Beyond a seat at the table

Pathways for gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making

SEI Stockholm Environment Institute

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FONDATION L'ORÉAL

Farmer in her agroecological garden, Ecuador, 2024

Foreword

Gender inequality and climate change are two of the most pressing global challenges of our time. And while these issues may seem unrelated on the surface, a closer examination reveals that they are intricately connected. As we deal with the impacts of a rapidly warming planet — evident from the unprecedented heat records of 2023 and the ongoing crises in vulnerable regions — the exclusion of women from climate decision-making processes not only perpetuates gender disparities but also undermines our collective efforts to adapt to and mitigate these challenges.

This report, "Beyond a seat at the table : Pathways for gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making," sheds new light on the degree to which barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate decision-making are common across contexts and scales. Most notably, it highlights the underestimated role of negative gender attitudes and norms in driving the persistence of gender inequity, suggesting that investing in women and enhancing their capacities, albeit vital, is not sufficient.

Civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations like CARE, plays a key role in addressing these disparities. Applying its Gender Equality Framework through initiatives such as 'She Grows the Future', CARE adopts a multidimensional, transformative approach to gender and climate justice, not only empowering marginalized women farmers, but also supporting their collective voice and action and influencing their socio-political environment.

To take this approach further, the report provides key recommendations for policymakers, donors and practitioners, around promoting gender-transformative climate policies, enhancing women's access to climate-related education and resources, and addressing the underlying social norms that hinder women's participation. It emphasizes the need for comprehensive strategies that not only increase women's presence in decision-making roles but also ensure their contributions are valued and impactful.

The urgency has never been greater. We must recognize that empowering women is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity for effective and sustainable climate action. By acting for gender-equitable participation in climate decision-making, we can empower more resilient and inclusive communities capable of meeting the challenges of a changing climate. Let us commit to breaking the barriers that limit women's roles and support their leadership in creating a sustainable future for all!

Sophia Sprechman
Secretary General
CARE International

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Acronyms and shortened forms

BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
CCPI	Climate Change Performance Index
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discriminations Against Women
CEMA	[National Assembly of Vietnam's] Committee for Ethnic Minorities Affairs
COP	Conference of the Parties
CPV	Communist Party of Vietnam
CSO	Civil society organization
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (Vietnam)
DOLISA	Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (Vietnam)
DONRE	Department of Natural Resources and the Environment (Vietnam)
FGD	Focus group discussion
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GDI	Gender and development index
GESI	Gender equality and social inclusion
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GII	Gender Inequality Index
HDI	Human Development Index
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
INDC	Intended Nationally Determined Contributions
INGO	International non-governmental organization
KII	Key informant interview
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Vietnam)
MOLISA	Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (Vietnam)
MONRE	Ministry of Natural Resources and the Environment (Vietnam)
NAP	National Adaptation Plan
NCCS	National Climate Change Strategy
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NDCs	Nationally Determined Contributions
PAP	Provincial Action Plan
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPO	Sociopolitical organization (in Vietnam)
SSI	Semi-structured interview
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
VFF	Vietnamese Fatherland Front
VND	Vietnamese Dong (currency)
VWU	Vietnamese Women's Union

Interview with respondents in Ho Mit Province, Vietnam, 2024

Executive summary

Background

Climate change poses a profound threat to global ecosystems and humankind. Complementing mitigation efforts, effective adaptation strategies, and actions are urgently needed in every sector and level of society (IPCC, 2023). Gender[1]-equitable participation in climate decision-making processes is recognized as central to the formulation and implementation of effective climate adaptation at all scales (IPCC, 2023; Kameri-Mbote, 2013; UNFCCC, 2022a, 2023b). Such gender-equitable participation helps to ensure that the needs as well as knowledge and skills of individuals of all genders can be taken into account in order to achieve inclusive climate adaptation decision-making and implementation (UN, 2009; UNFCCC, 2011, 2022a).

Despite this recognition and investments in building women's climate-related capacities, progress towards gender equity in climate adaptation appears to be slow and uneven (de Paula, 2021; IUCN, 2021). This poor progress reflects the need for evidence-based, critical re-thinking of barriers and enablers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making.

To contribute to addressing this need and the gaps in knowledge, this report surfaces the current state, perceptions regarding benefits, and associated **formal and informal barriers (constraints)** and **enablers (supporting factors)** of gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making. While recognizing the non-binary nature of gender, due to limited data, the report mainly discusses barriers to women's equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making. It does so from the global through the national scale, followed by a deeper dive into the local scale. To identify ways forward, the report then groups the barriers and identifies **entry points** for interventions and **levers** (interventions) for each group of barriers. In recognition of the complexity and interconnections at play, the report approaches and nuances the entry points and levers through the Gender at Work Framework (Rao et al., 2015, 2017). Specifically, the report highlights how each group of barriers can be addressed through different, but complementary and interconnected, entry points (consciousness and capabilities, access to resources, rules and regulations, gender and social norms) and levers, including those that build on existing enablers. Translating these insights to support action, the report then propose recommendations for policy actors, civil society organizations (CSOs), international development agencies, and donor groups in relation to **three pathways** that correspond to the groups of barriers: capacities; policies and governance; and gender and social norms.

In terms of **geographical focus**, the report situates gendered participation in climate adaptation decision-making within global literature and then contextualizes the issues with secondary data from four countries. With an eye to informing the 'She Grows the Future'[2] project (of Fondation L'Oréal and CARE), the four selected countries are the 'She Grows the Future' countries: Vietnam, Ecuador, Madagascar and India. The study deepens its insights through an in-depth country case study of Vietnam.

In terms of **methodology**, the study combined desk-based literature and policy review (global and four countries) with primary, qualitative research for the in-depth country case study (Viet-

1 Gender refers to socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society expects of boys and men and of girls and women. As a socially constructed concept, gender varies across contexts, locations and time (McDougall, Elias, et al., 2023). For more detail, see Annex 1.

2 The 'She Grows the Future Project', implemented by CARE France and Fondation L'Oréal, aims to "empower some 5,500 women farmers in Ecuador, Madagascar, India and Vietnam, helping them to adopt sustainable, resilient and equitable agricultural practices while increasing their share of voice within their communities" (Fondation L'Oréal, 2023).

nam). The latter comprised key informant interviews (KIIs), semi-structured interviews (SSIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). An intersectional gender lens was applied throughout, combining the focus on gender with attention to age and ethnicity. The study engaged with a total of 113 respondents.

Findings

The report identifies insights in relation to the global, four countries and Vietnam case level (from national to local), then brings these together as the basis for recommendations.

Global scale

At the global level, despite recognition in key policy discourse that gender equity and social inclusion are essential to progress on adaptation, significant gender imbalances in participation in climate adaptation decision-making not only remain—they have, in some cases, worsened compared to pre-pandemic periods. Specifically, in COP28[3] in 2023, data show that women delegates accounted for only 34% of all national Party delegates to the COP, the same percentage as in COP 18, 10 years prior (WEDO, 2024). Data disseminated by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) also reveal that women made up only 19% of the head of delegates, a decline from an already low percentage of 20% in COP27 (WEDO, 2024). With regard to women's participation in constituted bodies of the UNFCCC, out of 17 bodies, only 3 were found to have more than 50% women's participation (WEDO, 2023b). These constituted bodies are the Adaptation Committee, the Paris Committee on Capacity Building, and the Facilitative Working Group.

In terms of how the rationale for gender-equitable participation in climate decision-making is framed in the global climate policy literature, the study surfaced that while it is framed both as an end and as means, the latter framing strongly dominates in the global discourse.

In terms of the former, as an end in itself, gender equality as a human right includes equality in participation and decision-making. In terms of socially marginalized groups more broadly, the OHCHR has indicated the need for climate processes to be guided by and apply relevant human rights frameworks, which means that "[a]ffected individuals and communities must participate, without discrimination, in the design and implementation" of climate adaptation (and mitigation) measures (OHCHR, 2024, p.2). Although less recognized in the literature, this framing positions equitable decision-making in climate adaptation as intrinsically important (an end goal in and of itself).

The framing that emerged most strongly in the global literature was that of gender-equitable and inclusive participation in climate adaptation decision-making as a means—i.e., instrumentally important. This relates to its contribution to the global goals of climate adaptation being more effective, just and implemented in a timely and efficient manner. Specifically, the central benefit of gender-equitable participation identified in global literature reviewed for this study relates to equitable participation serving the goals of the climate policy, commitments and outcomes. For example, at COP 27, the Parties highlighted that "the full, meaningful and equal participation and leadership of women in all aspects of the UNFCCC process and in national- and local-level climate policymaking and action is vital to achieving long-term climate goals"(UNFCCC, 2023c, p. 2).

3 The Conference of the Parties or COP is the supreme decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 2023a).

In terms of barriers at higher levels, global literature surfaces a number of barriers, primarily focusing on: women's capacities and resources; lack of knowledge and information; limited access to education, employment and resources including financial resources, land and other natural resources; time deprivation due to disproportionate (unpaid) household and care responsibilities placed on women; and limited opportunities to access and assume leadership roles (UNDP, 2016, 2023c; UNFCCC, 2022a). In relation to enabling factors, global literature signals multiple efforts to overcome these barriers. These include the Parties to the Paris Agreement promoting women's participation in climate mitigation and adaptation efforts at UNFCCC (particularly following the enhanced UNFCCC Lima Work Programme and its Gender Action Plan agreed in COP 25), implementing gender quotas and gender plans at the national level, and introducing initiatives to enhance women's leadership in climate change negotiations. In tandem with this, there is an emphasis on building women's capacities as being key to ensure their inclusion in formulating new climate policies and to close the gender gap in climate decision-making.

National level: Insights from the four countries

At the national level, the report examines Vietnam, Ecuador, Madagascar and India. Secondary data from the UNDP global report (UNDP, 2022) indicate that of the four countries, Vietnam and Ecuador are performing better in terms of human development and gender indicators than the other two countries. With regard specifically to gender, Vietnam has the highest Gender Development Index (GDI) at 1.002, the lowest Gender Inequality Index (GII) at 0.296, and the lowest amount of time spent on unpaid work by women compared to men (best performing at three times that of men) in the Time Use Survey indicator (Indochina Research, 2023) of the four countries. These contextual aspects informed the choice of Vietnam for the in-depth case study as well as Vietnam's high climate vulnerability, its foundations in progress towards and investments in gender equality mean that the case, in theory, could potentially inform evidenced examples of enablers.

Notably, while the four countries studied vary in their levels of human development and gender equality, the Gender Social Norm indices (UNDP, 2023a) indicate that in all four countries over 90% of the populations hold gender biases along the following key dimensions: political, educational, economic and physical integrity.

The literature indicates that all four 'She Grows the Future' countries share several common barriers and enablers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making. The common formal barriers identified include, women's limited access to education, information, knowledge and training; lack of systemic implementation of gender-sensitive policy and institutional framework; lack of financial and human resources in implementing gender-sensitive and transformative approaches; unequal representation in decision-making spaces; and lack of gender-disaggregated data (Aguayo, 2022; Harivola, 2021; Khosla, 2009; UNDP, 2023b; UNFCCC, 2022a; Vietnam, 2022b) (Aguayo, 2022; Harivola, Stella, 2021; Khosla, 2009; Singh, 2023; UNDP, 2023b; UNFCCC, 2022a; Vietnam, 2022b). The common informal barriers include gender and social norms and stereotypes, and time poverty experienced by women (Aguayo, 2022; GRET, 2021; Harivola, Stella, 2021; Khosla, 2009; Singh, 2023).

The common formal enablers identified from the literature include: recognition of value of women's participation in climate adaptation decision-making; improved women's access to knowledge, capacity building and vocational trainings; increasing women's digital access to knowledge and training as well as for collective actions of social networking and mobilizations; improving institutional coordination and gender mainstreaming; and ongoing progress in collection, analysis and dissemination of gender-disaggregated data. A key common informal enabler identified in the country literature is the increasing recognition of discriminatory gender and social norms and practices, providing opportunities to initiate social change and transformative measures (NAP Global Network, 2023a, 2023b; UNDP, 2023b; UNDP India, 2021a, 2021b).

Vietnam case study: national to local

Zooming into the Vietnam case study, the study found mixed results and limited progress. On the one hand, institutions at the national level are slowly progressing towards their quotas for women's representation and community meetings regarding climate adaptation and other local development issues are perceived to have balanced gender attendance at the local level. On the other hand, women's participation is still highly inequitable, more specifically in terms of contributions and influence in climate adaptation decision-making arenas at every scale. The study's primary data was collected in Lai Châu province in Northwestern Vietnam[4] and focused on community meetings, which are the main and routinized local space in this context to discuss climate adaptation as well as other community issues. Overall, the results suggest persistent gender imbalances in decision-making. Specifically, data from both sites indicated that while attendance in the climate adaptation decision-making forums in general are perceived to be gender-balanced between women and men, active participation (questions raised and contributions made) in these climate adaptation decision-making spaces is still highly gender inequitable, with men also having more influence than women. In other words, discussions were perceived to be more dominated by men in terms of giving inputs and contributing to decision-making; FDGs confirmed that the majority of women are currently unable to influence decision-making in community meetings. Unpacking this further, women who are illiterate, do not speak Kinh, and who lack confidence and/or who are strongly under their husbands' control were identified as particularly likely to be at the lowest level of participation in community climate adaptation decision-making processes. The characteristics were reported to be more prominent among Hmong women.

A surprise finding was that when asked to identify the benefits of gender-equitable participation, despite Vietnam's investments and regional standing in gender, respondents at national, sub-national and local levels indicated that they had not seen or been a part of gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making in their lived experiences. As such, to address this question, respondents hypothesized about its effects. The majority of respondents, including men, indicated that the main benefits would flow from the fact that women would contribute more ideas and perspectives to discussions. In terms of benefits, responses reflected three main types: i) benefits to women themselves in terms of enhanced knowledge and skills, confidence and social exposure; ii) benefits to women's families and communities through improved information and knowledge on climate adaptation practices; and iii) benefits to society at large, through more inclusive climate adaptation policies, actions and outcomes. More broadly, respondents agreed that gender-equitable participation would enhance solidarity and unity of the community, which is important to climate adaptation decision-making, implementation and practice as well as other development outcomes.

In contrast to the above, a small minority of men signaled their views that they did *not* see potential benefit from more gender-equitable climate adaptation decision-making processes. They articulated these reservations in relation to women's limited access to education and knowledge, indicating that these limit the value of women's contributions. One articulated that the goal of gender-responsive policies may be more pressing than gender-equitable participation. These point to both practical as well as normative barriers—and signal a lack of recognition of participation as a right.

In terms of barriers, the Vietnam case study surfaces the following: i) limited education, knowledge, information, language and related skills; ii) underlying social norms and gender stereotypes including the resulting constraining practices of child, early and forced marriage and unequal time spent on unpaid care and domestic work; iii) "shyness" and lack of women's

4 *Lai Châu province, situated in the far northwestern part of Vietnam, reflects the context of rural mountainous areas with a high level of ethnic diversity and high vulnerability to droughts, floods and landslides. These characteristics differ from the other regions of climate vulnerable communities in Vietnam, particularly the low-lying coastal and river delta regions that are highly vulnerable to rising sea-levels and other regions of the countries where the Kinh ethnic group is largely dominant.*

agency[5] in speaking up in meetings; iv) non-conducive meeting environment due to distance and delivery formats; and v) limited awareness of existing gender barriers and disillusioned attitudes regarding value of participation.

In terms of existing enablers in Vietnam, the study identified: i) recognition of the importance of gender equity and gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making at national, sub-national and local levels; ii) extensive networks of socio-political organizations, particularly the Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU) at community level; iii) existence (in the past or currently) of adult literacy classes and skill development trainings at community level; iv) existing platforms for social and cultural engagements within and between communities; and v) acknowledgements by all regarding the need to address constraining gender and social norms, particularly those related to time division of unpaid care and domestic work and child, early and forced marriage practices.

