² Research shows that when countries work towards gender equality then they are more likely to achieve climate justice as a result of recognising the indispensability of political and economic redistribution in long-term response.³ However, countries especially from a crisis-prone region such as the Asia Pacific need to urgently re-orient agendas and their implementation so that they are ‘fit for purpose’ in the face of persistent gender inequalities, and intersecting security and climate risks. Based on the 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report on *Global Warming of 1.5 °C*, there are significant gaps in knowledge on the interactions of climate change responses with sustainable development and poverty eradication, particularly in understanding what synergies and trade-offs there are in current mitigation and adaptation strategies.⁴ Moreover, the IPCC recommends the development of integrated risk assessment, management and long-term response as increasingly necessary to encompass the occurrence of simultaneous hazards, cumulative impacts and cascading disasters which cannot be left to the analysis of natural and physical sciences alone.⁵ Policymakers, researchers and practitioners can no longer afford to map and analyse climate-related risks and impacts on human lives independent of other natural ecosystems, or to treat climate risks to food insecurity and health, for example, in isolation from climate-related drivers to conflict and displacement.⁶

¹ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). 2018. General Recommendation No. 37 on Gender-related dimensions of disaster risk reduction in the context of climate change. CEDAW/C/GC/37. Accessed http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/1_Global/CEDAW_C_GC_37_8642_E.pdf.

² In the Philippines, the two main national frameworks are the Climate Change Act of 2009 and National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010. In Cambodia, new plans and frameworks have been developed such as the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan (CCCSP) 2014-2023 and the Master Plan on Gender and Climate Change (MPGCC) 2018-2030. Vanuatu has developed the Climate Change Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016-2030; and the National Policy on Climate Change and Disaster-induced Displacement 2018.

³ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). 2013. *The Environment and Gender Index (EGI) 2013 Pilot*. Washington, D.C.: IUCN; IUCN Global Gender Office (IUCN GGO). 2015. *Women's Participation in Global Environmental Decision Making: An EGI Supplemental Report*. IUCN: Washington, DC. Available at: <http://genderandenvironment.org/resource/womens-participation-in-global-environmental-decision-making-an-egi-supplemental-report/>

⁴ See also Nilsson, Mans, Dave Griggs and Martin Visbeck, “Map the interactions between Sustainable Development Goals,” *Nature* 534 (2016): 320-322.

⁵ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). 2018. *Global Warming of 1.5 °C*. Available at <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>.

⁶ Mora, Camilo et al. 2018. “Broad threat to humanity from cumulative climate hazards intensified by greenhouse gas emissions.” *Nature Climate Change* 8: 1062-1071; Cramer, Wolfgang et al. 2018.

This chapter argues that pre-existing gender inequalities do not just exacerbate the consequences of climate change, they are themselves barriers to fully understanding and addressing the causes of interconnected insecurities tied to climate change. It provides a preliminary mapping of evidence based on research in the Philippines, Cambodia and Vanuatu⁷ to demonstrate how countries in the Asia Pacific region present emerging insights and critical junctures for meaningfully including gender as a key lens for integrated risk mapping, analysis and response. First, it discusses the distinct security context in the Asia Pacific where climate change intersects with pre-existing gender inequalities and compounded harms from poverty, protracted conflicts, land dispossession and local or community-level resource disputes. Because people from the Asia Pacific have been historically exposed to multiple and overlapping insecurities, localised and everyday knowledge especially among women contain insights for identifying the conditions for security comprehensively. Second, despite potential contributions of their knowledge, the chapter identifies three prevailing ‘gender-lite’ approaches within climate change and disaster programming and their role in weakening the transformative potential of integrating gender perspectives across risk mapping, analysis and response. This chapter underscores that the cost of weakly implementing gender equality goals is not only that women especially the indigenous and internally displaced, are kept out of meaningful contribution to developing inclusive peace in the face of climate change. Additionally, dominant national and global climate risk analyses remain partial or worse, flawed because they are ultimately unable to comprehensively respond to where, when, how and what multiple risks overlap.

