

Phase 3: Deliverable 3.4 Report on mechanisms and tools to reduce imbalances in decision-making

Conducting a study and providing with mechanisms and tools to reduce imbalances in decision-making on climate issues of vulnerable groups such as women and youth in the municipalities of Méri, Mbé and Petté

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1 INTRODUCTION

Cameroon has made the fight against climate change a priority and has signed all international agreements in this direction. It has made commitments to reduce greenhouse gases and invest into adaptation measures, notably through the development of a National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (PNACC)¹. This national adaptation plan provides a framework to guide the coordination and implementation of climate change adaptation initiatives in Cameroon. This plan also serves as a planning tool for defining and monitoring priority activities for the five agro-ecological zones of Cameroon.

Nevertheless, issues related to minority groups, women and young people are often addressed partially or as a secondary consideration when interventions and activities are carried out.

Men and women have differentiated roles, as well as access to and control over resources, power, and opportunities in the Cameroonian society. These differentiated roles influence the way in which vulnerability to climate change translate in concrete terms and the way vulnerability and impacts are addressed. The different impacts and responses of men and women also affect their ability to build resilient systems for their communities.

Knowledge is a social agent that allows active members of the "knowing" community to inspire vocations among people without barriers of gender, age or social background. For this reason, it is paramount that information is shared with all groups of a community and that these communities are also empowered to provide their opinion on upcoming decisions that will impact them.

Based on their experience, the consultants have conducted an assessment of the current consideration of women, young and vulnerable people in climate-induced risk planning and management to ensure activities implemented meet the needs of communities in an inclusive manner.

This study intends to provide a better understanding of how men and women in Cameroon's far north and Adamaoua regions differ in their vulnerabilities to climate and seasonal changes and in their capacity and strategies to adapt. Its objective is to identify specific gender-related vulnerabilities and needs (e.g. access to resilience actions, funding mechanisms, capacity-building

¹ Source : National Climate Change Adaptation Plan. Link:
https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/NAPC/Documents%20NAP/National%20Reports/Cameroun%20NAP_French.pdf

programs), with the aim to provide a conceptual framework for the management of gender and youth issues in the planning and management of climate change adaptation projects.

More specifically, the present study intends to address the following questions:

- i. How is Cameroon planning to change gender and youth roles in climate risk planning and management? (Section 2)
- ii. To what extent is vulnerability specific to gender and age in the far north region? (Section 3)
- iii. What are the factors encouraging changes in the roles of gender (drivers of change) and youth and what are the limitations and challenges? (Section 4)
- iv. How were women and youths involved in the activities previously carried out by the consultants and the beneficiary? (Section 5)
- v. What are the mechanisms that would enable a greater participation and inclusion of youth and women? (Section 6)

In the context of the present project, an in-depth understanding of the current gender- and youth-climate change nexus allowed the development of a conceptual framework enabling women and youth to be considered and informed in the formulation of projects and activities.

2 DEVELOPMENT, GENDER AND YOUTH POLICIES IN CAMEROON

Since 2020, the National Development Strategy (SND30), replacing the Strategy Document for Economic Growth and Employment Strategy (DSCE)², has become one of the government core reference for development policies. This strategy is the second phase of the "Vision Plan for 2035"³ issued by the Cameroonian government in 2009. The SND30 encompasses and designs the implementation of national sectoral policies. It seeks to reach four main objectives:

- establish conditions favourable to economic growth and the accumulation of national wealth as well as ensure that the structural changes essential for industrialization of the country are triggered.
- improve the living conditions of the populations and their access to basic social services by ensuring a significant reduction in poverty and underemployment.

² In French: Document de stratégie pour la croissance et l'emploi

³ Source: Cameroon Vision 2035. Link: http://www.cameroon-embassy.nl/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Cameroon_VISION_2035_English_Version.pdf

- strengthen adaptation and mitigation measures to manage the effects of climate change and environmental impacts to ensure sustainable and inclusive economic growth and social development.
- improve governance to strengthen the performance of public action in order to achieve development objectives.

The government stated its willingness to integrate women and young people into the country's decision-making and development policies through the development and implementation of policies and programmes related to them.

Also, Cameroon has ratified the main international instruments against gender-based discrimination (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Beijing Platform for Action, Maputo Protocol, etc.) and is resolutely committed to "Promote gender equality and empower women". To achieve this, it is progressively implementing profound reforms, notably in its DSCE and in its National Gender Policy.

2.1 Gender Policy

The National Gender Policy Document (NGPD) is the reference document on the promotion of gender equality in Cameroon published in 2011 by the Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family. The NGPD, which run until 2020, was developed based on the country's long-term development plan called "Vision Plan for 2035". The NGPD is a reference and orientation framework for Government action in the promotion and integration of gender and/or gender equality in all development sectors. It was drawn up according to a participatory approach, making use of updated sectoral data.

The general objective of the National Gender Policy is to contribute to the systematic elimination of inequalities between women and men at all levels of social life. The following specific objectives will contribute to the achievement of the general objective:

- Promote the equitable access of girls and boys, men and women to education, training and information.
- Promote better access for women to quality health services, including reproductive health services.
- Take measures to address the unequal access of men and women to economic opportunities and employment.