Based on the identified barriers and enablers at the local level, respondents were also able to suggest potential context-relevant strategies. These included: i) improving education attainment and school attendance among residents, ensuring completion of at least secondary education with the aim of attaining tertiary education, and enhancing suitability of the offered adult literacy classes in terms of timing, methods of delivery and content to also include knowledge beyond Kinh language; ii) enhancing awareness, among both younger and older generations, regarding negative impacts of early child, early and forced marriages, and working towards deterring and eventually eliminating these practices; iii) providing trainings on climate adaptation knowledge and practices, vocational skill development as well as soft skills and confidence building such as public speaking; iv) improving meeting environments including offering transportation support for those living in remote areas, more options to contribute inputs other than speaking up in community meetings, and official translations (of documentations and discussions) to suitable and relevant languages at hand; and v) ensuring the continuation of social and cultural events within communities, with the aim of expanding to include multi-community events.

The case study findings elucidate that these barriers are intersectional. For instance, education, knowledge and capacities appear to be key visible barriers to gender-equitable participation, especially affecting women and people from ethnic minority groups (of any gender) who do not speak the Kinh language. The study underlined however, that this affects youth less, as they have better access to education. Moreover, these barriers (and thus levers) are interconnected and operate at multiple depths. For example, the barriers of limited education, knowledge and capacities are shaped by factors including women's time poverty (due to inequitable gender division of labor and women's unpaid care and domestic work) and men constraining women's education, directly or indirectly (such as through gender relations). These, in turn, are rooted in underlying constraining gender and social norms and value systems, which would need to be addressed in order for women and marginalized groups to be able to optimize the benefits of identified enablers.

Synthesis insights from across contexts and scales

Analysis across the scales and contexts confirms a common pattern of gender-inequitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making processes at all scales. The study surfaces in particular that women are underrepresented in leadership positions at all scales and that they have less influence on decisions even when attendance is gender balanced at the local level. Indeed, the local analysis in particular surfaces that exclusions exist even when women are represented (present but undervalued and without equitable influence).

5 Agency defined here as capacity to make choices and act on them to fulfill one's intentions and/or potentials (UNFPA, 2023; World Bank, 2012).

The analysis sheds new light on the degree to which barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate decision-making are common across contexts and scales. Notably, it elucidates that these barriers are interconnected, both directly limiting women's participation in their own right and indirectly limiting participation by driving other barriers. The study additionally nuances current discourse by distinguishing more visible and tangible barriers (such as lack of education and information, language and literacy constraints) from more invisible and intangible barriers (such as individual and collective attitudes, confidence and agency, and gender and social norms), and signaling the significance of the latter.

Analysis across all scales suggests a somewhat common focus in discourse spanning global to local scales in terms of barriers and solutions: women and capacities. The report's findings, however, challenge this focus as necessary but not sufficient. Specifically, based on the degree to which gender attitudes, norms and stereotypes emerged in the findings, the study highlights that the focus on investing in women and enhancing women's capacities, albeit vital, is too narrow. The findings highlight the potency of the deeper, underlying structural elements in driving the persistence of gender inequity in climate adaptation decision-making, including and especially gender attitudes, norms and social value systems. This indicates the need for policy, investments and programming to frame their strategies accordingly. In addition to maintaining the essential value of investments in the capacities and empowerment of women and girls, the findings suggest that a multidimensional and more transformative framing will be required to address systemic and structural barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making at all scales. This will include investments that engage men and boys together with women and girls to enhance gender-equitable input and influence in climate adaptation decision-making (not only attendance), including strategies that surface and address underlying normative constraints as means to catalyze behavioral change of all community members (McDougall, Elias, et al., 2023).

Recommendations for Vietnam and wider contexts

In line with the above, the report puts forward recommendations in three main pathways as follows.

01. Enhance individual and collective capabilities: Continue and refine investments, including both on technical areas of climate adaptation as well as on psycho-social and organizational aspects that also contribute to enhancing agency[6] of women and marginalized groups. The study highlights that investing in capacity-building for women and marginalized groups is crucial and still an important pathway—albeit insufficient on its own—and is one that resonates with immediate local interests.

02. Promote gender-responsive policies, governance systems and legal frameworks: Comprehensive, well-targeted and gender-responsive policies, governance and legal and regulatory frameworks that apply a human rights-based approach, supported by high quality gender-disaggregated data, are needed to ensure gender-equitable and effective climate adaptation decision-making processes and outcomes.

03. Transform underlying gender and social norms and practices that sustain, reproduce or perpetuate gender inequity: Discriminatory gender and social norms, and resulting gender stereotypes and constraining social practices such as child, early and forced marriage, limit women and marginalized groups from equitably contributing to climate adaptation decision-making. In order to ensure that women and marginalized groups have equitable voice in climate adaptation decision-making, constraining gender and social norms need to be redressed at every sector and scale.

6 Agency defined here as capacity to make choices and act on them to fulfill one's intentions and/or potentials (UNFPA, 2023; World Bank, 2012).

Ex. Sum Table 1: Relationships between barriers, corresponding pathways and levers (interventions)

	Barriers	Corresponding Pathway	Levers (interventions) NB. For each Pathway (row), the Levers include actions engaging with all four Entry Points (Consciousness and capacities, Resources, Policies and regulatory frameworks, Gender and social norms)
1	**Lack of education, information, knowledge and training**	**Enhancing individual and collective capabilities**	Measures to ensure that girls, women and marginalized groups, including Indigenous Peoples, ethnic minorities, disadvantaged socio-economic groups and those living with disabilities, have full access to education, knowledge and trainings, including vocational and soft skill trainings, related to climate change and climate adaptation and that these follow best practices for inclusion. Important complementary measures include development of climate action and adaptation knowledge exchange platforms where women and marginalized groups are at the forefront of knowledge sharing and programs to enhance dialogue and women's confidence and agency, particularly in climate adaptation decision-making processes.
2	**Inadequate policy, governance and regulatory systems**	**Promoting gender-responsive policies, governance and systems**	As a foundation, dedicated and increased efforts to formulate and/or refine and implement more inclusive and gender-responsive policies and legal and regulatory frameworks and systems relating to or affecting climate adaptation (including laws against child, early and forced marriage) and climate decision-making. To better inform policymakers and further support this, systematic collection, analysis and dissemination of gender-disaggregated climate adaptation-related data is required, including specific gender-disaggregated and gender data on climate decision-making at all scales. At the local interface, measures are needed to ensure that all related written documents (particularly those regarding access to rights and control over resources including land, assets and financial services), and written and spoken consultations regarding climate adaptation decision-making are in appropriate languages and channels to each group of individuals.
3	**Constraining gender and social norms**	**Transforming underlying constraining gender and social norms**	Investments in gender-transformative approaches, meaning strategies and methods that surface otherwise hidden constraining gender and social norms and inequitable (power) relations in climate adaptation decision-making (and climate adaptation more broadly). This should include scaling 'out' successful gender-transformative strategies and/or methods to communities. It should also include scaling 'up' such methods and approaches from local to meso and macro scales. For example, in Vietnam through the Vietnamese Women's Union at multiple levels and/or People's Committee at local level, to the Department of Natural Resources and Environment at the district level, to the Division of National Resources and Environment (DONRE) at the provincial level, and the to Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) at the national level. It is also necessary to scale 'in' gender-transformative methods and strategies within the implementing organizations or agencies themselves. Importantly, these efforts require active engagement with men and boys in being agents of change (McDougall, Del Duca, et al., 2023; McDougall, Elias, et al., 2023; UNFCCC, 2022a). It is crucial to engage with individuals of all genders and at different life stages, particularly in the process of redressing any discriminatory gender and social norms and practices, for example child, early and forced marriages, that are still prominent in some local communities, and gender stereotyping particularly regarding women in leadership roles.

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Rice transplanting, Lai Chau Province, Vietnam, 2021

The first, and more well-trodden *Capabilities* pathway, is widely recognized as important to promoting gender-equitable climate adaptation decision-making. This pathway is the one that has been recognized already by actors in the climate decision-making arena. Here, the recommendations aim to nuance and strengthen this pathway, in terms of making it more connected with other relevant entry points (namely capacity-building that is targeted towards resources, policies and regulations, and gender and social norms) and illustrating that one lever can have multiplier effects on overcoming multiple barriers, if implemented in a well-coordinated and targeted manner. The first pathway here aims at enhancing knowledge and skills related to climate adaptation, and improving individual and collective agency of women and marginalized groups, thereby increasing their capability to equitably engage and participate in climate adaptation decision-making processes.

The next two pathways—*Policies and Systems* and *Norms*—are needed as the study has indicated that the first pathway, albeit necessary, is insufficient on its own. In fact, if on its own, the first pathway may even entrench gender gaps by implicitly reinforcing the notion that 'women need fixing'. The addition of the second and third pathways respond to the study insights regarding the need to engage levers at the level of systems and structures in order to create enabling environments for meaningful gender-equitable climate adaptation decision-making processes and outcomes. Specifically, these pathways are needed to ensure the systemic and structural foundations are in place such that women and marginalized individuals and groups can exercise their agency, rights and potentials, embodied in their meaningful and equitable inputs and influencing over climate-adaptation decision-making processes, effectively without discrimination or bias.

Unpacking this further, while the first pathway focuses on capacity and agency building of women and marginalized individuals and groups, the second and third pathways work to reduce barriers in policies and systems that may resist or constrain this newly developed or enhanced agency and to address the deeply underlying intangible, structural factors of constraining norms that otherwise lead to men and (sometimes) women inhibiting such agency, respectively. In this regard, the report highlights that these three pathways need to be implemented concurrently in a well-coordinated manner, involving all genders in the processes and paying particular attention to ensuring the more invisible and underlying barriers are addressed.

Compost making by a home garden group member, Vietnam, 2022

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Model farmers on plot, Madagascar, 2022

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PART A

Stockholm Environment Institute / CARE France - She Grows the Future

Part A

Background to the study

1. Introduction

Climate change poses a profound threat to human well-being and planetary health and systems. Based on current commitments in countries' Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), it is "likely" that global warming will exceed 1.5°C during the 21st century and that it will become "harder" to limit global warming below 2°C by the end of the century (IPCC, 2023). According to the UNEP Emissions Gap report, fully implementing unconditional National Determined Contributions (NDCs) made under the Paris Agreement would put the world on track for limiting temperature rise to 2.9°C above pre-industrial levels this century, while fully implementing conditional NDCs would lower this to 2.5°C (UNEP, 2023). The report also stresses that "Failure to bring global GHG emissions in 2030 below the levels implied by current NDCs will make it impossible to limit warming to 1.5°C with no or limited overshoot and strongly increase the challenge of limiting warming to 2°C" (UNEP, 2023, p. XVI). In other words, the main objectives of the Paris Agreement seem difficult to achieve, if things continue along the same trajectory. The change in trajectory would require significant systemic and structural changes that could leapfrog climate actions toward achieving sustainable climate resilience.

Within climate responses, adaptation and mitigation are recognized as urgently required in order to achieve climate-resilient development and secure a sustainable future for all. Effective and timely progress in these areas has been recognized as relying on increased international cooperation and coordinated policy frameworks with effective implementation at the global, national, sub-national and local levels (IPCC, 2023). Moreover, inclusive governance in the climate arena has been signaled as essential for effectiveness and equity, as well as to avoid perpetuating concerning trends of 'maladaptation' (Schipper, 2020), where actions that are intended to reduce climate vulnerability result in further increasing climate vulnerability for the communities or ecosystems in question.

More specifically, climate adaptation policy and programming has increasingly acknowledged that climate adaptation must be gender-responsive (see Annex 1) and consider obligations relating to gender[7] equality. This is in recognition of the relationship between gender and climate adaptation. Climate change impacts different genders differently and evidence indicating that while women tend to bear the brunt of climate impacts, they face gender inequities in adaptation opportunities (CEDAW, 2009; UNFCCC, 2022b, 2023b). For example, having set a global goal of" enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change"(UNFCCC, 2015, p. 9), the Paris Agreement's Article 7 calls for "a country-driven,

7 Gender refers to socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society expects of boys and men and of girls and women. Gender is not a binary concept. Rather, it is fluid and can take many variations. These identities may or may not correspond to biological sex (male, female, intersex) assigned at birth. As a socially constructed concept, gender varies across contexts, locations and time (McDougall, Elias, et al., 2023). For more detail, see Section 2 and Annex 1. While recognizing the non-binary nature of gender, due to data limitations this study focusses on women and refers to all genders when possible.

gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approach" (Schipper, 2020). Similarly the Agreement's Preamble states the following: "acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity" (UNFCCC, 2015, p. 2).

In order to effectively formulate and implement these intended impactful, equitable gender-responsive climate adaptation policies and actions, gender equitable-participation (see Annex 1) in climate decision-making processes at all scales is needed (IPCC, 2023; UNDP, 2016; UNFCCC, 2023b). Formal commitments to such participation have been made, including at the highest level in the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) (IPCC, 2020). Yet despite the necessity of and commitments to gender-equitable participation in climate decision-making, progress on this front has been reported as slow and uneven at all scales (de Paula, 2021; IUCN, 2021). The insufficient evidence on and insights to the nature of gendered participation, including the barriers and enabling factors, contribute to the tardy progress in achieving timely and effective gender-equitable and inclusive participation in climate adaptation strategies and actions. This in turn perpetuates slow progress towards the fulfillment of Article 7 as well as towards both women's empowerment (Sustainable Development Goal, or SDG, 5) and climate adaptation and mitigation (SDG 13) at all scales.

This study responds to these gaps. Specifically, the overall aims of the study are twofold. Firstly, it aims to investigate formal and informal constraints (barriers) and enablers (supporting aspects) of gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making processes. This includes specific attention to systemic and structural drivers, such as constraining gender and social norms as barriers. In terms of enablers, as climate adaptation decision-making is a complex process, the study investigates entry points, levers and underlying factors. Secondly, in analyzing the key barriers and enablers, the study aims to generate and propose recommendations and strategies to strengthen policy, programming and investments in climate adaptation. In particular, these recommendations are designed for government agencies from local to national levels, international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and international development funding agencies. These are oriented towards enhancing gender-equitable participation in decision-making with respect to climate adaptation, both for the context of the in-depth case (Vietnam) and more broadly.

The study is guided by three overarching research questions as follows:

01. What are the formal and informal barriers constraining gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making at multiple scales?

02. What are key entry points in climate adaptation decision-making, and what levers and factors enable gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making at multiple scales?

03. How can these barriers be overcome, and the levers and enablers reinforced or amplified?

In terms of scale and scope, the study investigates global, national and local scales. This is done using a methodology that combines desk-based and primary research, including an embedded case study. Specifically, desk-based research is applied for rapid analysis at the global and national levels. In the latter, the national focus is on the four 'She Grows the Future' project countries—Ecuador, India, Madagascar and Vietnam—as these are of particular interest to CARE France and Fondation L'Oréal who convened this study. The study then combines desk research with primary data collection and analyses to zoom in to a more in-depth case study of Vietnam.

This in-depth case approach in one country was included to enable bottom-up, local and contextualized insights. In addressing these, the study applies an intersectional gender lens and two supporting frameworks, namely the Five Degrees of Inclusion Framework (Johnson et al., 2021b) and the Gender at Work Framework (Rao et al., 2015, 2017).

The report is organized into three main parts. Part A introduces the aims and motivations of the report (chapter 1) as well as the key concepts and study methodology (chapters 2 and 3 respectively). Part B reports the main findings of the study at each scale. This comprises global policy frameworks, commitments, discourses and gendered participation (chapter 4), followed by analyses from the four CARE France and Fondation L'Oréal's 'She Grows the Future' project countries on common barriers and enablers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making (chapter 5); and an in-depth case study on Vietnam (chapter 6). The report concludes in the forward-looking Part C, with key points of discussion (chapter 7) and recommendations for Vietnam and for broader contexts (chapter 8).