Intersecting Crises and the Asia Pacific Context

The Asia Pacific, along with Africa, is predicted to have the greatest proportion of people already exposed and susceptible to impoverishment with the increase in multiple and compounded climate-related risks.⁸ Disaster-related displacements are already significantly higher in Asia Pacific compared to other regions and will likely continue to be so.⁹ Asia has accounted for most disaster-related displacement globally since 1970.¹⁰ In 2018, approximately 60 percent of disaster-induced displacements affecting 10 million people occurred in the Philippines, China and India.¹¹ While disasters are increasingly the main driver for displacement globally and regionally for the Asia Pacific, protracted armed conflicts and a resurgence of violence also continue to generate displacements. The region has had high levels of state-based, non-state and one-sided violence clustered in fragile areas that are also impacted by extreme weather.¹² Based on regional assessment for atrocity crimes against civilians, several countries in the region are reported to be at *very high risk* (Myanmar, The Philippines and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea), *high risk* (China and

“Climate change and interconnected risks to sustainable development in the Mediterranean.” *Nature Climate Change* 8: 972-980.

⁷ The evidence is informed by two separate field research projects broadly examining questions of gender and crisis: a) doctoral research on displacements caused by conflicts and disasters in the Philippines (2014-2018); b) collaborative research project with Monash University Centre for Gender, Peace and Security and ActionAid Australia in Cambodia and Vanuatu on gender-responsive alternatives to climate change (2018-2019). Data were collected through key-informant interviews and focus group discussions.

⁸ IPCC 2018, *Global Warming of 1.5 °C*, p. 178.

⁹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). 2015. *Disaster-related Displacement Risk: Measuring the Risk and Addressing its Drivers*. Geneva: IDMC. <http://www.internal-displacement.org/assets/publications/2015/20150312-global-disaster-related-displacement-risk-en.pdf>.

¹⁰ IDMC 2015, *Disaster-related Displacement Risk*, p. 21.

¹¹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). 2019. *Global Report on Internal Displacement*, p. 7. Accessed 6 November 2019, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2019-IDMC-GRID.pdf>.

¹² Uppsala Conflict Data Program, (Date of retrieval: 31/10/2019) UCDP Conflict Encyclopaedia: https://www.pcr.uu.se/digitalAssets/667/c_667494-1-1-k_ucdp_sea_2018.png, Uppsala University.

Indonesia), and *moderate risk* (Papua New Guinea).¹³ In the past and at present, the region has been the site of multiple forms of overlapping and recurrent crises from armed conflicts, disease outbreaks, environmental disasters and ongoing poverty. The consequences include immediate impacts through death and displacements, and long-term effects especially in terms of health and environmental sustainability. Facing multiple risks and hazards in everyday life, is therefore not new to the region but rather that with climate change, these risks are occurring more frequently and with increasing intensity for affected areas and populations.

Table 1. Examples of multiple and diverse security challenges

Security Challenge	Country	Gendered Consequences
Violence in unresolved conflicts	Philippines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurrent displacements undermine effective response that rely on continuity of service or assistance such as for sexual and reproductive health; • Multiple exposures to risks including threats of sexual and gender-based violence • Gender discrimination and violence such as child/early marriages involved in negative adaptation and mitigation
Violence in post-conflict transitions	Cambodia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender-based exclusions and lack of representation across climate change, disaster risk reduction and post-conflict transition programming • Land-grabbing, forced eviction and loss of livelihood through ‘development aggression’ as part of economic land concessions¹⁴
‘Slow’ and invisible violence	Vanuatu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existential security threat and loss of intangible heritage • Conflict management over access to land and natural resources resulting from permanent displacements • Barriers to accessing justice in plural legal systems for kin and community-level disputes especially in cases of domestic violence¹⁵

¹³ Asia Pacific Centre for Responsibility to Protect; <https://r2pasiapacific.org/files/4147/APRO%20October%202019%20%20FINAL.pdf>.

¹⁴ Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), 2012, *Development Aggression as Economic Growth* http://iphndefenders.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/AIPP_Report_4web_final.pdf.

¹⁵ Vanuatu Policing and Justice Support Program, *Conflict Management and Access to Justice in Rural Vanuatu*. Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Accessed on 6 November 2019, <https://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/conflict-management-access-justice-rural-vanuatu.aspx>.