- Promote a socio-cultural environment favourable to the development of women and respect for their rights.
- Ensure a better representation of women in public life and decision-making.
- Accelerate the implementation and internalization of legal instruments relating to the rights of women and girls.
- Strengthen the capacity of the national institutional mechanism for the promotion of women's rights.

The objectives of the NGPD aim to resolve the main problems identified in the different sectors. From these problems, seven strategic axes emerged, which are broken down into objectives and intervention strategies recorded in a matrix. Strategic objectives:

- Strategic Area 1: promoting equal and equitable access of girls and boys, women and men to education, training and information
- Strategic Area 2: improving women's access to health services,
- Strategic Axis 3: promotion of equal opportunities and opportunities between women and men in the economic and employment fields. Strategic objectives
- Strategic axis 4: promotion of a socio-cultural environment favourable to the respect of women's rights.
- Strategic Area 5: strengthening the participation and representation of women in public life and decision-making.
- Strategic Area 6: strengthening the institutional framework for the promotion of gender.
- Strategic Area 7: improvement of national legislation on the promotion and protection of women's rights.

The NGPD is in favour of women's rights and gender equality in all sectors including agriculture. Relating to agricultural cash products and cocoa in particular, the policy acknowledges that women are engaged in cash crop farming and they face enormous difficulties including access to land and land ownership, agricultural inputs, financial resources (credit, subsidies, grants etc.) and modern

agricultural techniques. Nonetheless the extent to which women are involved in cash crop agriculture is not mentioned⁴.

The Cameroonian government has also legalised a number of measures to address serious injuries, violence against children, early and forced marriages, violence against women, rapes and trafficking and exploitation for prostitution.

Beyond these issues, Cameroon has taken a number of steps to increasing girls' school enrolment and eliminating disparities between regions; reduce the dropout rate for girls in school; removing economic, social and cultural barriers to girls' access to education (including direct and indirect costs of schooling, early marriage and pregnancy); eliminate violence and sexual harassment of girls in schools; and eliminating role stereotypes and the responsibilities of men and women in textbooks school curricula, school programmes and teacher training.

2.2 Youth Policy

The National Youth Policy⁵ is anchored in both national priorities and international commitments of the Cameroonian government. The policy, adopted in 2006, prioritises national development and building a prosperous and peaceful country. It was formulated in a consultative process involving representatives of public institutions, private organizations, civil society, UN agencies, and youth movements. The policy document outlines a participatory and multi-sectoral approach. It focuses on the education sector, the provision of nutrition and health services to young people and seeks to respond the scarcity of employment⁶.

In addition, over the years, the government of Cameroon's has focused on developing and implementing specific programs aimed at providing concrete solutions to the major preoccupations faced by young people in Cameroon, namely⁷:

- Access to both quality education and adequate professional training
- Access to decent jobs
- Participation in the day-to-day activities of the community as well as decision making

⁴ Source: Gender analysis of the laws and policies that govern the cocoa, palm oil, rubber and timber supply chains in Cameroon

⁵ https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Cameroon_2006_National_Youth_Policy.pdf

⁶ <https://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/cameroon/>

⁷ <http://www.minjec.gov.cm/index.php/fr/pts-jeunes/146-innovations-of-the-3-years-special-youth-plan>

These important programs and projects dedicated to the socio-economic integration of youths are performed in collaboration with the development partners, particularly in the areas of education, health and employment. Their programs are coordinated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Civic Education⁸. The current major youth empowerment programmes in Cameroon are:

- The Cameroon National Youth Council (CNJC): a framework for dialogue, expression, consultation and youth action; it interfaces with the youths, the government and development partners.
- Multipurpose Youth Empowerment Centres (CMPJ): extracurricular coaching and accompanying structures for youth empowerment.
- The National Youth Employment Covenant (PANEJ): aimed at promoting youth employment, it offers opportunities for young people to acquire a professional training and thus increase their chances of employment.
- The Integrated Support Project to Stakeholders of the Informal Sector (PIAASI): the aim is to ensure better supervision of youths operating in the informal sector and maximise the creation of productive, stable and decent jobs. It is intended through initiative to fund approximately 8,000 micro-projects and the training of their promoters.

The Support Program to Rural and Urban Youth (PAJER-U): this program is aimed at creating salaried jobs for youth, and funding micro and junior enterprises.

Despite efforts made by the Government to ensure the socio-economic integration of youths through the above programmes, their impact has been limited. The jobs created are short-lived. In fact, most of these jobs lead to the exacerbation of youth unemployment. For this reason, the Government launched the Special Youth Triennial Plan, which seeks to accelerate the socio-economic integration of youth⁹ and started in 2017.

The main goal of the three-year programme is to enhance civic education, social and economic integration of young people. It aims to achieve this by providing civic and entrepreneurial training, employment and setting youth up businesses. The plan serves as an umbrella for all related

⁸ Youth empowerment in Cameroon: The Special Youth Triennial Plan (2018)

⁹ Source: Ayuketah, E. (2018). Youth Triennial Plan: Evaluation of road covered CRTV. Accessible: <http://www.crtv.cm/2018/02/12956/>

government projects designed for youths. This is to ensure better coherence be monitored and followed-up. The plan has three main objectives¹⁰:

- Implementing a National Observing Body.
- The specialisation and reinforcement of the operational capacity of existing projects and programmes under the Minister of Youth Affairs and Civic Education.
- The development of infrastructure and equipment for social education and proximity coordination of youths.