2. Concepts and analytical frameworks

To inform the research methods and analyses, the report employs the Five Degrees of Inclusion (Johnson et al., 2021b) and the Gender at Work (Rao et al., 2015, 2017) frameworks, in combination with an intersectional gender lens. Useful concepts for this study are also presented in the Glossary in Annex 1.

2.1 Gender and intersectionality

Gender is a social construct. As such, it may differ from biological sex (female, male, intersex). Gender reflects power relations and can vary across cultures, socio-economic contexts and timeframes. It shapes people's experiences, opportunities and constraints in social, political and economic systems. Gender relations are reproduced and negotiated through social gendering processes (including expectations, roles and responsibilities) at multiple levels of society, from family, community, institutions and systems.

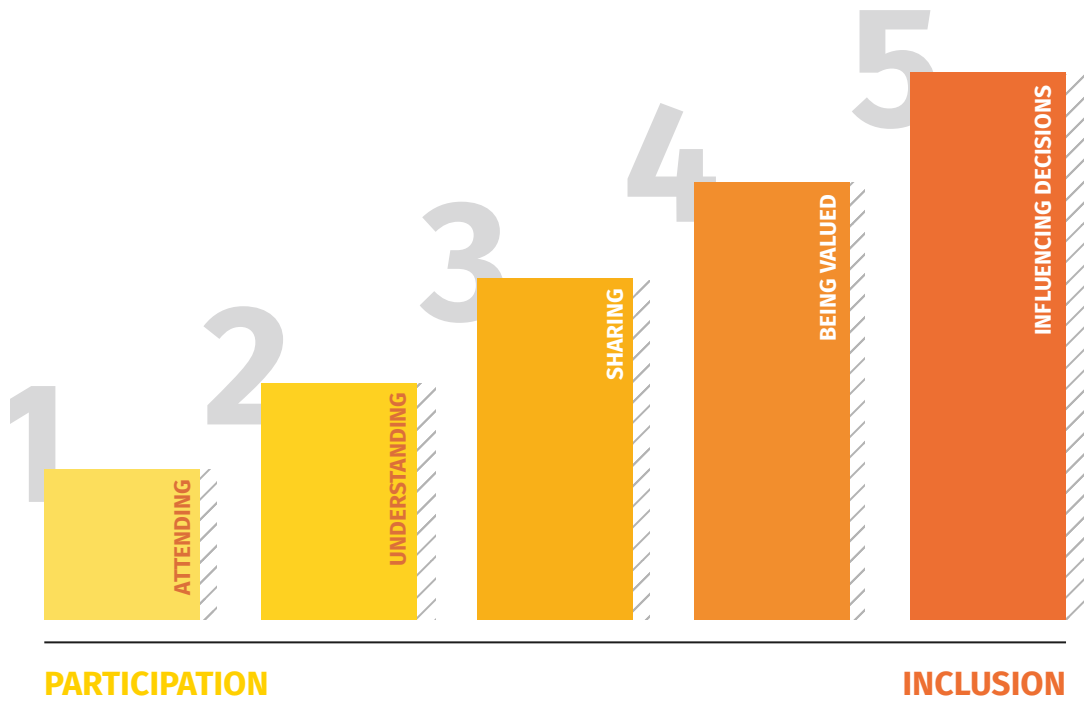
Intersectionality refers to the way in which various social marginalizations and discriminations (or power and privileges) interact with each other and gender to compound inequities and inequalities (Crenshaw, 1990). The social dimensions may relate to ethnicity, Indigeneity, class, (dis)ability or other aspects of identity. These marginalizations and discriminations have both overall patterns (such as marginalization of Indigenous peoples globally, and women from Indigenous groups facing compounding marginalizations) and context-specificity (such as who is an ethnic minority facing discrimination in a given locale).

An intersectional gender lens brings these concepts together. This lens has been applied throughout the study. It guides the investigation and understanding of gendered participation, taking into account, and highlighting, potential multiple discriminations experienced by different groups based on their gender, intersecting with their social attributes such as ethnicity, life stage and socio-economic conditions.

2.2 Five Degrees of Inclusion Framework

The objective of the Five Degrees of Inclusion Framework is to "conceptualize and assess the inclusion and exclusion of different people in decision-making processes" (Johnson et al., 2021, p. 5). The framework aims to provide further insights into what meaningful participation and inclusion in decision-making processes may imply. Seeking to avoid generic assessment of 'participation', the framework categorizes inclusion into five degrees. As illustrated in Figure 1, these are: attending; understanding; sharing; being valued; and decision-making.

Figure 1. The Five Degrees of Inclusion Framework



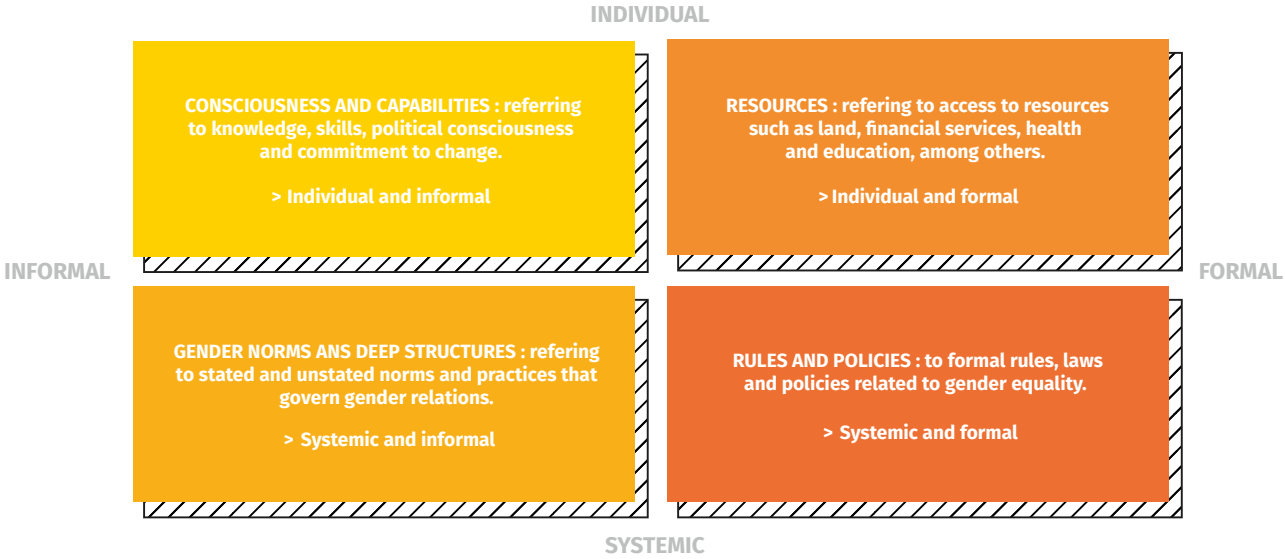
Source: Adapted from Johnson et al. 2021

As well as helping to unpack "the black box" of participation, the framework is particularly well-suited to this study as it emphasizes that "different people's experiences of inclusion (or exclusion) in governance processes can be impacted by their gender and other intersecting markers of social identities such as age, class and ethnicity" (Johnson et al., 2021, p. 3). The study employs the Five Degrees of Inclusion Framework to design the primary data collection methodology and the subsequent data analysis, helping to unpack the nature and extent of inclusion (or exclusion) in the decision-making and governance structure.

2.3 Gender at Work Framework

The Gender at Work Framework (Rao et al., 2015, 2017) was created to help identify and thus address gender inequalities and their roots in organizations, and has also been extended to wider arenas. The framework indicates that in promoting gender equity and mainstreaming gender in any organizational unit of any size, four main dimensions (or entry points) should be considered, classifying along axes of formality (informal to formal) and scale (individual to systemic). As illustrated in Figure 2, the dimensions or quadrants are: i) consciousness and capabilities; ii) resources; iii) norms and deep structures; and iv) rules and policies.

Figure 2. The Gender at Work Framework : Adapted for this study



Source: Adapted from Rao et al., 2015, 2017 in Soeters et al., 2021

The framework then "asserts that changing the norms and structures underlying inequality must be analyzed and addressed across four domains concurrent" (Soeters et al., 2021, p. 281). The study employs the Gender at Work Framework to guide the analyses and discussions on barriers and enablers. In particular, the framework is used to identify strategies to overcome barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making processes.

3.Study methodology

The study was carried out from January–November 2023. Overall, the methodological design purposively funnels down from broad (top-down) to local (bottom-up) scales and perspectives. This approach and the methodology were designed specifically to enable investigation of gendered participation at scale (globally and at least lightly in the four 'She Grows the Future' countries), as well as to deepen and allow local women's own perspectives to directly inform the insights and recommendations.

To do this, the research methodology comprises a combination of desk-based research and qualitative primary research. The desk-based research was employed to provide an overview of climate policy frameworks, commitments, discourse and the status of gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making at the global scale and at the national scale in the four 'She Grows the Future' countries, namely Ecuador, India, Madagascar and Vietnam, where Fondation L'Oréal and CARE have been working to contribute to the empowerment of women who are smallholder farmers. Following this, in zooming in to investigate an in-depth case study of Vietnam, a combination of desk research and qualitative research methods, consisting of key informant interviews (KIIs), semi-structured interviews (SSIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs), was employed. This in-depth case approach in one country was included in order to enable bottom-up, local and contextualized insights. The primary data collection in Vietnam

involved a total of 5 key informants and 113 respondents from national (8), subnational (7) and local (98) levels. SIIs with key informants and at national scales were conducted online, while SIIs and FGDs at sub-national and local scales were conducted in person. The research site for the SIIs and FGDs at the sub-national scale was Lai Chau Province, Tan Uyen district. Within the same district, Ho Mit and Trung Dong communes were the two research sites for the primary data collection at the local scale. The methodology and the 'funneling of scope' (scales) is visualized in figure 3. For more details on primary data collection methodology, including the ethics processes and study limitations, please see Annex 2.

Figure 3. Scales and methodology

Source: Authors' original figure.

One of the main limitations in this study is that the sample of respondents used for the Vietnam case study is not representative for Vietnam as a country. While the study included key stakeholders at national and sub-national levels from the policy-making and sociopolitical organizations (SPOs) in the primary data collection to the extent possible, given the small and qualitative nature of the study, the numbers were relatively limited as compared to the local levels. At the local level, the case study sites in Lai Chau reflect the context of rural mountainous areas with a high level of ethnic diversity and high vulnerability to droughts, floods and landslides. While purposively selected to reflect the convergence of socio-political marginalization, multidimensional poverty and climate vulnerability, these characteristics differ from the other regions of climate-vulnerable communities in Vietnam, particularly the low-lying coastal and river delta regions that are highly vulnerable to rising sea-levels and other regions of the countries where the Kinh ethnic group is largely dominant (see Annex 3 for more details on methodology and limitations).

Farmers walking back home from the field.

Ho Mit commune, 2023

© CARE

PART B

Part B
Findings and analysis

4.Global overview

This chapter outlines the current global commitments, issues, and knowledge gaps relating to the intersection of climate adaptation policy frameworks and gender-equitable participation in climate-related decision-making at multiple scales.

4.1 Backdrop: adaptation commitments, challenges and gendered climate impacts

According to the IPCC 6th Assessment Report on Climate Change, the ambition, scope and progress on adaptation has increased among governments, businesses, communities and civil societies since 2014 when the previous IPCC Assessment Report was published (IPCC, 2023). At least 170 countries have included adaptation in their climate policies and planning process, and this increase has been supported by enhanced public awareness and diversity of actors being involved in the efforts to address climate change (IPCC, 2023). Despite progress, however, significant gaps exist between current levels of adaptation and the levels needed to effectively respond to the climate impacts and risks (IPCC, 2023, p. 27). Adaptation efforts remain "fragmented, incremental, sector-specific and unequally distributed across regions" and "adaptation gaps [...] across sectors and regions [...] will continue to grow under current levels of implementation, with the largest adaptation gaps among lower income groups" (IPCC, 2023, p. 8).

Key barriers overall include "limited resources, lack of private sector and citizen engagement, insufficient mobilization of finance, low climate literacy, lack of political commitment, limited research and/or slow and low uptake of adaptation science" (IPCC, 2023, p. 9). A low sense of urgency, coupled with limited access to funding and knowledge and particularly climate literacy, has hindered the overall progress of climate adaptation (IPCC, 2023).

In response to these gaps, among others, the Parties to the Paris Agreement decided to adopt the UAE Framework for Global Resilience (UNFCCC, 2023e) at COP28. The framework will "guide the achievement of the global goal on adaptation and the review of overall process in achieving it with a view to reducing the increasing adverse impacts, risks and vulnerabilities associated with climate change, as well as to enhance adaptation action and support" (UNFCCC, 2023e, p. 2), including improving the "collective well-being of all people" (UNFCCC, 2023e, p. 2). The framework encourages the Parties to "take into account, where possible, country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent approaches, as well as human rights approaches, and to ensure intergenerational equity and social justice, taking into consideration vulnerable ecosystems, groups and communities and including children, youth and persons with disabilities" (UNFCCC, 2023e, p. 3). As such, the frameworks "Welcome progress in the provision of climate finance, while noting with concern that the current provision of climate finance for adaptation remains insufficient to respond to worsening climate change impacts in developing country Parties" (UNFCCC, 2023e, p. 4).

Echoing this concern are the findings from the OECD report Climate Finance Provided and Mobilised by Developed Countries in 2013-2021 (OECD, 2023). While the report indicates a promising 7.6% increase in the total climate finance mobilized by developed countries to developing countries in the year 2021, compared to the previous year, it also reveals a USD 4 billion, or a 14%, drop in adaptation finance in 2021, compared to the previous year. The low level of climate adaptation finance, in both absolute and relative terms, is one of the critical bottlecnecks to adaptation progress.

A further shortcoming relates to most adaptation practices being in the form of short-term risk reductions, rather than long-term forward-looking transformational adaptation. In tandem with this is the key issue that maladaptation is increasingly being observed. Maladaptation refers to measures or actions taken leading to an increase in exposure and sensitivity to climate change of the target groups of individuals or communities (Schipper, 2020). Maladaptation reflects not just ineffective or inefficient adaptation. Rather, it reflects poorly designed adaptation strategies that are not sufficiently responsive to people's needs or risks, leading to people becoming even worse off than they were previously. As women and marginalized groups already experience unequal adverse impacts of climate change, maladaptation therefore affects them disproportionately (IPCC, 2023; Schipper, 2020). This, in turn, can potentially worsen pre-existing inequities. In order to avoid or minimize such maladaptive responses, "flexible, multi-sectoral, inclusive, long-term planning and implementation of adaptation actions, with co-benefits to many sectors and systems" (IPCC, 2023, p. 19) are required.

To ensure that adaptation policies and implementation processes continue to scale up and intensify, enabling conditions would need to be strengthened and barriers reduced or removed. The 2023 IPCC's 6th Assessment Report has also underscored that these enabling conditions not only need to be differentiated by national, regional and local contexts capabilities, but need to particularly take into account gender equity and social inclusion (IPCC, 2023; S. Lee & Baumgartner, 2022; UNFCCC, 2023d). This push to engage with gender reflects that climate change risks and impacts vary, mirroring or potentially magnifying pre-existing gender and social inequalities.

4.2 Snapshot: gender-equitable participation in global climate adaptation policy and decision-making

In this section, we present a snapshot of policy that lays the foundation for gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making. We then synthesize key insights from the global literature regarding current patterns and status of gendered participation in climate adaptation decision-making.

4.2.1 Policy foundations

Since the mid-1990s, there have been a number of global commitments and agreements made regarding climate change and women's equitable participation. Here we highlight four that are very salient to climate adaptation decision-making.

The Beijing Platform for Action of 1995 clearly highlights the linkage between women's empowerment and sustainable environmental management. It also identifies three strategic objectives for actions by governments, regional and international organizations and actors regarding "women and the environment" (UN, 1995, p. 103): "Involve women actively in environmental decision-making at all levels" (UN, 1995, p. 105), "Integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programs for sustainable development" (UN, 1995, p. 107), and "Strengthen or establish mechanisms at the national, regional and international levels to assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women" (UN, 1995, p. 108).