Asia Pacific is a highly diverse region – politically, economically, and socio-culturally.¹⁶ This diversity manifests in different configurations of security challenges and forms of violence that need to be taken into account as part of climate change risk mapping, analysis, and response (see Table 1). For instance, security contexts in the region vary from countries (or localities within countries) affected by ongoing conflicts, to those that are transitioning from conflict, and countries where despite absence of major conflicts and intra-state violence but are facing existential security challenges due to climate change. In the Philippines, research on women farmers in areas prone to protracted, recurrent and low-intensity conflicts indicate the need to ensure climate change programming is integrated within national gender equality and peace and reconciliation processes.¹⁷ In Cambodia, a country still on a long recovery from conflict, economic development through extractive industries such as mining and logging are reportedly fuelling land dispossessions and have distinctly impacted indigenous peoples.¹⁸ Finally, for Vanuatu, though the country has not experienced internal conflicts, it does face significant existential threats from rising sea levels, uncertainty and development challenges posed by severe cyclones and mass resettlements due to volcanic activity. The loss of intangible heritage, as well as community or localised level tensions due to permanent displacement and resource scarcity all constitute profound and intersecting insecurities.¹⁹

This plurality of political, economic and socio-cultural systems also means varying outcomes on gender equality issues which in turn shapes differential vulnerabilities to climate risks, and varying capacities for prevention and response among countries and affected populations especially for women, minority groups, indigenous peoples, and people with disabilities.²⁰ Different groups of women in the region have varying pre-existing access (or lack thereof) and roles in governance and decision-making. For example, there is a stark contrast between the Philippines which has been a regional leader for relatively strong women’s parliamentary representation at approximately 30 percent, and Vanuatu which has had only five women elected in parliament since independence in 1980.²¹ Another example relates to traditional practices and beliefs which vary in their influence. While it is widely known that certain aspects of tradition serve to harm specific groups and individuals especially women and sexual minorities, ‘traditional knowledge’ especially among indigenous peoples from the Asia Pacific is increasingly recognised as vital to climate, peace and security.²² Indeed, there is evidence from the region of collective experiences and shared memory of how insecurity constitutes an everyday part of life, and this actively shapes local long-term crisis prevention, adaptation and mitigation.

¹⁶ See UN ESCAP 2019, *Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2019*, https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/ESCAP_Asia_and_the_Pacific_SDG_Progress_Report_2019.pdf.

¹⁷ Chandra, Alvin, Karen McNamara, Paul Dargusch, Ana Maria Caspe, and Dante Dalabajan. 2017. “Gendered vulnerabilities of smallholder farmers to climate change in conflict-prone areas: A case study from Mindanao, Philippines,” *Journal of Rural Studies* 50: 45-59.

¹⁸ Park, Clara Mi Young. 2018. “Our Lands are Our Lives”: Gendered Experiences of Resistance to Land Grabbing in Rural Cambodia,” *Feminist Economics*, DOI: 10.1080/13545701.2018.1503417.

¹⁹ Vanuatu Department of Women’s Affairs, Ministry of Justice and Community Services. n.d.

“Gender and Climate Change Adaptation in Vanuatu.” Accessed 6 November 2019.

<https://www.nab.vu/document/gender-and-climate-change-adaptation-vanuatu>; McLeod, Elizabeth et al. 2018. “Raising the voices of Pacific Island women to inform climate adaptation policies,” *Marine Policy* 93: 178-185.

²⁰ Simangan, Dahlia. 2019. “Situating the Asia Pacific in the age of the Anthropocene,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 73(6): 564-584.

²¹ As of January 2019, regional average for Asia is at 20.1 percent and the Pacific at 16.7 percent according to data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union, “Women in National Parliaments,”

<http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm> (accessed 20 October 2019).

²² McLeod et al. 2018; AIPP 2012; D. Nakashima, I. Krupnik & J.T. Rubis. 2018. *Indigenous Knowledge for Climate Change Assessment and Adaptation*. Local & Indigenous Knowledge 2 (Cambridge and Paris: Cambridge University Press and UNESCO).