If the letter of the law is to be followed, Cameroon has one of the strongest laws and policies on youth, which have been adopted by many African states as the base of their own policies. Paradoxically, there have been countries which have used Cameroon's youth legislation as an inspiration but have eventually been more effective in adopting and implementing progressive youth policies than Cameroon. According to the Youth Policy Labs, the problem in Cameroon has never been the lack of institutions, policies and laws on youth, but rather the absence of political willingness to effectively monitor and implement these laws and policies¹¹.

3 THE CURRENT SITUATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS IN RELATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

3.1 The specific situation of women

Across societies the impacts of climate change affect women and men differently. Women are often responsible for gathering and producing food, collecting water and sourcing fuel for heating and cooking. With climate change, these tasks are becoming more difficult. Extreme weather events such as droughts and floods have a greater impact on the poor and most vulnerable¹². Despite women being disproportionately affected by climate change, they play a crucial role in climate change adaptation and mitigation. Women have the knowledge and understanding of what is needed to adapt to changing environmental conditions and to come up with practical solutions. But they are still a largely untapped resource. Restricted land rights, lack of access to financial resources,

¹⁰ Source: Mbonteh R. (2017). Cameroon: Special Youth Triennial Program-FCFA 102 Billion for insertion, All Africa. Accessible: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201701100698.html>

¹¹ Source: Youth Policy Labs. Website: <https://www.youthpolicy.org/blog/development/youth-policies-in-cameroon-evaluating-theory-and-practice/>

¹² Source: IUCN, gender and climate change. Link: <https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/gender-and-climate-change>

training and technology, and limited access to political decision-making spheres often prevent them from playing a full role in tackling climate change and other environmental challenges¹³.

According to the NGPD, while gender considerations in Cameroon vary by regions, ethnic groups or religions, the current gender roles and perception have traditionally been for men to be in charge of productive and public roles while women would take care of the household. In 2007, it was found that 26% of households in the country were headed by a woman¹⁴. Even though specific figures are not available, the situation must be more imbalanced in north Cameroon where traditions and the weight of religion are stronger than in the rest of the country. The head of the household is always a man, and polygamy is very common. Women marry early with about 50% of them marrying for the first time before the age of 18. Bearing children is considered as the most important role of women and leads to a high fertility rate of 4.78¹⁵. Again, this figure must be much higher in north Cameroon. Therefore, young women are early committed to housework and they are unable to take part in public decision making. Only single and emancipated women can pretend being the head of their household.

The perceptions of roles, attitudes and behaviours of men and women in Cameroon have evolved with time¹⁶. Parity was highly encouraged in the last elections with encouraging results, especially in the south. In the north, progress are more difficult but female elected representatives are more numerous than before. Today, in the regions of Adamaoua, the North and the Far North, 39 women from diverse backgrounds were appointed for life as local Notables. They will be efficient opinion multipliers among women communities and associations. However, important disparities can be found between urban and rural areas, and between those with a high educational background and those with basic education. According to the Ministry of Secondary Education, school enrolment rate is particularly low in the north due to poverty and some cultural barriers. Young girls are more affected by deschooling.

Region	School enrolment rate	Proportion of girls
Far North	20,53 %	27,89 %

¹³ IUCN. Link: <https://www.iucn.org/resources/issues-briefs/gender-and-climate-change>

¹⁴ Country report of Gender Profile, Cameroon (JICA, 2015). Link: <https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/1000026850.pdf>

¹⁵ Country Strategy Paper 2010-2014. Link: https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/CAMEROON_2010-2014%20COUNTRY%20STRATEGY%20PAPER.pdf

¹⁶ For details on this issue, please refer to "The National Gender Policy Document 2011-2020", Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family-Cameroon.

Adamaoua	25,18 %	35,45 %
North	30,74 %	33,39 %

Source: Ministry of Secondary Education, 2011

From this data, we can infer that less than 10 % of girls attend school on a daily basis. Then, women's literacy rate is particularly low in these regions: 17,4 % in Far North, 26,7 % in North and 31,8 % in Adamaoua (Ministry for Women and Family, 2014). Women in rural areas and those with lower educational background tend to keep traditional values. Women with little or lacking education can hardly attend meetings, access information, or find a skilled job. As a result, they are more dependent on the male members of their household and more vulnerable.

It is generally difficult for a rural woman to build a balanced relationship with her husband because, in many cases, husbands are much older than their wives and women often come from a different village to get married as a teenager. While women and men are on more equal terms in the cities, the perception of gender division of labour, in which men are the main breadwinner and women take domestic responsibilities, remain. The use of kindergartens is not common amongst modest families living in cities, where children are often taken care of by other members of their family (e.g. especially her parents) when a woman works.