In 2009, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) expressed its concern about the absence of a gender perspective in the UNFCCC and other global and national policies and initiatives on climate change. In this regard, CEDAW has specifically called for "women's rights to participate at all levels of climate change decision-making to be guaranteed" (CEDAW, 2009).

In 2015, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5, have provided a policy framework, including indicators and guidelines, for achieving gender equality. This includes, for example, SDG 5 target 5.5: "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life" (UN, 2017, p. 10). The corresponding indicators for the targets are the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments and local governments and the proportion of women in managerial positions (UN, 2017).

In the same year, the 2015 Paris Agreement was ratified and refers to gender specifically in three places, namely: the Preamble; Article 7, in relation to adaptation; and Article 11, in relation to capacity building (UNFCCC, 2016).

Currently ratified by 198 Parties to the Convention (countries), the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is considered the primary governing body and framework for international policy and decision-making on climate change and actions. Since its inception in 2015, the Convention continues to improve and address gender equality and women's equitable participation in climate decision-making over the years.

To this end, the key decisions taken by the Parties to the Paris Agreement with regard to gender equity include : Decision 3/CP.23 (UNFCCC, 2017) taken at COP 23 in 2017 on the establishment of the Gender Action Plan, which can be seen as a key milestone of the UNFCCC process; and Decision 3/CP.25 (UNFCCC, 2020a, 2020b) taken at COP 25 in 2019 on the enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its Gender Action Plan (GAP), which further emphasized the importance of participation and leadership of women in all aspects of the UNFCCC process and at all levels (WEDO, 2023a, 2023b). More recently at COP 28, the Parties adopted the UAE Framework for Global Climate Resilience with key targets including "by 2030 all Parties have in place country-driven, gender-responsive, participatory and fully transparent national adaptation plans, policy instruments, and planning processes and/or strategies, covering, as appropriate, ecosystems, sectors, people and vulnerable communities, and have mainstreamed adaptation in all relevant strategies and plans" (UNFCCC, 2023e, p. 3).

4.2.2 Current patterns and status of gendered participation in global climate decision-making

Here we focus on women's participation in the climate adaptation decision-making in UNFCCC and Conferences of Parties (COPs). With regard to women's participation in the constituted bodies of the UNFCCC, out of 17 constituted bodies, only three bodies have more than 50% women's participation (WEDO, 2023a, 2023b). These bodies are the Adaptation Committee, the Paris Committee on Capacity Building and the Facilitative Working Group. The Adaptation Committee has the highest women's representation at 81% (WEDO, 2023b), followed by the Facilitative Working Group (FWG) of the Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples Platform (LCIPP) at 64% and the Paris Committee on Capacity-building (PCCB) at 58% in 2022 (WEDO, 2023a). The lowest percentage of women's participation is observed in the Technology Executive Committee and the Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism, both at 10% (WEDO, 2023b). It is noteworthy that women have highest representations in the constituted bodies regarding climate adaptation, social inclusion and capacity-building, and lowest representations in committees related to technology and clean energy transition.

Regarding participation in decision-making process, at COP28, women encompassed 19% of heads of delegation, a decrease from COP 27 at 20%. This implies that less than one in five heads of delegation are women (WEDO, 2023b, 2024). Overall, the numbers of women heads of delegations have not changed much over the last 10 years, with 21% in 2012 and 20% in 2022 (Alcobé & Harty, 2023; IIED, 2023). Women delegates accounted for 34% of all the delegates, again a decline from COP27, at 35.6% of all national Party delegates (WEDO, 2023b, 2024). Despite the significant increase in the number of total delegates at COP28 (20,188 unique delegates), compared to the previous numbers at COP27 (11,955) and COP26 (9,731), the gender ratio of the delegates has not reflected this same increase (WEDO, 2023a, 2023b, 2024).

Compared to women's participation in the UN peace and security negotiation processes, these above numbers are slightly higher. According to the Women and peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General (UN Security Council, 2023), women representatives accounted for 16% of all the delegates in four out of five UN-led or co-led peace negotiation processes in 2022, declining from 19% and 23% in 2021 and 2020, respectively (UN Security Council, 2023). The report adds that "without active measures taken by the UN, the number would have been even lower"(UN Security Council, 2023, p. 3).

Moving beyond numbers to roles and engagement, analysis conducted by IIED found that in relation to climate decision-making at COPs, "women often have more administrative and event-related responsibilities than technical ones" (IIED, 2023). Moreover, evidence suggests speaking time (contributions) are also inequitably gendered. For example, women accounted for only 29% of total speaking time in plenaries at COP26 (IIED, 2023). These numbers highlight that despite the progress in increasing numbers of women in decision-making processes, there is a need to go beyond the numbers and ensure that the quality and nature of women's participations are as active and influential as their counterparts (Dazé & Hunter, 2022).

As a whole, women's participation and influence in the UNFCCC's bodies and in the COPs, despite some progress, still has much room for improvement. Women remain underrepresented on the UNFCCC's constituted bodies as well as in many countries' delegations. In sum, women's participation and influence in high-level positions show inadequate gender balance (WEDO, 2023a, 2023b).

4.3 Global perspectives: benefits of gender-equitable participation in decision-making

In this section we briefly surface how the benefits of and rationale for gender-equitable participation in climate decision-making are framed in the global climate policy literature.

In terms of how the rationale for gender-equitable participation in climate decision-making is framed in the global climate policy literature, the study surfaced that while it is framed both as an end and as means, the latter framing strongly dominates in the global discourse.

In terms of the former, as an end in itself, gender equality as a human right includes equality in participation and decision-making. In terms of socially marginalized groups more broadly, the OHCHR has indicated the need for climate processes to be guided by and apply relevant human rights frameworks, which means that "[a]ffected individuals and communities must participate, without discrimination, in the design and implementation" of climate adaptation (and mitigation) measures (OHCHR, 2024, p.2). Although less recognized in the literature, this framing positions equitable decision-making in climate adaptation as intrinsically important (an end goal in and of itself).

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Within this instrumental framing, a subtheme is that inclusion and equity not only enhance outcomes overall, but specifically for marginalized actors and those who are most climate vulnerable. For example, the report highlights that "Adaptation outcomes for the most vulnerable within and across countries and regions are enhanced through approaches focusing on equity, inclusivity and rights-based approaches" (IPCC, 2023, p. 101).

Unpacking this further, the instrumental framing of the benefits of gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making can be summarized into four main aspects as follows.

Firstly, there is an overall connection made between participation and an influence on quality of governance. As the IPCC 6th Assessment Report notes, gender-equitable decision-making at all scales lead to more effective climate governance, providing overall direction on setting targets and priorities and mainstreaming climate action across policy domains and levels (IPCC, 2023). Reinforcing this, the 2016 UNDP report Gender and Climate Change emphasizes that gender equality and enhanced women's participation are central to environmental sustainability. The report highlights that countries with higher representation of women in congress or parliament are more likely to set aside protected land areas and to ratify multilateral environmental agreements (UNDP, 2016).

Secondly, the benefit of gender-equitable participation is identified as connected to the instrumental contribution of women's knowledge. The literature signals that women possess the knowledge and relevant ideas from their day-to-day experiences, which need to be taken into account for effective climate adaptation (Kameri-Mbote, 2013; UNFCCC, 2022a). When women have been excluded from available opportunities, such exclusions negatively impact not only women, but society and resources as a whole (Kameri-Mbote, 2013). Linking to women as knowledge holders, the UNFCCC report also explicitly highlighted the roles women play as custodians of natural resources and agents of change (UNFCCC, 2022a).

Thirdly, the literature highlights the practical value of participation in enabling responsiveness of climate policies. As highlighted by UNDP (UNDP, 2023c), consulting women and women's organizations and including them in planning and decision-making can help ensure that climate actions and adaptation address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and men. More broadly, this connects to engagement avoiding human rights violations and/or minimizing maladaptative responses.

Finally, the IPCC literature connects participation to social capital. Specifically, the IPCC 6th Assessment Report highlights more equitable and meaningful participation of all relevant actors in decision-making processes at all scales can contribute to building social trust. They signal this as important because it can in turn contribute to enhancing the support "for transformative change" (IPCC, 2023).

4.4 Formal and informal barriers and enablers

Despite increasing evidence and recognition of the importance and benefits of gender-equitable participation in decision-making process, as indicated above, women and gender minorities are still underrepresented in the decision-making processes on climate change. This section summarizes the key barriers and enablers identified at the global level.

4.4.1 Barriers

There are several key barriers to gender-equitable decision-making identified in the global climate literature. As highlighted by the (UNDP, 2016, 2023c; UNFCCC, 2022a), these include: women's lack of — or limited — access to knowledge and information on climate change and climate adaptation; women's limited access to education, employment and resources including financial resources and land; women's time deprivation due to disproportionate (unpaid) household and care responsibilities placed on women; and underlying constraining gender and social norms that have led to harmful and discriminatory practices.

Analysis from the Peer Learning Summit co-organized by the NAP Global Network and Government of Jamaica in 2022 ahead of COP 27 highlighted that among the key barriers, "Social norms emerged as one of the main challenges to integrating gender in adaptation processes and actions" (Ceinos, 2022). This analysis supports the argument that supplementary measures beyond quotas are needed to enrich the nature and quality of gender-equitable participation.

4.4.2 Enablers

Some global literature highlights efforts underway to address barriers to gender-equitable climate decision-making and enhance gender equality in relation to climate decision-making (UNDP, 2016, 2023c; UNFCCC, 2022a).

The review of global literature underscores the attention to and investments in building women's attendance and capacities as a means of enhancing inclusion in formulating climate policies and of closing the gender gap in climate decision-making (UNDP, 2013, 2016, 2023c; UNFCCC, 2022a). Specifically in relation to women's participation in climate adaptation decision-making in the UNFCCC and policy-making processes, two main enabling mechanisms have been highlighted. The first is the UNFCCC's adoption of decisions to promote "women's participation in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts" (WEDO, 2023b). The second is the UNFCCC's implementation of gender quotas and the introduction of climate change and gender plans at the national level. While not without limitations (see Kandawasvika-Nhundu, 2022), the introduction of gender quotas has been reported to enhance the effectiveness of climate decision-making and actions (Cook et al., 2019). In tandem with this, there is a growing number of initiatives by civil society to enhance women's leadership in climate change negotiations (WEDO, 2023b).

Complementing these enablers are the "locally led adaptation principles", developed by the Global Commission on Adaptation in 2021, to promote and enable local leadership. Locally led adaptation aims to achieve this objective by: i) providing local people with the necessary information and capacity; ii) addressing additional challenges posed by climate change; and iii) challenging norms of leadership specifically by empowering the traditionally excluded—the poor, women, youth, children, people with disabilities, displaced people, Indigenous Peoples and marginalized ethnic groups (Global Center on Adaptation, 2023; Soanes et al., 2021; World Resources Institute, 2023). Currently, more than 100 organizations around the globe, including CARE, have endorsed these principles and applied them to guide their work and initiatives around the world. Locally led adaptation also offers an important channel in which local contributions and leaderships can influence and benefit overall climate action and outcome at the global level.

The above signal that some global-level enablers or mechanisms in support of gender-equitable participation in decision-making have started to be put in place, albeit slowly and on a voluntary basis. While this level is significant and trend-setting, what happens at the national scale and in diverse national contexts is equally important and extremely salient in shaping gendered climate adaptation decision- making. The next section thus turns to this level.

5. Four countries comparison

This section moves from the global to the national scale. Specifically, it turns to a short analysis of the four **'She Grows the Future'** project countries, namely Vietnam, Ecuador, Madagascar and India. In looking across this breadth of contexts, this analysis enables insights into the current situation, as well as common barriers and enablers, of gender-equitable participation in decision-making. Following a summary of key indicators across contexts, this section outlines each country profile in three main dimensions: socio-economic and cultural backgrounds, climate change policy framework, and gender equality status. It then looks across the four countries to elucidate patterns of barriers and enablers to gender-equitable participation.

5.1 Country profiles

As backdrop to this chapter, Table 1 sets the scene in the four **'She Grows the Future'** countries. Specifically, it summarizes several key indicators of socio-economic condition, gender equality status and climate policy frameworks and performance (to the extent that data is available).

Farmers in Field, Madagascar, 2022

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Table 1. Development, Gender and Climate Indicators for Vietnam, Ecuador, Madagascar and India.

Country/ Indicator	Vietnam	Ecuador	Madagascar	India
Human development				
Human Development Index (HDI)[1] 2021	0.703 "high" Rank: 115/191	0.740 "high" Rank: 95/191	0.501 "low" Rank: 173/191	0.633 "medium" Rank: 132/191
Gender				
Global Gender Gap[2], 2023	0.711 Rank: 75/146	0.737 Rank: 50/146	0.737 Rank: 51/146	0.643 Rank: 127/146
Gender Development Index (GDI)[3], 2021	1.002 Group 1	0.980 Group 1	0.956 Group 2	0.849 Group 5
Gender Inequality Index (GII)[4], 2021	0.296 Rank: 71/191	0.362 Rank: 85/191	0.556 Rank: 143/191	0.490 Rank: 122/191
Proportion of women in Parliament, 2022	30%	39%	19%	15%
Time Use Survey	3x more time on unpaid work than men (TUS 2022)	4x more time on unpaid work than men (TUS 2012)	4.4x more time on unpaid work than men (TUS 2001)	7x more time on unpaid work than men (TUS 2019)
Gender Social Norm Index[5] (% of people with gender bias)	93.80%	92.09%	Data unavailable	99.22%
Climate				
Nationally Determined Contribution	November 2022	March 2019	September 2016	August 2022
National Climate Change Strategy	July 2022	July 2012	"National Climate Change Policy" Nov 2010	"National Action Plan on Climate Change" June 2008
National Adaptation Plan / Other Adaptation Policy	July 2020	March 2023	May 2022	None, but "National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change" 2015
Climate Change Performance Index	Ranked 40/63 countries	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Ranked 8/63 countries

1 HDI is based on indicators for 3 dimensions: healthy life (life expectancy); knowledge and education (expected years of schooling, mean years of schooling for adults at age 25); and income (gross national income) (UNDP 2022).

2 Global Gender Gap index is based on indicators for four dimensions: economic participation and opportunity (labor force participation rate, wage equality for similar work, estimated earned income, legislators/senior officials/managers, professional/technical workers); education attainment (literacy rate, enrollment in primary secondary, and tertiary education); health and survival (sex ratio at birth and healthy life expectancy); and political empowerment (women in parliament, women in ministerial positions, years with female/male head of state) (World Economic Forum 2023).

3 GDI is HDI of women/HDI of men, where Group 1 implies high equality in HDI achievements between women and men and Group 5 implies low equality in HDI achievements between women and men (UNDP 2022).

4 GII is based on indicators in three dimensions: reproductive health (maternal mortality rate and adolescent birth rate); empowerment (female and male population with secondary education, female and male shares of parliamentary seats); and labor market (female and male labor force participation rates) (UNDP 2022).

5 Gender Social Norm Index (GSNI) quantifies biases against women, capturing people's attitudes on women's roles along four key dimensions: political, educational, economic and physical integrity (UNDP 2023).

Landscape, Ho Mit Province, Vietnam, 2024

Table 1 illustrates that of the four countries, Vietnam and Ecuador are performing better in terms of human development and gender indicators than the other two countries. Regarding gender equality, Vietnam has the highest Gender Development Index (GDI), the lowest Gender Inequality Index (GII) and the lowest figure for the Time Use Survey indicator in all of the four countries. Similarly, Ecuador has the best ranking in the Global Gender Gap indicator, the highest proportion of women in parliament and the lowest percentage of people with gender biases out of the four **'She Grows the Future'** countries.