In the Philippines, research participants emphasised that for poor communities besieged by constant threats of disasters, immediate survival is more important than long-term resilience building because “how can they think of preventing future disasters when they still face food insecurity on a daily basis?”²³ In a focus-group discussion in Cambodia, local commune officers expressed how they feel they must prioritise needs because there is not enough resources to meet both emergency response and long-term development planning due to frequent and rapid-onset disasters in their community. When emergency assistance runs out, everyone – even the commune leaders themselves – are forced to find ways to self-cope. One participant stated “even if we seek support from the commune, they cannot help anyway – they are in the same situation as us. The officers are also struggling”.²⁴ This sentiment finds resonance in Vanuatu where pre-existing poverty and low economic development mean that with rising frequency in climate change-related risks and hazards, responding to development needs and disaster resilience-building in remote communities becomes increasingly difficult while also managing other crises. As pointed out by a female research participant in Vanuatu, “some of our politicians are struggling. They get overwhelmed themselves by the multiple demands. They need help in capacity-building too”.²⁵

These insights will rapidly gain relevance for other regions and societies as complex risks and hazards become an overwhelming reality that impacts on the capacity to develop long-term prevention, mitigation and adaptation globally. Based on regional monitoring by UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), Asia Pacific countries are exhibiting negative trends – regressing farther away from targets under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda in key areas of climate action, natural resource management and environmental protection. In Asia Pacific, “nearly half of SDG indicators in which progress is likely to deteriorate by 2030 are environmental”.²⁶ However, as gender research in conflict, disasters and fragile settings show, when there are gaps or shortages in response and protection mechanisms during times of crises, as well as in the aftermath, these are linked with intensified care burdens for women and girls.²⁷ They fuel negative coping mechanisms that result in undermining the rights and well-being of the most marginalised members of society.²⁸ How can risk mapping, analysis and response, already onerous tasks in the Asia Pacific region, be made ‘fit for purpose’ and responsive to gender equality in the face of predicted worsening conditions under climate change? Within a highly diverse region, there are significant opportunities to learn where, when, how and what multiple climate risks overlap in order to identify what needs and capacities can be strengthened for sustainable development and peace.

²³ Personal interview, female representative of INGO, Guiuan, Samar, 24 February 2015; and male academic and specialist in disaster research, Quezon City, 3 February 2015. See also Tanyag, Maria. 2018. “Resilience, Female Altruism and Bodily Autonomy: Disaster-Induced Displacement in Post-Haiyan Philippines,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 43(3) 2018: 563-85; and Su, Yvonne and Maria Tanyag. 2019. “Globalising myths of survival: post-disaster households after Typhoon Haiyan,” *Gender, Place & Culture*, DOI: 10.1080/0966369X.2019.1635997.

²⁴ Focus group participant, Kampot, Cambodia, 27 May 2018.

²⁵ Personal interview, Port Vila, 25 September 2018.

²⁶ UN ESCAP, *Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report 2019*, 7. Accessed 6 November 2019; https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/ESCAP_Asia_and_the_Pacific_SDG_Progress_Report_2019.pdf.

²⁷ Tanyag, Maria. 2018. “Depleting Fragile Bodies: The Political Economy of Sexual and Reproductive Health in Crisis Situations,” *Review of International Studies* 44(4): 654-71; Rai, Shirin M., Jacqui True, and Maria Tanyag. 2019. “From Depletion to Regeneration: Addressing Structural and Physical Violence in Post-Conflict Economies,” *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society* 26(4): 561-85.

²⁸ See for examples UN Women. 2015. *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325*. New York; Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW). 2014. *Identifying Opportunities for Action on Climate Change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines*. Kuala Lumpur: ARROW; Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law, and Development (APWLD). 2015. “Climate Change and Natural Disasters Affecting Women Peace and Security.” Report, APWLD, March 13, Chiang Mai.