In 2015, the labour market participation rate for women was 66% compared to 77% for men. Women are mainly active in the agricultural sector: in 2015, only 26% of non-agricultural jobs were held by women¹⁷. However, in the north, women do not own lands. The landowner is always the head of the family, who is usually a male. Whereas access to land is controlled by the state in the south of the country, following decolonisation, a more traditional set-up is in place in the north. Farmers are often only usufructuaries and the lands belong to local chiefs. Women rights are almost non-existent, and they are particularly vulnerable, which easily allows traditional leaders to dispossess them of their lands. While they contribute for 60% of national food production, women are particularly affected by poverty, including food insecurity and lack of safe drinking water. Women are particularly poor in north Cameroon: 63 % in the Far North region and 50% in Adamaoua according to the Ministry for Women and Family.

¹⁷ Source: The World Bank

In Mbé, the climatic hazard that impacts on the health of the population is mostly drought, and the occurrence of measles, malaria, and typhoid with women being more affected by malaria and children by measles. In Meri, the flu, yellow fever and bronchitis affect children much more.

Impacts of climate change on women

Climate change impacts men and women differently, given their different roles and responsibilities at the household and community levels. Women are more exposed and vulnerable to climate change because they are often poorer, receive less education, and are not involved in political and household decision-making processes that affect their lives. Cultural norms related to gender sometimes limit the ability of women to make quick decisions on whether to move to safer grounds in disaster situations until it is too late¹⁸.

Similarly, a gendered sociocultural ethos does not encourage girls to learn skills such as swimming and tree climbing that help people to survive during floods¹⁹. Additionally, women tend to possess fewer assets and depend more on natural resources for their livelihoods²⁰.

3.2 The specific situation of young people

Young people in Cameroun face difficulties in accessing decent employment. Unemployment and underemployment levels are very high among young people. Approximately 11% of youth aged 15 to 29 years are unemployed, particularly in urban areas. Underemployment affects approximately 94 % of young people aged 15 to 19 years and 84 % of those between 20 and 24 years²¹.

Cameroon's three northern regions (Far-North, North and Adamaoua regions) are particularly hard hit by unemployment and poverty. While an average of 37.5% of Cameroon's population lives below the poverty line, the percentage in the Far North, North and Adamaoua regions is twice as high in some cases. The lack of prospects particularly affects young people in the region. Many have been unable to attend school, and few have undergone vocational training²².

¹⁸ Source: Nellemann, C., R. Verma, and L. Hislop (eds), Women at the frontline of climate change: Gender risks and hopes. A Rapid Response Assessment, 2011

¹⁹ Source: U. Röhr, "Gender and Climate Change," in Tiempo Issue 59 (2006); World Bank, "Social Dimensions of Climate Change," 2010; UNDP, "Africa Adaptation Experiences Gender and Climate Change: Advancing Development through an Integrated Gender Perspective," Vol. 1, 2011.

²⁰ Source: FAO, note 3, 2011; UNDP Note 3, 2011.

²¹ National Youth Policy of Cameroon (2006)

²² Improving the living conditions of disadvantaged youth in northern Cameroon (GIZ, 2016). Link: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/66884.html>

Society is largely gerontocratic: elders dominate political and social activity. Young people are very restricted in their participation in political decision-making and in their ability to play an active role. As a consequence, they have little trust in local authorities and the state. Reciprocally, the public administration's staff frequently view young people as a disruptive factor and take a sceptical stance.

Violent groups in the region are taking advantage of the socially disadvantaged position of young people and their poor economic prospects to recruit members. The Far North region has seen violent assaults and suicide attacks since 2014. In all three regions, hold-ups on country roads, including kidnappings of members of the local elite, are not uncommon. The tense security situation in the region has led to internal and, indirectly, international migration²³. Mainly, young people tend to leave remote areas to go to Maroua, the regional capital of the Far North Region. For example, they move from small cities like Mbé and Petté to the regional capital in order to find a position, usually an unqualified job. This exodus phenomenon can be seasonal. During the rainy season, which is also the most intense agricultural season, many jobs are available in the countryside. On the contrary, during the dry season, unemployment is higher and young people have to find a livelihood elsewhere. The Méri area is specifically mountainous and a large amount of labour in terraced fields is needed, allowing young people to work locally more easily.

The situation of young people concerning participation in social life and decision-making is characterised by a low level of involvement. This can partly be explained by a lack of organization and inadequate training of young people due to an inadequate legal framework and the lack of an advisory youth council, and also by the reluctance of adults to involve young people in the decision-making process. This reluctance is the consequence of generational conflict, lack of spaces for dialogue between adults and youth, and low representation of young people in decision bodies such as parliamentary assemblies, municipal bodies and the community²⁴. This said, in the northern regions, a young man of 25 years old is often already married and have children. Then, he can be considered as the head of a household by the community and take part in public decision making. Young men can be elected as municipal councillors whereas it is hardly possible for young women.

²³ Improving the living conditions of disadvantaged youth in northern Cameroon (GIZ, 2016). Link: <https://www.giz.de/en/worldwide/66884.html>

²⁴ National youth council of Cameroon (CNJC)

Cameroon has also implemented youth councils both at the national scale and at the local scale. They address youth specific issues such as education or entrepreneurship.

Impacts of climate change on youth²⁵

Extreme weather events, which damage infrastructure, lives and livelihoods, resemble economic shock, with knock-on social impacts. Some vulnerabilities to, and impacts of, climate change on young people are similar to those of economic crises, with some impacts being cumulative.