Followed from Vietnam and Ecuador are Madagascar, with middle to low scores/rankings, and then India. While India lands in 'medium' HDI, due to its relatively high GDP compared to Madagascar, India's 5 gender indicators, out of the total of 6 indicators presented here, are the lowest of all four countries (with Madagascar lower only in GII). In several areas, India is significantly lower—including unpaid work, with women carrying out 7 times more than men (versus 3 times more in Vietnam).

The data regarding Gender and Social Norms is striking across the countries as all three for which there is data indicate that over 90% of people in these contexts have biased attitudes with regard to women's roles along four key dimensions: political, educational, economic and physical integrity (UNDP, 2023a). The data suggest that in India, over 99% of people hold gender biases. This signals two points of interest for this study. First, it underscores that both men and women have internalized gender-constraining biases. Second, the higher percentage of constraining norms (India) correlates with its lower gender equality scores (seen in other indicators, which include gendered decision-making). This aligns with the wider gender literature underscoring the relationship between (constraining) norms and gender outcomes (ODI, 2015; UNDP, 2023a; UNFCCC, 2022a).

The following sections discuss the current gender context and status of gendered participation in climate decision-making in each of the four countries.

5.1.1 Vietnam

As outlined in Table 2, Vietnam's Human HDI stands at 0.703, ranked at 115th out of 191 countries in 2021, belonging to a "high" HDI group. In the same period, Vietnam's GDI and GGI stand at 1 and 0.296, respectively, (UNDP, 2022), reflecting the highest GDI and the lowest GGI (the best ranking GGI) among the four SGTF countries. Similarly, the Time Use Survey states that women in Vietnam spend 3 times more on unpaid work than men in Vietnam (Charmes, 2015; Indochina Research, 2023), indicating the least unequal time use between women and men among the four countries under discussion. The Global Gender Gap Report shows Vietnam's gender gap value at 0.711, ranked 75 out of 146 (World Economic Forum, 2023). The Word Bank has reported percentage of women in parliament records at 30% (World Bank, 2023e), the second highest among the four countries under the discussion. According to the 2019 National Study on Violence Against Women in Vietnam (UNFPA Vietnam, 2019), as of 2019, 63% of women have experienced at least one or more types of violence [8] (physical, sexual, economic and/or psychological violence) in their lifetime by a husband, and 31.6% experienced such violence in the last 12 months.

Vietnam has been identified as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change in the world due to its long coastline, low-lying deltas and increasing exposure to hazards, with extreme weather events increasing in frequency and severity (UNDP, 2023b). With its CCPI ranked at the 40th out of 63 countries in 2023, Vietnam has been making steady progress in its climate policy, along with reduction in GHG emission, renewable energy and energy use, stepping 3 places above the previous year (Burck et al., 2023). It, however, remains among the 'low' performing countries (Burck et al., 2023). In line with this, Vietnam's Environmental Performance Index ranks at 178th out of 180 countries.

Vietnam updated their NDC in November 2022 and revised their National Climate Change Strategy in July 2022, and is in the process of updating their NAP, with the last update being in July 2020. Vietnam's NDC recognizes women, ethnic minorities, children and adolescents, the elderly and people with disabilities as the most vulnerable groups to the impacts of climate change (Vietnam, 2022c). In terms of participation, it notes that "the participation of women and young people in climate change adaptation activities is still limited" (Vietnam, 2022c, p. 22).

While the updated NDC notes the need to increase the participation of women and youth in climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction and mitigation (Vietnam, 2022c), the NDC does not include much detail on how this will be achieved, aside from the development and implementation of national communication programs to "promote movements and activities of youth and women on disaster prevention, climate change adaptation, and GHG emissions reduction" (Vietnam, 2022c, p. 28). Similarly, no specific roles are attributed to women and marginalized groups.

Approved on 20 July 2020, Vietnam's NAP indicates the need to promote gender equality, including empowering women, in climate change adaptation processes. Specifically, it entrusts the Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA) and local governments with the tasks to formulate policies and initiatives to support vulnerable groups and promote gender equality in climate change adaptation activities by 2023 (UNDP, 2023b). One of the objectives of the Plan is also to "Improve capacity for women, increase the participation of women in climate change activities"(Vietnam, 2022a), which should be achieved through communication schemes on green growth, gender and climate change, as well as through vocational, livelihood and soft skills trainings for women engaging in economic sectors towards climate change adaptation—

8 Gender-based violence (GBV) refers to any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will based on gender differences, norms, roles and expectations. There are different kinds of violence including (but not limited to) physical, verbal, sexual, psychological and socio-economic violence . See Annex 1 for more detail.

both activities being led by MOLISA (Vietnam, 2022a). However, the NAP does not specifically call for measures to promote gender-equitable participation in climate decision-making as such (for example, quotas for gender ratios in participation in climate adaptation decision-making process and/or gender-disaggregated data on inputs contributed during the process).

With regard to barriers, the NDC specifically signals challenges to gender-equitable participation in decision-making, identifying an "overall lack of regulations, incentive mechanisms and solutions to improve the role and position of women in policy formulation and implementation of climate change response and disaster presentation activities at all levels" (Vietnam, 2022a, p. 21).

The UNDP Vietnam's report Mainstreaming Gender into the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) Process (UNDP, 2023b) identifies a number of key barriers for gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making in Vietnam at the national level. These include the limited availability of gender or sex-disaggregated data and empirical evidence, the slow progress in translating gender equality as a guiding principle to the implementation at the practical level at every scale, and the gaps and discrepancies in awareness, understanding and capacity to implement (joint) climate adaptation and gender equality efforts between different ministries and provincial and local agencies. The report also identifies NDC's acknowledgement of lack of guiding documents and mechanisms to integrate gender into climate change adaptation legal frameworks as mentioned above.

Furthermore, a project report by GRET indicates that "Because of cultural norms and gender-based prejudices, women have less access to and control over natural resources. In Vietnam, approximately 38% of women and 62% of men possess land use certificates; women are therefore seldom fully included in decisions on natural resource management." (GRET, 2021, p. webpage).

A number of key enabling factors have also been identified by the UNDP Vietnam report (UNDP, 2023b). First, the recognition by the government, international agencies and related stakeholders that effective formal governance structures for climate change and gender equality are currently lacking and must be established (UNDP, 2023b). Second, the well-established acceptance and recognition of the importance of gender equity and women's roles in climate decision-making. Third, the corresponding concrete efforts to ensure gender-responsive NAP, illustrated by the joint project, sup-NAP, which also extends support to collect sex-disaggregated data under national and sectoral monitoring and evaluation, among others (UNDP, 2023b). And fourth, strong roles that social and political organizations (SPOs) such as the VWU and Farmer's Association play in facilitating local decision-making process (Hoang Hong Hue, 2019).

The key barriers and enablers in Vietnam will be discussed and examined in more detail in Chapter 6, which presents an in-depth case study of Vietnam.

5.1.2 Ecuador

According to the UN Human Development Report 2022, Ecuador's HDI stands at 0.740, ranked at 95 out of 191 countries, while GII registers at 0.3620, ranked 85th out of 191 countries (UNDP, 2022). Ecuador's GDI of 0.980 puts Ecuador in the top group, Group 1, implying high equality of HDI achievements between women and men. In line with this, the Gender Gap Index for Ecuador, recorded at 0.737, places Ecuador at 50th place out of 146 countries as reported in Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2023), and at the top among the four countries under discussion.

Correspondingly, the World Bank data for Women in Parliament show that women represent 39% of total number of seats in the parliament in Ecuador (World Bank, 2023b), also the highest among the four countries. The National Time Use Survey of Ecuador published in 2012 indicates that women spend more than four times (4.2 times) more time on unpaid work than men in 2012 (UN, 2021; World Bank, 2023b). The recent Gender Social Norm Index reveals that 92.09% of the population have gender bias attitudes toward women's roles (UNDP, 2023a), the lowest percentage of population with bias among the four countries in discussion.

Despite the rankings amongst these four countries, a study by IUCN reports that the culture of male dominance is still highly pervasive across multiple sectors of Ecuador, which has hindered women's voice and influence in resource decision making" (IUCN, 2015). Moreover, many Ecuadorian women face multiple discriminations, based not only on their gender but their ethnic and cultural origin as well. Interviews in the study illustrated that Mestizo women, Andean women, and Amazonian women experience varying degrees of discrimination, with Mestizo women typically suffering the most discrimination, particularly with regard to resource decision-making (IUCN, 2015).

UNDP Ecuador has recently reported that six out of ten women (60%) experience gender-based violence. Women's unemployment rate is higher than men, and women are less represented at the decision-making level. These, and other factors, make women as well as minorities, children and adolescents more vulnerable because they have less resources to cope with the adverse effects of climate change (Estefania Aguayo, 2022 cited from the webpage).

In terms of climate adaptation, UNDP Ecuador is conducting gender analysis to identify gender-differentiated climate vulnerabilities and corresponding adaptation measures, while promoting gender-equitable participation and sex-disaggregated data as key components necessary for planning and implementation and monitoring and evaluation of climate policies, respectively (Aguayo, 2022). Under the leadership of the Ministry of Environment, Water and Ecological transition, Ecuador is currently developing a Gender and Climate Change Action Plan (Aguayo, 2022).

Regarding Ecuador's progress in climate action, Ecuador's Environmental Performance Index ranks at 66 (Wolf, M. J, Emerson, J. W., Esty, D. C., de Sherbinin, A., Wendling, Z. A., et al., 2022), out of 180 countries in the study (the data for Ecuador's Climate Change Policy Index is currently not available). Ecuador has updated its NDC in March 2019 and has launched the NAP in March 2023. According to the NDC Partnership, "Ecuador stands out for its commitment to climate action by incorporating gender-sensitive tools throughout the entire NDC process, building capacity around gender considerations, enhancing climate-related policies, adopting a whole-of-government approach, and pledging to involve women's organizations at every step" (NDC Partnership, 2023). Ecuador is the first country to present an NDC with a gender mainstreaming approach. According to the NAP Global Network, among its objectives, Ecuador's NAP (2023-2027) aims to promote "a gender approach" in the implementation of adaptation measures. The NAP also includes "Participation" and "Gender and Intersectionality" as two of the seven cross-cutting issues (Aguayo, 2022). The NAP also recognizes women as priority groups, highlighting issues related to gender-differentiated impacts of climate change and redistribution of care work (NAP Global Network, 2023a).

Key barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making in Ecuador include discriminatory gender and social norms, as highlighted above, and limited resources and awareness of women's valuable contribution to climate decision-making and environmental management (Aguayo, 2022). Furthermore, women's time poverty is also an important barrier.

A number of enabling activities support gender-equitable participation include the use of gender and adaptation criteria in local and national planning, the participation of women in consultations and the training sessions on gender-sensitive adaptation (NAP Global Network, 2023a). Notably, Ecuador stands out for its commitment to gender consideration in their climate policies and actions.

5.1.3 Madagascar

Madagascar is one of the poorest countries in the world, with an HDI of 0.5017 and ranked 173th out of 191 countries (UNDP, 2022). Madagascar's GDI of 0.956 puts Madagascar in Group 2, implying medium-high equality of HDI achievements between women and men, while GII registers at 0.556, ranked 143th out of 191 countries (UNDP, 2022). The Gender Gap Index in Madagascar, recorded at 0.737, places Madagascar at 51st place out of 146 countries as reported in Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2023), sharing the top position with change to: just behind Ecuador among the four countries.

In contrast to these rankings, the World Bank data for Women in Parliament show that women represent only 19% of total number of seats in the parliament in Madagascar (World Bank, 2023d). The Time Use Survey for Madagascar conducted in 2001 indicates that women spend 4.4 times more time on unpaid work than men (Charmes, 2015). As the most updated figure of time use is available for 2001, this may have changed overtime. Currently, the Gender Social Norm Index has not yet been constructed for Madagascar. These indicate the current existence of the gender data gaps in Madagascar.

Analysis by the Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat reveals that Malagasy women are responsible for unpaid household tasks such as fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking and taking care of agriculture and small livestock, which require time and strength (Tahirindray, 2022). As a result, women have less time and limited opportunities to develop intellectually or economically (Tahirindray, 2022), despite them being at the center of the management of natural resources, which are crucial to climate actions (Tahirindray, 2022). According to UNFPA, one in three women are reported to have experienced physical or sexual violence at some point in their lifetime (UNFPA, 2022).

Regarding climate vulnerability, "Madagascar is one of the African countries most severely affected by climate change impacts and experiences with an average of three cyclones per year" according to the World Bank climate change knowledge portal (World Bank, 2023a). Madagascar's Environmental Performance Index is ranked at 167th (Wolf et al., 2022) out of the 180 countries in the study. Currently, the Climate Change Policy Index has not been constructed for Madagascar.

According to the IMF technical report, Madagascar continues to develop and update its national framework for climate change in line with their development goals and its NDC commitments (IMF, 2022). Madagascar's has updated the NDC in September 2016. However, climate change has not yet been sufficiently and systematically mainstreamed into sectoral policies, with some sectors developing their own standalone documents and strategies for climate change (IMF, 2022).

According to Gender Review of NAP Documents for Madagascar conducted by NAP Global Network (NAP Global Network, 2023b), Madagascar's NAP, updated in 2022, refers to gender and inclusion as guiding principles. It highlights the need to strengthen women's capacities and recognizes power relationships in some of the adaptation priorities. Furthermore, the several prioritized national programs have integrated a gender approach to their formulation and implementation. Importantly, the NAP also proposes gender-sensitive indicators and identifies which indicators require gender-disaggregated data.

In examining barriers to women's participation in public decision-making, the Report on Gender analysis on SRH and climate resilience: Madagascar- Anosy and Diana regions (Harivola, 2021) highlights that "In Madagascar, women's participation in decision-making bodies is still low in both the public and private sectors due to the social, economic and political situation of women, which limits their power of action and autonomy. The place given to men and women in society and the stereotypes conveyed reinforce the tendency that power and responsibility for public decision- making are reserved for men" (Harivola, Stella, 2021, p. 36). Furthermore, the report highlights that traditional practice of early marriage is still prevalent in Madagascar (Harivola, 2021). In addition to this, women's time poverty, low ratios of women representations in leadership and climate-related decision-making roles and lack of gender-disaggregated data are also prominent barriers.

In overcoming the gender-related barriers, among the enabling factors identified in this context are the recognition of constraining gender and social norms and the government's efforts to emphasize social inclusion and strengthen women capacities as illustrated in the NAP (NAP Global Network, 2023b).

5.1.4 India

According to the UN Human Development Report 2022, India's HDI stands at 0.633, ranked at 132 out of 191 countries, and GII registers at 0.490, ranked 122nd out of 191 countries (UNDP, 2022).

India's GDI of 0.849 puts India in the last group, Group 5, implying low equality of HDI achievements between women and men in India. In line with this, the Gender Gap in India, recorded at 0.634, places India at 125th place out of 146 countries, as reported in the Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2023), and the last position among the four countries under discussion. The World Bank data for Women in Parliament show that women represent 15% of the total number of seats in the parliament in India (World Bank, 2023c), and the Time Use Survey for India indicates that Indian women spend 7 times more time on unpaid work than men (Government of India, 2019; Ratheesh & Anitha, 2022). The recent UNDP's Gender Social Norms index shows that 99.2% of the population have biased attitudes on women's roles along four key dimensions: political, educational, economic and physical integrity (UNDP, 2023a). This figure of gender bias is the highest among the four 'She Grows the Future' countries. A report by Oxfam indicates around 40% of Indian women have experienced domestic violence in their lifetime (Isadora Frankenthal & Diya Dutta, 2021)

In line with the Gender Social Norm index, Indian society can be characterized as a male-dominated or patriarchal society, with women being underrepresented in planning processes (Khosla, 2009). Despite women and men having equal rights in the Indian constitution, in practice women's political participation is still underrealized. More often, seats which have been reserved for women in local decision-making bodies are filled by women who act as "proxies" for their male family members (Khosla, 2009).