Urgent Need to Move beyond ‘Gender-lite’ Approaches

One of these key opportunities is in allowing everyday or localised knowledge including indigenous knowledge possessed by women and men to drive climate change and security agendas. These insights from the region, especially by women, can serve as ‘alarm bells’ for navigating intersecting crises yet are still prevalently marginalised within national decision-making processes. Instead, there is evidence that the transformative aspects of gender mainstreaming commitments in national policies and frameworks are reduced to the bare minimum. A ‘gender-lite’ approach²⁹ is different from ‘gender-blind’ in that there are steps taken to promote ‘gender’ but this is done to depoliticise gender issues as a matter of bureaucratic ‘tick box’ or procedural conformity. While the absence of substantive or meaningful engagement to gender analysis may in part be shaped by the distinct governance challenges of multiple crises in the Asia Pacific, it can also represent a deliberate mechanism to limit women’s contributions in implementing agendas, in analysing what climate risks there are, and their leadership in developing inclusive solutions to climate-driven insecurities. There are three main types of ‘gender-lite’ approaches identified in the Philippines, Cambodia and Vanuatu.

A) Attendance as Participation

First, participation is often limited to consultation and physical attendance in meetings and training seminars. This means women lack control over the decision-making process and do not have equal ownership of the decision outcomes. For instance, a scoping study conducted by the Asian-Pacific Resource & Research Centre for Women (ARROW) revealed that in terms of the Philippine national climate change action plan, “women’s organisations mobilised during the drafting stages of the plan to have SRHR [sexual and reproductive health and rights] included in the plan, however, their views are not reflected in the final plan”.³⁰ Women’s participation in effect rubber stamped the decision-making process even if the outcome ultimately sidelined their insights. In Cambodia, a similar pattern was noted in a focus group discussion among rural residents. Participation can often be reduced simply to consultation where the women are taught or ‘given’ information rather than enabled to set agendas and define outcomes. One informant from an NGO stated, “[C]onsultation process is only done once a year. We are consulted but then they do not do anything for the issues we raise. So the following year, we were less interested to participate”.³¹ In this context, the use of a gender-lite approach to participation is a disincentive to women’s long-term or ongoing participation. Ironically, when women stay away from local-level consultations this is then used against women to silence them by the men in their communities, and to justify their exclusion from leadership roles. In Vanuatu, this is evident because women belonging to communities with strict adherence to customary rules trace their marginalisation to practices that explicitly disallow them from physically attending the *nakamal* – a traditional space where all village decision-making is done. In response, women have devised ways over time to circumvent these prohibitive norms by influencing the men in their families to speak on their behalf in village decision-making processes.³² However, there is no guarantee that the men will promote women’s interests let alone make decisions that are favourable to the women.

²⁹ Gender-lite is “gender without feminism, gender without power, but also gender without sexuality, nor ‘race’ and ethnicity” according to Sarah Bracke, “The Unbearable Lightness of ‘Gender and Diversity,’ *DiGeSt. Journal of Diversity and Gender Studies* vol. 1, no. 1 (2014), p. 45.

³⁰ ARROW 2014. *Identifying Opportunities for Action on Climate Change and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and the Philippines*. Kuala Lumpur: ARROW, p. 26.

³¹ Female informant from NGO, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 4 June 2018.

³² This is being done by women from the *Women I tok tok Tugeta* (WITTT) network in Vanuatu. See Stefanova, Kristina, “These women in Vanuatu highlight the strength of the female network following a crisis” *Women’s Agenda*, Accessed 6 November 2019, <https://womensagenda.com.au/latest/women-work-following-disaster-crisis-vanuatu/>.

B) Women-only Silos

Second, gender mainstreaming has reflected a tendency to confine gender issues within ‘women-only programs’ of larger disaster risk reduction and climate change programs. Where there have been spaces for gender inclusion, these have been possible often under departments viewed as ‘soft issues’ such as social welfare, culture, and women ministries. For programs under departments and ministries relating to energy, meteorology, land and natural resources, gender is seen as relevant only in meeting requirements around gender-balanced participation and not in the risk analysis and response. Consequently, this frames women as primarily beneficiaries of already pre-formed agendas rather than problem-solvers, decision-makers and implementers. Across the three countries, women rarely have influence in setting agendas and defining outcomes, and this tends to be even more pronounced in sectors around resource governance, disaster risk reduction, and climate change.³³ According to a research participant in Cambodia, “[W]hen they hear ‘gender’, they just throw it to the women. I tell them not just women but also men”.³⁴ In Vanuatu, research participants reported that at the community level, they have Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs) which have a designated women’s representative. However, they were unclear as to what was the purpose or mandate of the women’s representative. There were even concerns from some participants that this position can be used to relegate women’s leadership only within and up to community-based ‘DRR and CC only issues’ rather than allowing for women’s capacity for leadership and political participation to flourish across all levels of governance. One female participant from Vanuatu aptly argued that “the women were included as part of ‘tick-box’.”³⁵