Young people, especially those facing structural disadvantages, suffer disproportionately in labour markets in times of crisis, and these impacts are likely to be exacerbated by climate change. For example, youth from the poorest families cultivating the most marginal areas are most likely to be forced to seek employment in the informal sectors, in which young people are already overrepresented, and therefore become vulnerable to low-paid, low-quality jobs, more so if they have migrated in search of employment.

Extreme weather events have been shown to reduce participation, especially female, in education since the burden of schooling costs becomes higher and the need for adolescents and young people to contribute economically to households becomes greater.

Climate crises can increase malnutrition among adolescents – through food shortages resulting from lower agricultural yields or loss in livelihoods opportunities - with potentially long-term health consequences, such as complications with pregnancy, leading to increased levels of reported stress and increased exposure to water or vector-borne diseases.

They are also vulnerable to impaired social capital and psycho-social development due to breakdown of family and social support, increasing their vulnerability to future shocks. They are also more likely to seek alternative support networks, such as gangs or military groups.

3.3 Access to funding mechanisms

Gender considerations were not integrated from the start into the design and operationalization of most existing dedicated climate financing mechanisms. Both outside pressure and internal recognition of sub-optimal outcomes of gender-blind projects and programs has led to substantial efforts in recent years, in several multilateral climate funds, to incorporate gender considerations retroactively into fund programming guidelines and structures. Over the past years, climate funds

²⁵ Hazell, J. (2010); 'The Overlap between the Effects of the Economic Crisis and Climate Change Vulnerability,'

have also improved collaborative efforts and expert exchange on helping each other to improve the gender responsiveness of their operations²⁶.

While frameworks and policies now exist that articulate gender considerations and uphold stakeholder engagement in climate financing for all four of the main public climate finance mechanisms—the Adaptation Fund, Climate Investment Funds (CIF), Green Climate Fund (GCF), and Global Environment Facility (GEF)—each varies in their mode of operation and implementation. Moreover, the engagement and participation of grassroots women, women’s organizations and gender experts in climate finance processes—from design to decision-making, implementation to monitoring— remains limited. This in turn limits the depth, breadth and efficiency of climate initiatives by hindering the integration of local knowledge, context and opportunities in climate change solutions, as well as inhibiting advances in human rights and gender equality.

4 ADDRESSING VULNERABILITIES TO CLIMATE RISKS AMONG VULNERABLE GROUPS

Adaptation, vulnerability and resilience of people to climate change depend upon a range of conditions. These vary from their degree of exposure and dependency upon weather patterns for livelihoods and food security, to varying capacities in adaptation, which are influenced by gender, social status, economic poverty, power, access, and control and ownership over resources in the household, community and society.

Social roles and inequality of resources and power are the main factors in gender-differentiated and age-related vulnerability to climate change in the Far North and Adamaoua regions. Thus, social roles define the level of exposure and sensitivity of women and young people to climate change; and power relations determine the adaptability of young people and women to climate change.

Effective climate change adaptation brings everyone to the table, recognizing the value of their knowledge and their potential as agents of change. The process of adaptation planning is designed to make it possible to invest in concrete actions that reduce vulnerability to climate change. However, there is a risk that adaptation investments actually reinforce existing wealth and power structures, rather than benefit the most vulnerable women and men. Adaptation is effective when it is equitable, providing opportunities and benefits for all people.

²⁶ <https://climatefundupdate.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CFF10-2018-ENG-DIGITAL.pdf>

4.1. Addressing women vulnerability

The rural communities, especially women, children, female-headed households and the elderly are the most vulnerable groups. Women bear most of the burden in activities that are most impacted by adverse climate, including collection of water, firewood and ensuring daily access to food.

In addition, women's decision-making in public life is very low due to:

- Lack of adequate financial resources
- Illiteracy and limited access to education and work opportunities
- Discriminatory cultural and social attitudes and negative stereotypes
- Burden of domestic responsibilities
- Intimidation, harassment and violence
- Lack of access to information

The technical assistance of the current project has been carried out with gender and age consideration. The "relais climats" supporting the trainings and awareness campaigns were made up of young people who had been proposed to consultants by the different town halls. The criteria for choosing these young people were that they belonged to one of the vulnerable villages and respected gender parity (i.e. 2 per village for a total of 20 in each of the three communes), had already had to work with the town hall, and had the ability to use an android telephone which is a determining tool for data collection.

The vulnerability matrices of each community were developed through a participative process, which started with the forums of the neighbourhoods in each municipality, then it was extended to the level of the relays at the level of each municipality. which includes a meeting with municipal officers and with the vulnerable population (populations of the most affected villages). Trainings held to municipal officers in the three municipalities have included gender consideration in non-discriminatory form. Municipality officers where male and female and were treaded in the same way.

In the public awareness campaigns oriented to the civil society special attention was paid to vulnerable groups such as youth and women to discuss the impact of climate change and possible options to adapt to these effects. They groups were made up of young people who had been proposed to the consultants by the respective municipality officers. The criteria for choosing these young people were that they belonged to one of the vulnerable villages and respected gender

parity, had already worked with the town hall, and had the ability to use an android telephone, which is a determining tool for data collection.

The three action plans that will be developed in the next months will include outputs of the previous study and promote and encourage women, youth and vulnerable population's empowerment.