Regarding India's progress in climate action, India's Environmental Performance Index[9] ranks at 180 (Wolf et al., 2022), the last position in the 180 countries in the study. The Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), ranked at the 8th position in 2023 (Burck et al., 2023), nevertheless reflects India's ongoing efforts and steady progress in its climate policy, along with reduction in GHG emissions, renewable energy and energy use, and its placement is up two places from the previous year (Burck et al., 2023). India has announced a net-zero target for 2070 (Burck et al., 2023) and in August 2022 has updated its intended NDC, which has one mention of gender and women as one of the challenges to be addressed.

Key barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making process in India include unequal access to education and health care, limited access and control over resources (Khosla, 2009; Singh, 2023), which all contribute to weakening women's voices and participation in decision-making process (Khosla, 2009; Singh, 2023), and languages and illiteracy. Illustrating the latter, the 2022 UNFCCC report (UNFCCC, 2022a) shared an example of a project in India that aimed to reduce water scarcity, but offered technical information in one language. This significantly limited the outreach of the project, particularly towards women, who are often in charge of providing water for the households.

With regard to enabling factors for enhancing gender-equitable participation for climate adaptation decision-making in India, the introduction of quota systems and recognition of the underlying social and gender and social norms and their discriminatory impact by the government, NGOs and the international community have helped to initiate the drive to change attitudes and behaviors towards women and their roles in society in India. For example, international organizations including the UNDP India have been working on the areas of behavioral change and climate actions from the perspective of gender equity (UNDP India, 2021a, 2021b). Initiatives and collective actions via existing women's self-help groups and agricultural networks at the local level have been reported to also play an important part in empowering women in relation to climate adaptation decision-making (Pyburn & Eerdewijk, 2021). Capacity-building activities (particularly on climate-smart technologies and practices) and climate adaptation information dissemination (carried out with and through women-led groups) have been reported as potentially effective in contributing to supporting women's participation in climate adaptation decision-making (Pyburn & Eerdewijk, 2021).

9 Environmental Performance Index (EPI), developed by Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy, Yale University and Center for International Earth Science Information Network, Columbia University, use 40 performance indicators across 11 issue categories (for example climate change mitigation, water management, water resources, air quality, agriculture, fisheries, ecosystem Services and biodiversity and habitat) , offering a scorecard that highlight leaders and laggards in environmental performance (Wolf et al., 2022). The higher the score implies the higher the environmental performance.

5.2 Common barriers and enablers

This sub-section presents some of the common key barriers and enablers among the four **'She Grows the Future'** countries that have been identified in the previous sub-section. Table 2 summarizes these key common barriers and enablers related to: access to knowledge, policy framework, data, representation, time use and division of labor and gender and social norms. Table 2 also pairs the corresponding enabling factors with the identified barriers as a way to recognize and identify the potential entry points for generating insights for recommendation which will be discussed later in chapters 7 and 8.

Table 2. Common barriers and enablers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making, across the four 'She Grows the Future' countries.

Relating to	Barriers	Enablers
Access to knowledge (formal)	In Vietnam, Ecuador, Madagascar and India, women's limited access to education as well as climate adaptation information and training hinder women's capabilities to fully contribute to climate adaptation decision-making.	In all four countries, there have been clear efforts and momentum in investing in women's capacity building and access to knowledge and training. There are also existing women-led groups, such as women self-help groups in India and the Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU) networks in Vietnam, that can facilitate and/or spearhead these capacity-building activities.
Policy, including resourcing and implementation (formal)	Lack of funding in gender mainstreaming and investment in promoting gender equity has been reported in Ecuador, Vietnam and India. Gaps in the implementation, from gender at the principle level to the practical level, have been reported in Vietnam and Madagascar.	Ecuador and Madagascar stand out in terms of commitments to incorporating gender considerations in climate-related policies, as illustrated by their NDCs and NAPs, respectively.
Data (formal)	Lack of gender- and/or sex-disaggregated data prevail in all the 'She Grows the Future' countries.	All four countries recognize the importance of gender- and/or sex-disaggregated data collection, use and dissemination. Notably, the NAP of Madagascar specifically identifies the need to collect gender-disaggregated data and proposes several gender responsive indicators.
Representation (formal)	All four countries have low levels of women's representation in parliaments and the international climate decision-making arena. In COP 28, ratios of women in country delegates ranged from 30% (India) to 50% (Ecuador), with no women heads of country delegates (WEDO, 2023c).	Investment in women or gender-sensitive capacity building initiatives have been reported to be promoted in all four countries.
Time poverty and division of labor (informal)	Women in all four countries experience unequal time share and division of labor leading to women's time poverty.	No clear enabling factors were identified in this respect from any of the four countries.

Norms and stereotypes (informal)	Discriminatory gender and social norms and values prevail in all four of countries. Women from ethnic minorities were reported to experience further discrimination in the literature on Vietnam, Ecuador and India.	Recognition of the value of women's participation in all four countries by policy actors, international agency and NGO actors. This recognition includes acknowledgement of women's participation both as a right (thus important from a social justice perspective), and as an indispensable component to achieving sustainable human, environmental and economic development and climate resilience. Enhanced awareness regarding gender equity has been reported in all of the countries.
Language and illiteracy (formal/ informal)	Language constraints are particularly pronounced in countries with diverse ethnic groups, which includes Madagascar, Ecuador, India and Vietnam (Minority Rights Group International, 2023). Literacy as a constraint is particularly an issue in contexts with low overall literacy or low literacy among women, particularly in India with 65.8% female literacy rate in 2018, and Madagascar, with 75.8% in 2021 (World Bank, 2023c, 2023a).	Across the four countries, capacity-building is continuously being offered to women and marginalized groups by government agencies and NGOs to marginalized groups, particularly in rural areas (Aguayo, 2022; NAP Global Network, 2023a, 2023b; Rivoal & Thanh Nga, 2022; UNDP India, 2021a)

6. In-depth case findings: Vietnam

This chapter further nuances and deepens insights and adds local, bottom-up perspectives by diving into a case study of Vietnam. As outlined in Chapter 3, this employs both literature review and qualitative research methods for primary data collection. Section 6.1 sets the scene with a short presentation of climate and gender policy frameworks in Vietnam. Section 6.2 reports on the current status of women's participation in climate adaptation decision-making at national, sub-national and local scales. The barriers and levers to this are then examined in Sections 6.3 and 6.4, respectively.

6.1 Policy frameworks

Effective and equitable participation in climate decision-making requires both climate policy to facilitate opportunities for participation in climate decision-making, as well as gender policy to set up principles and systems to enable equitable engagement. As such, here we briefly surface both; more detail and background are elaborated in Annex 3.

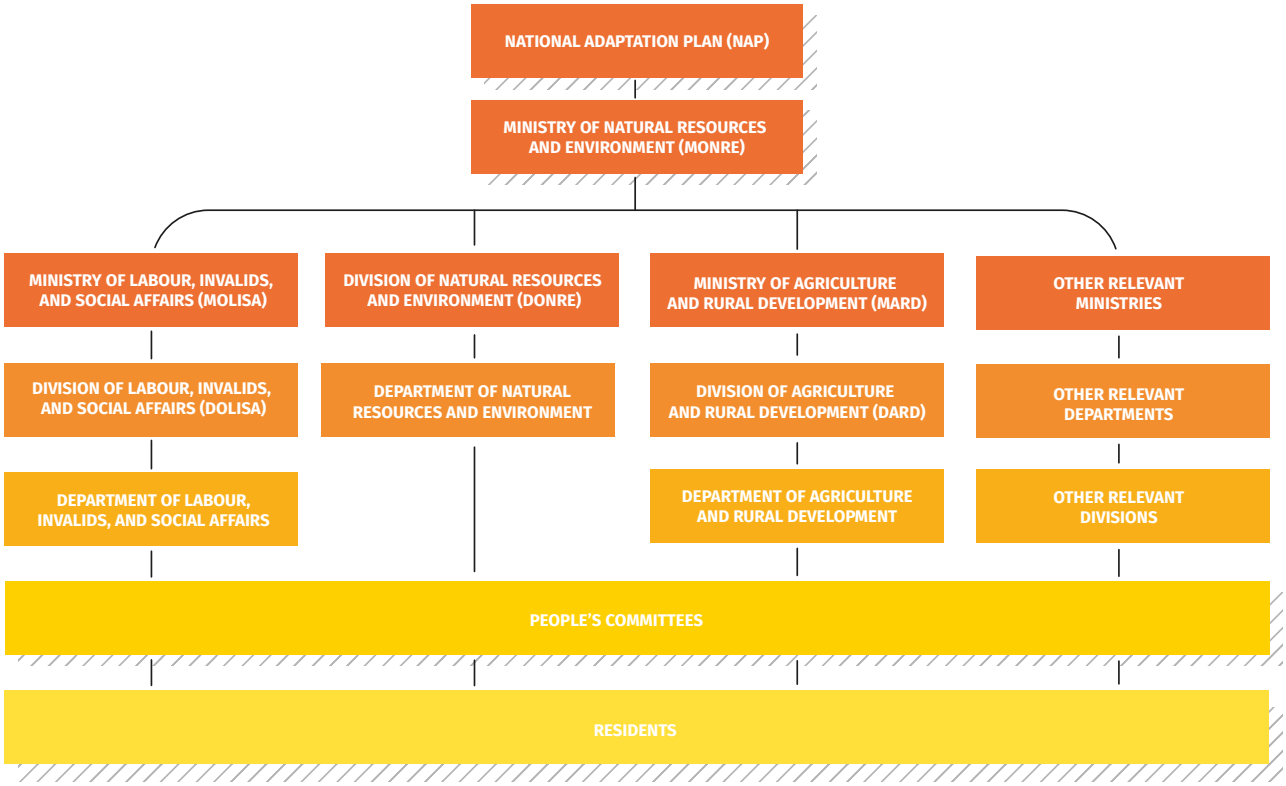
6.1.1 Climate policy frameworks

After signing onto the Paris Agreement in 2016, Vietnam has employed the Agreement as an overarching framework to define specific mitigation targets documented in the NDCs and to guide the formulation and implementation of climate-related policy framework, particularly the National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS), the National Target Program, and other related programs and strategies. The current report focuses on the NCCS and the NAP which are Vietnam's primary legislative documents on climate change adaptation policy. Whereas the NCCS defines Vietnam's long-term climate change strategies until 2050, the NAP serves as a medium-term action plan until 2030.

At the sub-national level, following the issuances of the NAP, leaders of the Provincial People's Committees were tasked with translating the NAP into Provincial Action Plans (PAPs) which would be more tailored to the specific conditions and needs of their provinces. This translation process is led by the Division of Natural Resources and Environment (DONRE). In drafting the PAP, DONRE engages with other relevant divisions at the provincial level including the Division of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA) and the Division of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD). However, DONRE also coordinates with relevant departments at the district level and People's Committees at the commune level to gauge the needs of local residents.

Figure 4 displays coordination between government agencies at the national, sub-national, and local levels in implementing the National Adaptation Plan. At the national level, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) is the leading agency and is responsible for coordinating with and assigning tasks to relevant ministries including MOLISA and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). Divisions within each province coordinate with one another to translate the NAP into PAPs which contain tasks and goals specific to their respective provinces. Following translation, divisions are responsible for implementing PAPs within each district within the province. At the commune level, the People's Committees communicate directly with residents to ensure they are informed of relevant provisions set forth in the NAP and PAPs. This top-down organization of government agencies ensures implementation and compliance with the National Adaptation Plan from the national down to the grassroots (communal) level.

Figure 4: Implementation of the National Adaptation Plan.



Source: Authors' figure.

6.1.2 Gender policy frameworks

Along with its increasing commitments to addressing climate change, Vietnam has also made multiple policy investments in promoting gender equality. In 2006, the National Assembly passed the Law on Gender Equality with the goal of creating equal opportunities for men and women and eliminating gender discrimination across various sectors of society including the political sector. To achieve this, the Law tasks the Government with "promulgating national strategies, policies, and goals on gender equality" (Law No. 73/2006/QH11 Article 25, 29/11/06). In 2018, the National Assembly Central Committee issued the Seventh Conference on Building Staff at All Levels (Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW 2018 on Building a Team of Competent and Reputable Officers on Par with Their Duties, 2018) followed by the issuance of the National Strategy on Gender Equality (Resolution No. 28/NQ-CP 2021 National Strategy on Gender Equality for the Period 2021 2030, 2021) by the Prime Minister in 2021. In relation to this, Vietnam has set extensive targets for representations in parliament, government positions. These are outlined in Box 1 below.

Box 1. Women's representation targets in Vietnam

Regarding women's representation in parliament, the Seventh Conference on Building Staff at All Levels (Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW 2018 on Building a Team of Competent and Reputable Officers on Par with Their Duties, 2018) was issued in 2018. It announced the nation's goal to achieve at least 20–25% women at the National Assembly and at least 35% of People's Councils at lower levels (provincial, district, communal) by the year 2030 (Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW 2018 on Building a Team of Competent and Reputable Officers on Par with Their Duties, 2018). In addition, the Seventh Conference also specified that "in areas where there are ethnic minorities, there must be ethnic minority leaders suitable to the population structure" (Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW 2018 on Building a Team of Competent and Reputable Officers on Par with Their Duties, 2018).

Regarding women's representation in administrative roles, the National Strategy for Gender Equality was issued in 2021 and established a national goal of achieving at least 60% women of heads of regulatory agencies and local governments by 2025 and at least 75% by 2030 (Resolution No. 28/NQ-CP 2021 National Strategy on Gender Equality for the Period 2021 2030, 2021). In tandem with the National Strategy for Gender Equality, the National Assembly's Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA) also issued a decision approving the plan for implementation of the national strategy on gender equality for 2022–2030 (Decision No. 64/QD-UBDT 2022 Implementation Plan of Gender Equality Strategy 2022 2030, 2022) in January 2022, announcing that it aimed to have 50% women in leadership positions within Ethnic Affairs Offices from the state to local level by 2025 and 60% by 2030 (Decision No. 64/QD-UBDT 2022 Implementation Plan of Gender Equality Strategy 2022 2030, 2022). CEMA further stated that in all government positions a "reasonable percentage should be from ethnic minorities" and female candidates should be "prioritized" (Decision No. 64/QD-UBDT 2022 Implementation Plan of Gender Equality Strategy 2022 2030, 2022). See Section 6.3.2.1.1 for additional discussion about Vietnam's efforts towards achieving its gender quotas.

Vietnam has also integrated other mechanisms to facilitate gender mainstreaming at various levels. In addition to the National Committee for the Advancement of Women which provides guidance to the Prime Minister on issues of gender equality, a Committee for the Advancement of Women has been established across all ministries in order to ensure Ministries and People's Committees are implementing activities centered on advancing women. These Committees are responsible for developing policies and programs to encourage women to participate in leadership teams and decision-making processes. Furthermore, interviews with national policy actors revealed that for all new policies, each agency must complete a "gender impact assessment" describing any gender disparities and strategies to mitigate them.