C) Gender analysis is incidental and not integral

Third, women’s presence is not enough to effect transformative or radical shifts in policy-making when prevailing norms and codes in climate governance spaces continue to privilege the same masculinised forms of activities, behaviours and solutions.³⁶ In the three countries, gender analysis is treated as incidental rather than integral to governance mechanisms of climate change, disaster risk reduction and development. Gender is ‘added on’ as part of bureaucratic exercise which in turn can only provide narrow and ‘settled’ answers about women’s and men’s experiences as well as knowledge.³⁷ This gender-lite approach hinders the integral role of gender for critical engagement with peace and climate change through the analysis of yet unknown sites of violence and vulnerability where climate risks interconnect and why. It mutually reinforces the other two modes of limited gender mainstreaming by excluding women’s substantive control over decision outcomes and by confining gender in the socio-cultural dimensions and not in areas considered as ‘technical’. For instance in Vanuatu after 2015 Tropical Cyclone Pam, research participants noted that ‘gender’ is often considered a secondary issue and not a priority in emergency response. In the aftermath of the disaster “the gender and protection cluster did not really get funding until 2 to 3 years after... the government said money should go to infrastructure.”³⁸ This embodies an entrenched belief that the relevance of gender is severed from the broader dynamics of disasters and especially in the prevention and preparedness response. Yet “when projects fail to address gender differences within the environmental context, they risk wasting development resources on projects and creating negative effects on welfare, equity, equality, and sustainability. Project results are superior when gender considerations are taken into account during all processes of planning, design, and implementation”.³⁹

³³ See also IUCN 2013; IUCN GGO 2015.

³⁴ Female commune officer in a focus group discussion, Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 26 May 2018

³⁵ Female informant, NGO representative, Port Vila, 25 September 2018.

³⁶ Magnusdottir, Gunnhildur Lily and Kronsell, Annica. 2015. “The (In)Visibility of Gender in Scandinavian Climate Policy-Making.” *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 17(2): 308-326.

³⁷ Arora-Jonsson, Seema. 2014. “Forty years of gender research and environmental policy: Where do we stand?” *Women's Studies International Forum* 47, p. 305.

³⁸ Personal interview, Port Vila, 4 October 2018.

³⁹ IUCN 2013, p. 41.

Conclusion

Why is it that despite significant global advances in the acceptance of gender equality as a pre-requisite and outcome of effective environmental and climate change policy-making, gender inequalities are yet to be integrated in risk mapping, analysis, and response? This chapter argued that with escalating and compounded climate-driven risks and hazards, it is all the more imperative to scrutinise the quality of ‘gender-lite’ mainstreaming and implementation approaches. In the Asia Pacific where multiple and interconnected climate risks are already occurring and with amplified effects, there are national policy frameworks and action plans in place that explicitly promote gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive implementation. These frameworks and their implementation however need to be urgently re-oriented to allow for the local insights of those most affected at the intersections of multiple crises and insecurities to truly drive them forward.

Main Recommendations

- Re-assess existing national frameworks and plans based on their support for everyday and traditional knowledge as legitimate forms of climate risk expertise of individuals and communities at the crossroads of different crises particularly disasters and conflicts.
- Women and members of minority groups must not simply be added into pre-existing processes for ‘passing down’ technical solutions but rather, integrated risks and response are reassessed from their standpoints.
- Provide enabling resources and spaces for women to have control over the decision-making process and to equally benefit from decision outcomes.
- Promote women’s participation and leadership across all agencies and ministries beginning with developing women’s expertise at basic community or village governance structures.