Theoretical gender benefits expected in all the processes of the project:

- Empowerment of vulnerable populations through their active participation in the design of the vulnerability matrices, selection of pilot projects and definition of Climate Change action plans.
- Increased knowledge on climate change impacts, gender-related vulnerabilities and needs through trainings, and awareness campaigns.
- Increased capacity and empowerment to detect potential risks and apply simple practical decisions on energy, agriculture and climate issues.

The importance of women participation

Women are critical in responding to climate change. Women, with their local knowledge, can lead their community in the management of natural resources, food production and water governance. Their participation in decision-making, representation and leadership in community and political levels, results in greater adaptive capability and responsiveness to threat²⁷.

It is important to recognize the existence of barriers to women's participation and leadership, and understand and assess the nature of these barriers (e.g. time poverty, illiteracy, restrictions on mobility, social norms against woman). The identified barriers should be taken into consideration when designing the adaptation action plan.

Gender specialists and sociologists can help identify the barriers preventing participation across different categories of women (e.g. women in male-headed households, women in female-headed households, women of different age groups). If women are not involved in decision-making, their interest are unlikely be represented.

4.2. Addressing youth vulnerability

As mentioned, before, participatory activities (trainings, campaigns, interviews and focus groups) took place in three municipalities: two in the Far-north Region (one of the poorest regions in the

²⁷ <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/Impact2/topics/leadership.html#slide1>

country) and the third one in Adamaoua Region. Both regions are regularly affected by floods, droughts and heat waves.

According to the participatory groups, young people understood climate change to mean different things, for example:

- The absence of trees, causing heavy windstorms.
- Indiscriminate burning of the bush, leading to soil infertility.
- Emissions of gases into the atmosphere from bush burning.
- Drought (dry streams) and floods, resulting in displacement and migration.
- Changing weather patterns, affecting farming.

Participants were aware of the effects of climate change on their livelihoods in the short term and were concerned about the possible, long-term consequences on their lives. Most young people in these areas are involved in rain-fed agriculture and rely on good weather for their activities, which includes food production. They are very vulnerable to the effects of extreme weather conditions.

Most participants viewed the main impact of climate change as lower agricultural production, leading to diminished incomes. This has triggered several consequences. Some of the most relevant ones identified by focus groups were inability to pay school-related costs, resulting in school abandonment and seasonal migration to the south to find short-term jobs.

Migration can have many negative implications for unskilled young people, including living in sub-standard housing, loss of home social networks (which erodes their social capital) and low earnings. These observations from the field have been analysed alongside other studies of young migrants in Cameroon, which indicate that young people observe the challenges faced by migration while recognising that it opens important opportunities that they would not have had in their own villages²⁸.

Because many households rely on subsistence agriculture, low yields following extreme weather events cause hunger among young people during the lean season. This impact is not particular to this age group, but is a major concern, particularly for younger youth and children, leading to permanent developmental problems.

²⁸ Hashim, I (2006) 'The Positives and Negatives of Children's Independent Migration: Assessing the Evidence and the Debates'. Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty (Migration DRC)

The importance of Youth Participation

In communities, such as the studied ones, if youths do not intervene or participate in decision-making, they become less able to contribute to climate-change adaptation programs given insufficient information about how it can be done. The research found that many young people are negatively influenced by their perception that they have no experience in mitigation or adaptation against severe weather events as typically there have not been environmental improvement initiatives and training in alternative sources of livelihoods available to their communities, which limits their interest in the types of programs that might have an important bearing on their livelihoods. This suggests that it is important to extend and improve the reach in the provision of livelihood diversification options and communicating these better to young people.

4.3. Limits and challenges

We have analysed the barriers to resilience, which include issues such as poor governance, illiteracy, social or physical barriers to accessing services, or lack of security and control over assets, recognizing that some of these barriers may be specific to particular groups. The gender dimension is important here to identify barriers that specifically affect women or men. It is also interesting to explore how declining quality and availability of ecosystem services limits people's options for responding to climate risks. The role of institutions, policies, and power dynamics in creating barriers to individual groups or entire communities must also be considered here. This component of the analysis helps identify actions to overcome these barriers to build people's resilience capacities throughout the adaptation plan.

5 DIAGNOSIS OF PARTICIPATORY PROCESS

As a first step in the analysis, the information collected during the various event organised, intended to better understand the climate risks affecting the communities, as well as how these are likely to change in the future. This involved a review of the climate-related shocks and stresses experienced by communities' members and combining this information with scientific information on future climate projections to understand the different scenarios that the community is likely to experience. These events discussed how these climate risks and changes might impact people, their livelihoods and the ecosystems that support them, to identify those that are most important to address in efforts to increase climate resilience. In doing this analysis, one of the conclusions was that climate change affects people differently, based on a number of factors, including their location, livelihood strategies and roles in their household and/or community.

As part of the various workshops that were organised in the municipalities of Mbé, Petté and Méri, one of the first exercises to identify was to convene all the women who could contribute to the

activities of the workshop. This process was carried out through women's associations, development committees, elected representatives and sectorial staff working in the localities. They were considered particularly relevant groups since they provide training and coordinate activities encouraging young girls and other women to realize their worth and to assume decision-making positions. Wherever possible, women's groups of six to ten people were formed at the forums stage in the municipalities. A facilitator was specifically responsible for raising awareness among these women.