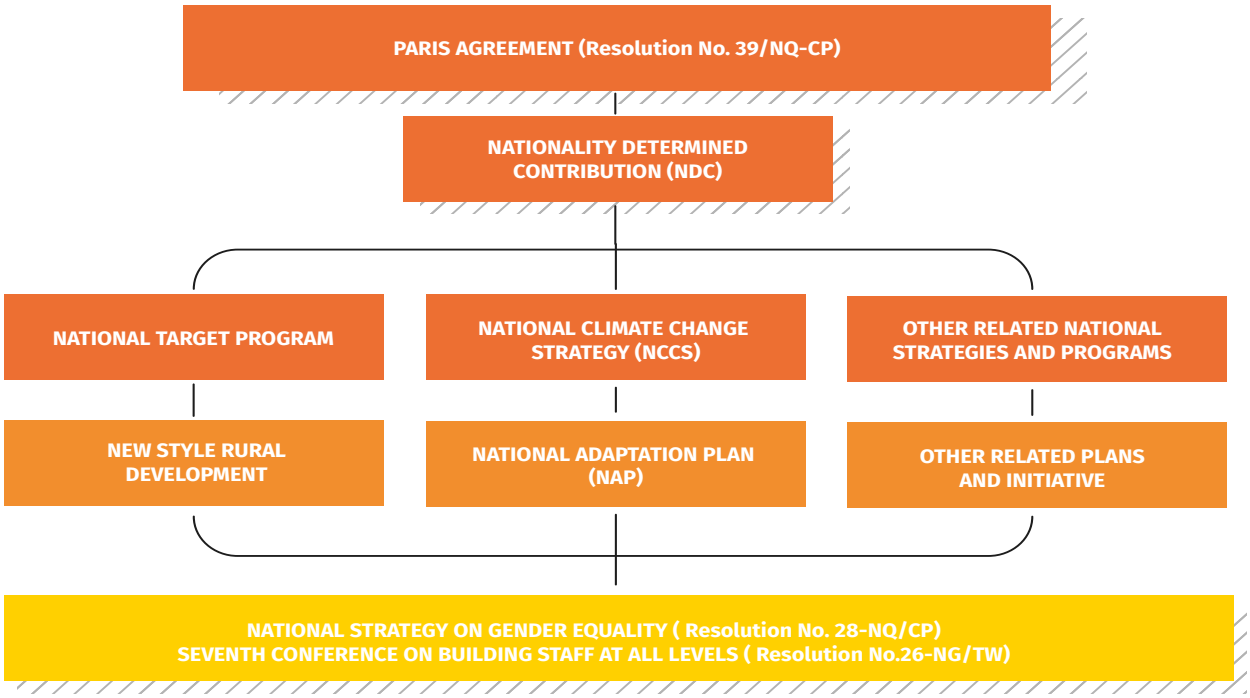
The National Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU), a sub-organization under the Vietnamese Fatherland Front, plays an important role in supervising and guiding these gender mainstreaming

efforts. The VWU is responsible for supervising agencies across different sectors to ensure compliance with the strategies and quotas set forth by the state. Furthermore, the VWU is responsible for reviewing and providing comments on all gender impact assessments to ensure that any issues of gender participation are fully addressed in laws and policies.

6.1.3 Gender decision-making provisions in climate policy

Together, these decisions serve as a framework for promoting gender equity and social inclusion in policy formulation and implementation at "all levels" of governance including the national, sub-national, and local levels and "all sectors" including climate change adaptation policy (Resolution No. 26-NQ/TW 2018 on Building a Team of Competent and Reputable Officers on Par with Their Duties, 2018; Resolution No. 28/NQ-CP 2021 National Strategy on Gender Equality for the Period 2021 2030, 2021). Figure 5 provides a snapshot of these.

Figure 5. Snapshot of policies promoting gender equitable decision-making in climate adaptation.



Source: Authors' figure.

In Table 3 we present a rapid analysis of gender in relation to climate, specifically climate policies and decision-making.

Table 3. Gender considerations in Vietnam's climate policy framework.

Legal and Policy Frameworks	Gender Considerations	Current gaps and shortcomings
The Law on Gender Equality, Seventh Conference on Building Staff at all Levels, and the National Strategy on Gender Equality	These frameworks are cross-cutting and are binding on all sectors of political decision-making.	All still lack explicit language on how gender equality will be achieved in decision-making regarding climate change and disaster risk reduction.
Vietnam's NDC	The NDC states that "many legal documents have mentioned climate change adaptation, but there is overall lack of guiding documents such as... the integration of gender equality in climate change adaptation" (Vietnam, 2022b). Section 5 of the NDC re-emphasizes the importance of gender mainstreaming to climate change policy, listing "increasing integration of gender equality" as a "measure to promote implementation of the NDC" (Vietnam, 2022b).	The NDC identifies "refining institutions, promoting potential and resources" as a gap in the Nation's approach to climate change adaptation (Vietnam, 2022b). This gap is attributed to discrepancies in policymaking, including the lack of gender mainstreaming.
Vietnam's NCCS	Two overarching tasks related to climate change adaptation: "perfecting institutions, promoting potentials and resources to effectively respond to climate change" and "supporting active adaptation to climate change" (Decision No. 896/QD-TTg 2022 Approving the National Strategy on Climate Change to 2050, 2022). The former task requires the State to engage in community-based and participatory strategies. This includes "communicating, awareness raising and community participation, in sustainable forest and forestry development," and "preserving and promoting traditional culture and local knowledge in responding to climate change" (Decision No. 896/QD-TTg 2022 Approving the National Strategy on Climate Change to 2050, 2022). The latter task requires the State to focus on "enhancing resilience and adaptive capacity of natural, economic and social systems, ensuring sustainable livelihoods" (Decision No. 896/QD-TTg 2022 Approving the National Strategy on Climate Change to 2050, 2022). Under this task, the State also makes a commitment to "ensuring social security and gender equality" (Decision No. 896/QD-TTg 2022 Approving the National Strategy on Climate Change to 2050, 2022). This involves developing educational and awareness-raising activities for "women, youth, people in high risk of natural disasters" as well as capacity-building activities such as job training, digital transformation, and increasing access to capital sources (Decision No. 896/QD-TTg 2022 Approving the National Strategy on Climate Change to 2050, 2022). Through these activities, the State aims to "strengthen the role, participation and capacity of women and youth in climate change adaptation" by 2030 (Decision No. 896/QD-TTg 2022 Approving the National Strategy on Climate Change to 2050, 2022).	Lack of clear guidelines for gender mainstreaming for different government agencies and at different scales.

Vietnam NAP	Building on from NCCS, the NAP assigns MOLISA with implementing policies and initiatives to promote gender equitable participation in climate change adaptation. MOLISA is responsible for three key tasks. First, MOLISA must develop "specific policies to support vulnerable people, mainstreaming gender in the implementation of climate change adaptation activities" (The Prime Minister, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 2020). MOLISA must also implement a "communication project to promote green growth including 'Gender and climate change' or 'Gender equality with climate change'" (The Prime Minister, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 2020). Finally, MOLISA must create "soft skills training for female workers participating in new economic sectors in the direction of climate change adaptation" (The Prime Minister, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 2020).	Lack of clear guidelines on promoting gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making. *There are gaps between gender mainstreaming at the "principle" level and at the practical level (Rivoal & Thanh Nga, 2022) .*

With regard to the feedback mechanism from the local to national level, Vietnam's Law on Grassroots Democracy (Law No.10/2022/QH15 Implementation of the Democracy at the Grassroot, 2022) defines several mechanisms for residents to participate in and provide feedback on programs implemented by government agencies at all levels, including issues, actions and policies on climate adaptations. Channels of decision-making flowing from the local level can take the form of Assembly delegates, government agencies and/or SPOs receiving and addressing the citizen's comments, complaints and proposals (Hoang Hong Hue, 2019).

The grassroots-level People's Committees are the primary agencies responsible for communicating and consulting directly with residents to collect their feedback on the implementation of projects. By law, the People's Committees are required to meet with residents once a year. However, according to information shared by respondents in Lai Chau, the village meetings usually convene at least four times a year. These meetings can include "periodic meetings, rallies with voters, communication with citizens, and regular and other meetings of the residential community" (Law No.10/2022/QH15 Implementation of the Democracy at the Grassroot, 2022). Furthermore, the Committee is required to host additional meetings and invite residents for public comment for programs concerning sensitive subject matter, including "projects impacting the environment" (Law No.10/2022/QH15 Implementation of the Democracy at the Grassroot, 2022). If questions or feedback cannot be addressed during meetings at the grassroots level, local authorities are required to record and elevate these comments to higher-ranking authorities at either the district, provincial, or national level until the issue Is resolved. This feedback mechanism from the grassroots up to the national level is intended to ensure that program implementation is informed by residents from the bottom-up. Local policy actors and SPO representatives in Ho Mit shared that if they cannot address the issues raised in the meetings, they would pass on these matters to the higher levels for guidance before responding and addressing the matters at the local level. These findings are in line with the literature, which indicates that channels of participation in decision-making at local level can take the form of Assembly delegates, government agencies and/or SPOs receiving and addressing the citizen's comments, complaints and proposals (Hoang Hong Hue, 2019).

See Section 6.2.2.3 for information on women's participation in relation to this mechanism (i.e., in village meetings at the local level). Box 2 below provides a summary of key takeaways for gender equality and climate adaptation in Vietnam's policy frameworks.

Box 2: Key takeaways – gender equality and climate adaptation in Vietnam's policy frameworks

The commitments Vietnam made under the Paris Agreement serve as a foundation for the State's policies and programs on climate change adaptation.

Drafting of Vietnam's climate change adaptation policies follows a top-down approach: policies are drafted at the national and sub-national level and implemented by agencies at the local level.

At the National level, Vietnam's framework key strategies for climate change adaptation are outlined in the National Climate Change Strategy and the National Adaptation Plan.

At the sub-national level, Vietnam's climate change policies are translated into the Provincial Action Plans, with some consultations held with local agencies.

At the local level, People's Committees ensure that tasks assigned to them under the NAPs and PAPs are fully implemented.

Under the Law on Grassroots Democracy, policymakers to regularly engage with residents to collect feedback on implementation of programs, including those on climate change adaptation. However, there is little documentation available on how these policies are implemented at the sub-national and local levels.

Vietnam has several mechanisms for promoting gender equity in political processes, including through quotas for women's participation in both decision-making and implementation bodies within the state.

However, current compositions show that the nation is still struggling to meet its targets. Furthermore, although quota data are useful proxies for women's representation, they fail to indicate whether women are given meaningful opportunities to participate and provide substantive input in decision-making.

6.2 Women's participation in climate adaptation decision-making processes

6.2.1 Perceptions regarding benefits of gender equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making.

The section reports on perceptions regarding the benefits of gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision. It is based on primary data collected through SIIs and FGDs in Vietnam. Respondents at all scales (national, sub-national and local) were asked to reflect on any/all gender-equitable climate adaptation decision-making processes they had been part of or had heard of and, based on those, share their observations regarding benefits of gender-equitable participation in such processes.

Before turning to benefits, we note a surprise finding of the study: no respondent at any scale, of any gender, was able to recall or recount an experience of gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making in terms of equitable contributions and influence made by women. In other words, the study surfaced a deficit of gender-equitable experiences in this sphere. As shared by a woman SPO representative in Tan Uyen district: "*it's hard to tell because it has never happened*".

Given this deficit of experiences, respondents instead reflected on the potential benefits of gender-equitable participation. Looking across responses, the possible benefits emerged in terms of the following four categories, which span from individual to wider socio-environmental outcomes:

· **Individual benefits for the women who participate more in decision-making**: The most reported beneficial outcome, by both women and men respondents, was better understanding of current issues and greater social exposure, and overall improvement of women's confidence and agency. This came up most frequently at the sub-national level.

· **Benefits for women more broadly**: Gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making would allow women as a group to take part in decisions that affect them directly, and their inputs would lead to more inclusive policies. This was underscored by one respondent (from an SPO at the local and provincial levels) as a particularly important outcome for women from ethnic minorities, as increasing their participation would improve their status and "make the lives of the Hmong people less difficult".

· **Benefits for the community and society as a whole**: Respondents, including men local residents as well as policymakers at national and sub-national levels, shared that women could contribute more ideas, and women's participation in leadership positions would add more perspectives to the discussions. Furthermore, positive outcomes for the community were reported to include "greater unity", "better solidarity"or that the "community will be better". District-level policymakers also suggested that women participating more in decision-making could be of benefit in terms of women becoming role models, motivating other women to follow their lead.

· **Benefits for climate actions, decisions and outcomes:** District-level policymakers and socio-political organizations (SPOs) in Ho Mit observed that more women participating would mean more people mobilized for environmental protection and disaster risk reduction. They also added that, for example, women are usually in charge of animal husbandry, so they should be the ones making decisions related to this topic. In parallel, a man working with a national-level NGO suggested that increasing women's participation could help shift the current narratives that victimize women and marginalized groups towards a better recognition for their contributions to climate adaptation, eventually reframing them as agents of "change". A woman policymaker at the national level further added that having more women contributing to climate adaptation decisions that affect them as a gender group would potentially reduce women's climate vulnerability.

In contrast to the above indications of benefits (positive outcomes), a small but important insight related to perceptions of limited benefit of gender-equitable participation. This is presented in Box 3.

Box 3. Perception of no benefits of gender-equitable participation

When asked about benefits of gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making, a small minority of men, mainly at the local level, expressed reservations regarding the benefit of more participation of women. Some articulated this in terms of women not be able to offering "constructive ideas". They linked this to women's limited level of education and literacy. One local policymaker remarked that "I don't think we would really benefit from more participation". A policy actor at the national level, while articulating full support for the need to promote gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making, suggested that the goal of gender-responsive policies may be more pressing than gender-equitable participation, given the current context. This appeared to reflect some resignation to the current state of inequity and the slower pace of shifting norms and values, compared to putting policy in place. In other words, the invisible barriers, related to social norms, may take longer to change. Together these signal persistent informal and underlying barriers—as well as participation not yet being much recognized as a right and hence an end in itself.

6.2.2 Status of women's participation in key public sector institutions

6.2.2.1 National level

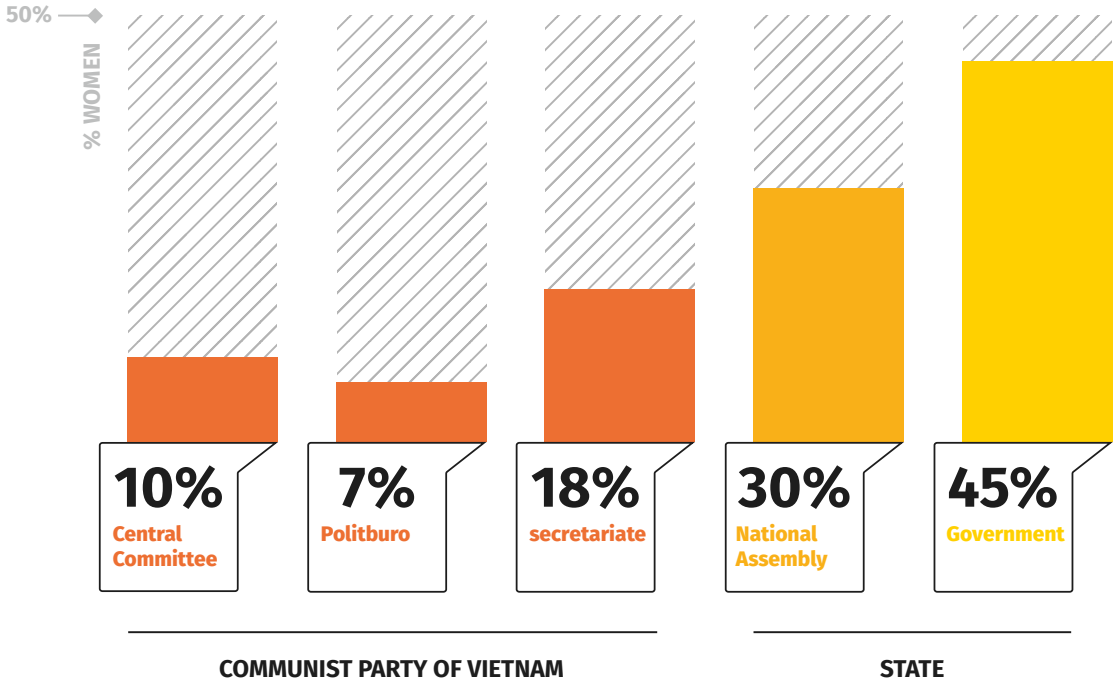
Vietnam's political system is composed of two main entities: the Community Party of Vietnam (CPV) and the State System. The CPV's role is "to lead the country in all fields" through "directing state and socio-political organizations" (Vietnam, 2023), while the elected and appointed officials within the State System are responsible for enacting laws and resolutions which reflect the needs of the greater public. Both the CPV and State have an organizational structure from the national down to the local level.