The main objective of the participation workshops was to carry out participatory risk mapping in the most vulnerable or at-risk neighbourhoods and villages in each municipality. Specific objectives of the participation workshops were to:

- Identify and assess climatic risks and risk areas in different neighbourhoods and villages.
- Identify the impacts of these risks on the different sectors of activity of these municipalities.
- List and assess endogenous adaptation strategies.
- Make communities aware of the challenges of climate change.
- Identify relevant and effective adaptation actions by identified risks.

6 PROPOSED MECHANISMS AND TOOLS IN DECISION-MAKING

Inclusive consultation with both men and women as well as young people at the design and implementation phases of projects provides a thorough and considered approach representative of the strengths that both genders generate. In particular, women are valuable and integral contributors to climate change adaptation. Often seen solely as vulnerable beneficiaries, women are effective agents, leaders and decision-makers in the efforts to adapt to climate change²⁹.

In order to ensure an integrated consideration for youths and women, it is proposed to follow the FAO's gender-responsive adaptation planning framework³⁰ adapted to apply it as well to young people as follow:

Step 1. Lay the ground and address gaps

²⁹ <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/Impact2/>

³⁰ Source: Promoting gender-responsive adaptation in the agriculture sectors: Entry points within National Adaptation Plans. Link: <http://www.fao.org/3/I8906EN/i8906en.pdf>

- Ensure global and national gender and youth policy and commitments are known, including those focusing on agriculture, rural development and energy access, to ensure the alignment of the adaptation activity formulation process with them.
- Ensure the meaningful participation of stakeholders with a gender, youth and social inclusion perspective.
- Undertake a capacity assessment and address capacity gaps on gender and youth.

Step 2. Prepare the adaptation activity formulation

- Conduct a gender and youth analysis for adaptation activities.
- Address gender and youth in climate vulnerability and risk assessments and appraisal of adaptation options.

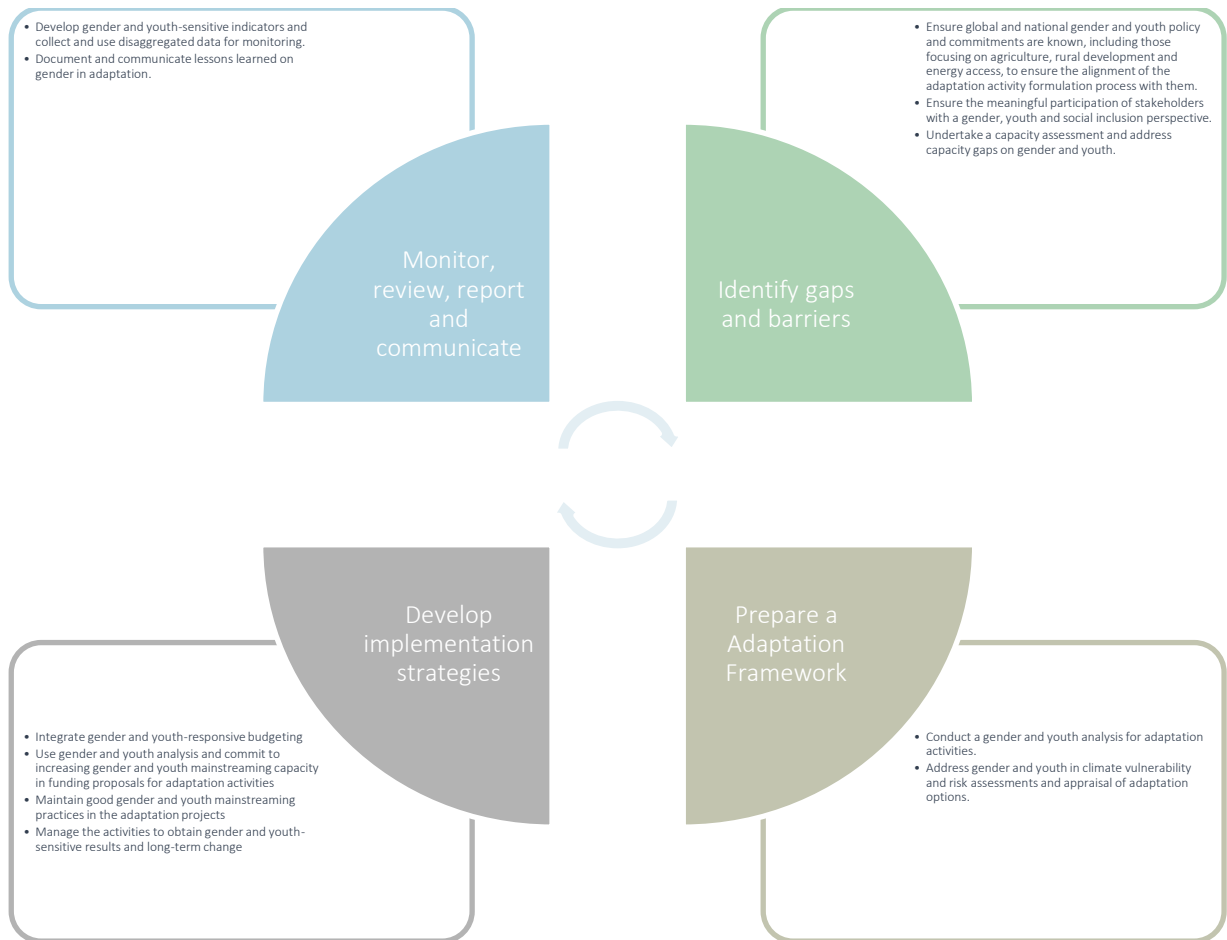
Step 3. Develop implementation strategies

- Integrate gender and youth-responsive budgeting
- Use gender and youth analysis and commit to increasing gender and youth mainstreaming capacity in funding proposals for adaptation activities
- Maintain good gender and youth mainstreaming practices in the adaptation projects
- Manage the activities to obtain gender and youth-sensitive results and long-term change

Step 4. Monitor, review, report and communicate

- Develop gender and youth-sensitive indicators and collect and use disaggregated data for monitoring.
- Document and communicate lessons learned on gender in adaptation.

The conceptual framer is summarized in the figure below.



Women can be involved in decision-making through:

- Strengthening the representation of women in decision-making positions in municipal councils.
- Building women's leadership capacity and knowledge about climate change and adaptation.
- Strengthening women's participation in women's advocacy associations and development committees.
- Creating or structuring women's networks at the local level.
- Supporting the creation of Income Generating Activities (AGR) for women.

On the other hand, many of the trends that characterize adult population's views about climate change are reflected in young people's views. For example, there are generally high levels of climate change concern among the younger age groups, but it is rarely the top priority among younger people or the general population. In the Cameroonian context and the northern part in particular, young people are much more inclined towards short-term solutions and therefore could not be more climate-sensitive than older people. There are competing priorities for this age group's attention as well as concerns and worries that are, in a sense, more immediate and important than

the climate change. This is the context against which initiatives to engage young people on climate change must be viewed³¹.

Young people can be involved through the development of their capacities and an effective and massive participation in development issues that young people can be easily involved in the decision-making process. This through their participation in:

- Establishing local youth advisory councils on climate change and local development issues.
- Promoting youth-led community development activities
- Promoting youth participation in political and institutional decision-making bodies at the local level such as the municipal council, the regional council, the executive, etc.

Key concepts

Gender and youth-responsive facilitation

The participatory nature of the adaptation plan process requires skilled facilitation to promote dialogue, share knowledge and reach consensus. Gender and youth-responsive facilitation is a tool for ensuring that people of all genders and age are able to participate meaningfully in learning and decision-making processes. It recognizes that there may be obstacles for some people—often women, youths and representatives of marginalized groups—to speak freely and share their opinions or concerns. Gender and youth-responsive facilitation aims to overcome these barriers to create the conditions for inclusive and balanced dialogue.

Gender and youth mainstreaming

The process of gender and youth mainstreaming applies the findings of gender and youth analysis in the design of policies, plans, programs or actions. It considers the differentiated impacts of decisions and investments on women, men and young people. A gender and youth-mainstreaming approach involves³²:

- Including gender and youth equality as an objective of the intervention.
- Ensuring that gender considerations are visible throughout the intervention at different levels and across different activities or components
- Consideration of gender and youth-based roles and responsibilities, as well as the relationships between genders and ages and how these affect the design of interventions.

³¹ Corner, A., Roberts, O., Chiari, S., Völler, S., Mayrhuber, E. S., Mandl, S., & Monson, K. (2015). How do young people engage with climate change? The role of knowledge, values, message framing, and trusted communicators. *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change*, 6(5), 523-534.

³² <https://www.sida.se/contentassets/3a820dbd152f4fca98bacde8a8101e15/gender-tool-mainstreaming.pdf>

- Clear linkages between gender and youth-related activities or components and the achievement of results in other areas.

Generally speaking, a gender and youth-mainstreaming approach results in a mix of integrated activities, targeted gender and age activities that address underlying causes of gender and age inequality.

Gender and youth -responsive M&E

Adaptation processes often involve the establishment of monitoring and evaluation (ME&S) systems for adaptation at the national and local level. These systems track both the process, in terms of progress in planning and implementing adaptation actions, and the outcomes, meaning the results of investments in adaptation. Gender and youth -responsive M&E considers the gender and age dimensions in both of these elements, in terms of the methodology, indicators, data collection and analysis approaches that are applied. Sex- and age disaggregated data is a fundamental basis for this; however, the data must be appropriately collected, analysed and communicated for a truly gender-responsive approach³³.

Gender and youth -responsive budgeting

Gender and youth-responsive budgeting aims to ensure that allocations of public funds address the needs of women, men, girls and boys. The process generally involves three key elements: gender- and age-specific expenditures, which are targeted allocations of resources for different gender and age groups; promoting equal employment in the public service, which may involve affirmative actions to address imbalances; and tracking of gendered and aged results from general expenditures³⁴. Gender and youth-responsive budgeting is grounded in gender and age analysis, which enables better targeting of expenditures and establishes the basis for tracking the gender and age-differentiated impacts.

³³ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2010). Gender, climate change and community-based adaptation. New York: UNDP

³⁴ Budlender, D. & Hewitt, G. (2003). Engendering budgets: A practitioners' guide to understanding and implementing gender-responsive budgets. Commonwealth Secretariat

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