This section provides insights into women's engagement in Vietnam's political system by participating in both the CPV and the State System from the national to the local level. Figure 6 provides an overview of the percentage of women who serve on key decision-making and implementation bodies under both the Communist Party and the State.

Homegarden harvesting, Ecuador, 2024

© Ana Maria Buitron / CARE

Figure 6: Women's participation in Vietnam national politics



Source: Authors' figure

According to UN Women's 2021 Country Gender Equality Profile for Vietnam, as of June 2021, women held 45% of key leadership positions across ministries, ministerial-level agencies, and other government agencies (UN Women, 2021). Furthermore, the UNDP found that although women represent "40% of ministerial staff on average, they only hold about 21% of key leadership positions, often concentrated at the deputy or vice positions" as of October 2022 (Khalidi, 2022).

The 2021 election cycle resulted in women taking 30% of the National Assembly seats, falling just 5% short of the national goal. Various estimates were reported as to the number of women occupying positions in the government at all levels; however, these estimates all fall well below the nation's 75% goal.

Currently, Nguyen Thi Phuong Hoa serves as one of MONRE's five deputy ministers, making her the only woman on MONRE's central leadership team (Chief of Office of MONRE, 2023). Meanwhile, there are no woman serving on MARD's central leadership team (MARD, 2023).

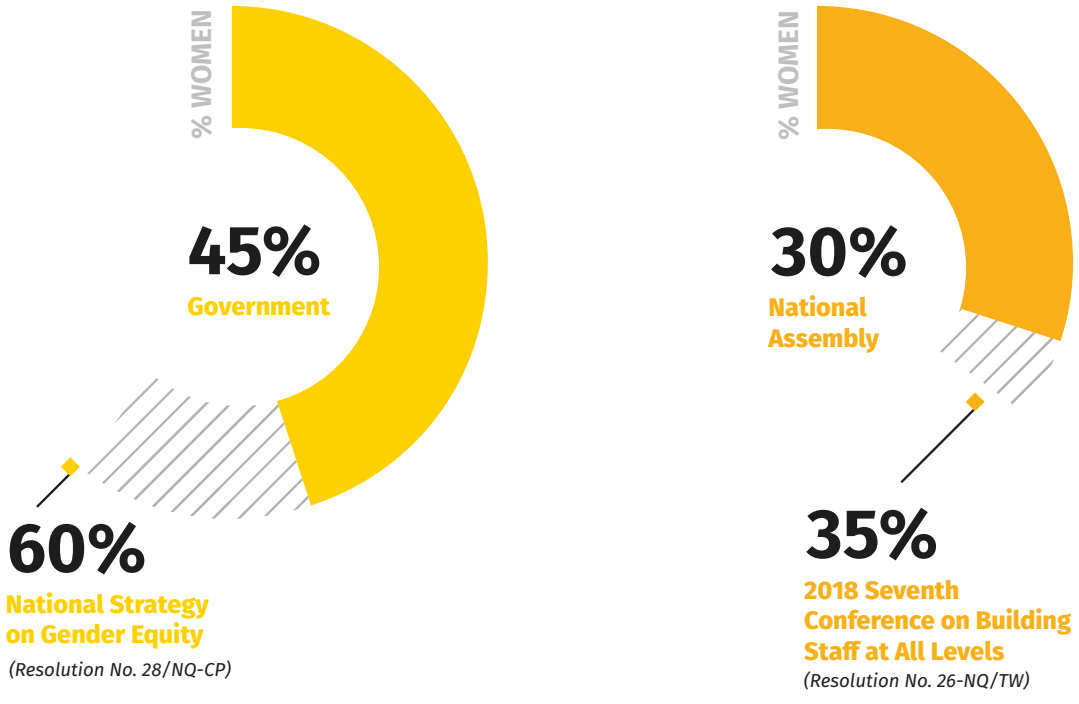
In addition to MONRE and MARD, the National Steering Committee for Implementation of Vietnam's Commitments at COP 26, formed by Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh in 2021, also plays a prominent role in shaping climate change policy at the national level in Vietnam, including overseeing the drafting of the National Climate Change Strategy. Currently, Nguyen Thi Hong is the Governor of the State Bank of Vietnam and is the only woman appointed out of 19 representatives appointed to serve on this committee (Decision No. 2157/QD-TTg 2021 Establishing the National Steering Committee for the Implementation of the Climate Change Convention, 2021, art. 1). Notably, the Committee does not include representatives of the Vietnamese Women's Union or the Ministry of Invalids, Labor, and Social Affairs. Table 4 summarizes key duties and responsibilities of key government agencies related to climate adaptation policy and the number of women in leadership roles within these.

Table 4: Overview of duties and responsibilities of key ministries and governance mechanisms, and of the women in leadership positions within these.

	Duties and Responsibilities	Women in Key Leadership Positions
Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment	• Government agency responsible for state management of issues relating to "land and water resources, mineral and geological resources, climate change," and more (Decree No. 68/2022/ND-CP Regulations Functions, Tasks, Powers and Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Resources and Environment, 2022, art. 1) • Drafts and collects inputs from relevant stakeholders for drafting of the National Climate Change Strategy and National Adaptation Plan • Implements tasks from the National Adaptation Plan • Serves as standing body for the Steering Committee for Implementation of Vietnam's Commitments at COP26	**Total Members: 6** **# Women: 1** **% Women: 16.7%**
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	• Government agency responsible for state management of issues relating to crop cultivation and plant protection, animal husbandry and veterinary medicine, fisheries, salt industry, forestry and more • Implements tasks from the National Adaptation Plan related to agriculture and disaster prevention	**Total Members: 5** **# Women: 0** **% Women: 0%**
National Steering Committee for Implementation of Vietnam's Commitments at COP 26	• Directs and coordinates with various sectors to accomplish tasks related to Vietnam's commitments at COP 26 • Oversees and guides drafting of the National Climate Change Strategy	**Total Members: 19** **# Women: 1** **% Women: 5.26%**

Figure 7 summarizes the current compositions of women serving in leadership positions across the National Assembly and the Government compared with the target quotas on women's participation in politics set by national policies. There are 15% and 5% gaps between the target quotas and current compositions of women in leadership position in government and in national assembly, respectively.

Figure 7: Current status of women's representation in Vietnam's Government and National assembly against target quotas.



Source: Authors' figure.

6.2.2.2 Subnational & local—People's Committee, People's Council

Whereas the National Assembly holds primary authority to pass resolutions and laws at the National level, the People's Councils serve as the main decision-making bodies at the sub-national and local level. Accordingly, People's Committees are the main agencies responsible for implementing laws at the sub-national and local level.

People's Councils act as supervisorial bodies, ensuring that laws and resolutions are properly implemented by People's Committees at the sub-national level. After the latest election cycle, women make up 29% of Deputies of the People's Councils at the provincial, district and commune level (Viet Nam News, 2023).

People's Committees are responsible for designing and proposing plans for the implementation of laws under the supervision of People's Councils of the same level. Furthermore, members of the People's Committee are selected and appointed by the People's Council of the same level.

Across Vietnam, there are 24 women serving as either Chair or Deputy Chair of the Provincial People's Committees, representing 8.5% of 284 available seats (Viet Nam News, 2023). Currently there are no women appointed as Chair or Deputy Chair in Lai Chau Province, Tan Uyen District, or Ho Mit Commune People's Committees (People's Committee of Lai Chau Province, 2023b; People's Committee of Tan Uyen District, 2019, 2020). However, in Trung Dong Commune, Do Thi Thuy Ninh serves as one of two Deputy Chairs on the Commune People's Committee (People's Committee of Tan Uyen District, 2019).

6.2.2.3 Women's participation in the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV)

Vietnam is a single-party state in which the Community Party of Vietnam (CPV) serves as the "leading force of State and Society" (Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 2013, sec. I). As such, all State agencies and socio-political organizations (SPOs) must "strictly observe the Party's resolutions and directions" (Vietnam, 2023). The CPV not only supervises the drafting and implementation of a broad range of "political programs, strategies, and guidelines" but also exercises considerable authority over the elections and appointment process for all State officials (Vietnam, 2023).

During the most recent election cycle, the 13th National Congress elected fewer women to decision-making positions than in the preceding term. The Central Committee currently includes 18 women representing 10% of the Committee (Nhan Dan, 2021). The Politburo only includes one woman, while two women have been appointed to the Party Secretariate (Communist Party of Vietnam Electronic Newspaper, 2023; Vietnam, 2023). Truong Thi Mai is the first woman to have been appointed as Permanent Member, the highest position within the Party Secretariate (Hoang, 2023).

The Vietnamese Fatherland Front (VFF) is a conglomeration of all SPOs in Vietnam, including the VWU and Farmer's Association, aligned and guided by the CPV. Fatherland Front Committees at the sub-national and local level play an important role in community engagement. The Fatherland Front Committee leaders are responsible for "participating, supporting, and guiding the People through implementation of democracy at the grassroots levels" (Law No.10/2022/QH15 Implementation of the Democracy at the Grassroot, 2022, art. 87).

Leaders of the Fatherland Front Committee at each level are nominated and appointed internally by other members of the Fatherland Front. In Lai Chau Province, the Fatherland Front Committee is composed of one Chair and 3 Vice Chairs. Dao Thi Thiep serves as the Standing Vice Chair and is the only woman on Lai Chau's Fatherland Front Committee (People's Committee of Lai Chau Province, 2023a).

6.2.3 Women's participation in communities: local perspectives

This section presents findings and analysis from primary data collection in Ho Mit and Trung Dong communes in Tan Uyên District of Lai Châu province. This section starts with a brief introduction to decision-making forums at the local scale; in this context, community meetings are the main forums for climate adaptation decisions, as well as other local topics. Next, this section presents insights regarding gendered participation in community meetings. In doing so, it takes a deep dive into women's perceptions of what participation in climate adaptation decision-making means, to what degree women in their communities are participating, and the characteristics of women depending on their degree of participation.

6.2.3.1 Background to climate decision-making at the village level and current patterns of participation

Triangulating the literature with key informant interviews identified that in this study context, village meetings were the primary site of climate adaptation discussions and the foundation for decision-making. As described in section 6.1.3, village meetings are a legal requirement and are a key feedback mechanism for local inputs. They are required to take place at least once a year by law. According to key informants and respondents, these meetings are the main forum where local residents receive information about climate change and discuss adaptation solutions together (there are usually no separate local dedicated meetings or forums specifically on climate adaptation). The village meetings regarding climate adaptation are also the forum for community-level sharing of information, inputs, comments and concerns and complaints regarding climate adaptation, which further makes them the most accessible and important space for participation (and thus for the assessment of participation).

Given that the vast majority of residents in the sites are farmers, the main climate adaptation-related topics discussed in village meetings are around crops and natural resources management. Disaster management was also identified as a recurring topic, including in relation to droughts, landslides, floods, rock rains and forest fires.

Village meetings are organized on a regular basis, reported as occurring approximately 4 times in a year. In terms of frequency of participation, most of the respondents in both communes seem to have at least one member of the household attend meetings regularly. This high attendance rate is explained at least in part by the use of fines and related financial incentives for participation in some villages. The fines are not official regulations and depend on the villages : the amount of fines also varies, reportedly between 40,000 VND and 100,000 VND, approx. 1.6 – 4 USD). In some villages in Ho Mit and Trung Dong, forest protection fees can also be withheld when households fail to attend village meetings (which are funds normally used to incentivize residents to take care of forest resources and prevent forest fires). Men in a FGD in Trung Dong seemed to agree with this approach as "without the fines, the meetings would not be fully attended". However, these fines also represent a financial burden for families already living in poverty, and were reported to create a sense of shame and social pressure for those who have less time to spare, as this widowed mother of four shared:

> *"If the leader and the Women's Union see that I participate less, they will tell me something. [...] The issue is if there is a low rate of participation, I will not have the money. I am kind of ashamed when I cannot participate in activities because they will come to talk to me".*

The gender ratios of attendance in village meetings at the local level are reported by both women and men local respondents to be fairly well-balanced, and in some occasions with more women than men attending**.** There are currently no official statistics available.

There are several reasons behind this gender-balanced ratio in attendance. First, women and men respondents shared that men have migrated to work outside the villages; as a result, women (wives) who stay behind at home would attend the community meetings. A woman in a FGD in Trung Dong shared that "*usually when we see a woman in the meeting it's because the husband is not home*". Second, if men are busy or do not wish to attend, then "*wives would go in place of the husband*", as shared by a woman in Ho Mit. Third, some men residents indicated that in their households, they take turns between husband and wife, sometimes depending on the topics and how it relates to their division of tasks in the household. Respondents from all genders added that the ones attending the meetings are then expected to share the content of the discussion with other household members and make decisions together (although in practice this may not necessarily happen in every household—see section 6.4 on barriers).

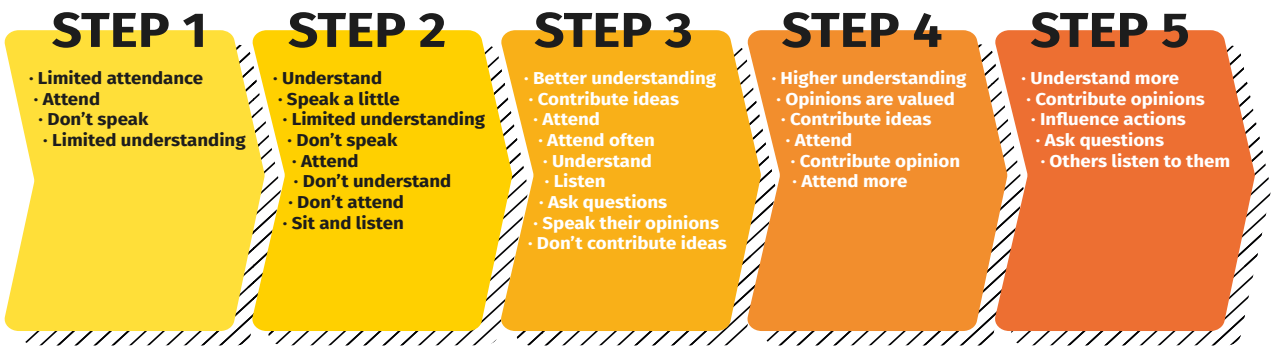
6.2.3.2 What women's participation means to women villagers

To better understand what "participation" means to villagers, the research team used an adapted version of the "ladder of power and freedom" tool (Petesch & Bullock, 2018). This qualitative data collection tool is used to provide narrative data on the perceptions of local men and women on nature and the characteristics of participation in climate adaptation decision-making at different degrees. The tool was used in gender-segregated FGDs (men and women separately) and sampled purposefully to form 'more empowered' and 'less empowered' groups of men and women.

The ladder tool was explained to respondents in each FGD in terms of the steps spanning from: at the bottom of the ladder are people who have little influence in decision-making in village meetings; at the top of the ladder are those who have great influence. Respondents were then asked to describe the nature of each 'step' (i.e., rung) on the ladder. Figure 8 summarizes the findings of the exercise conducted with the four women-only FGDs (one FGD with 'more empowered' women and one with 'less empowered' women, in each commune, 32 women total). Findings are presented as word clouds that 'step' on the ladder of participation. The figure and analysis in this section aim to provide a brief overview of what women's participation means to women respondents.

Data collection workshop in May Trung Dung Province, Vietnam, 2024

Figure 8. Results of the "ladder of power and freedom" exercise with women-only focus groups Defining the steps (rungs) on the ladder of women's participation.



Notes: In this figure, the words or proxies to the same idea (e.g., "doesn't go to the meetings often" and "limited attendance") that were mentioned the most frequently appear in proportionally bigger fonts. For instance, when asked to define step 2 of the ladder, the most common ideas were that these women have "limited understanding" and "don't speak". Words that appear smaller have been mentioned by lesser respondents, for instance "sit and listen" at step 2.

Source: data from all four women-only FGDs, this study.

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Participatory ranking activity in Ho Mit Province, Vietnam, 2024

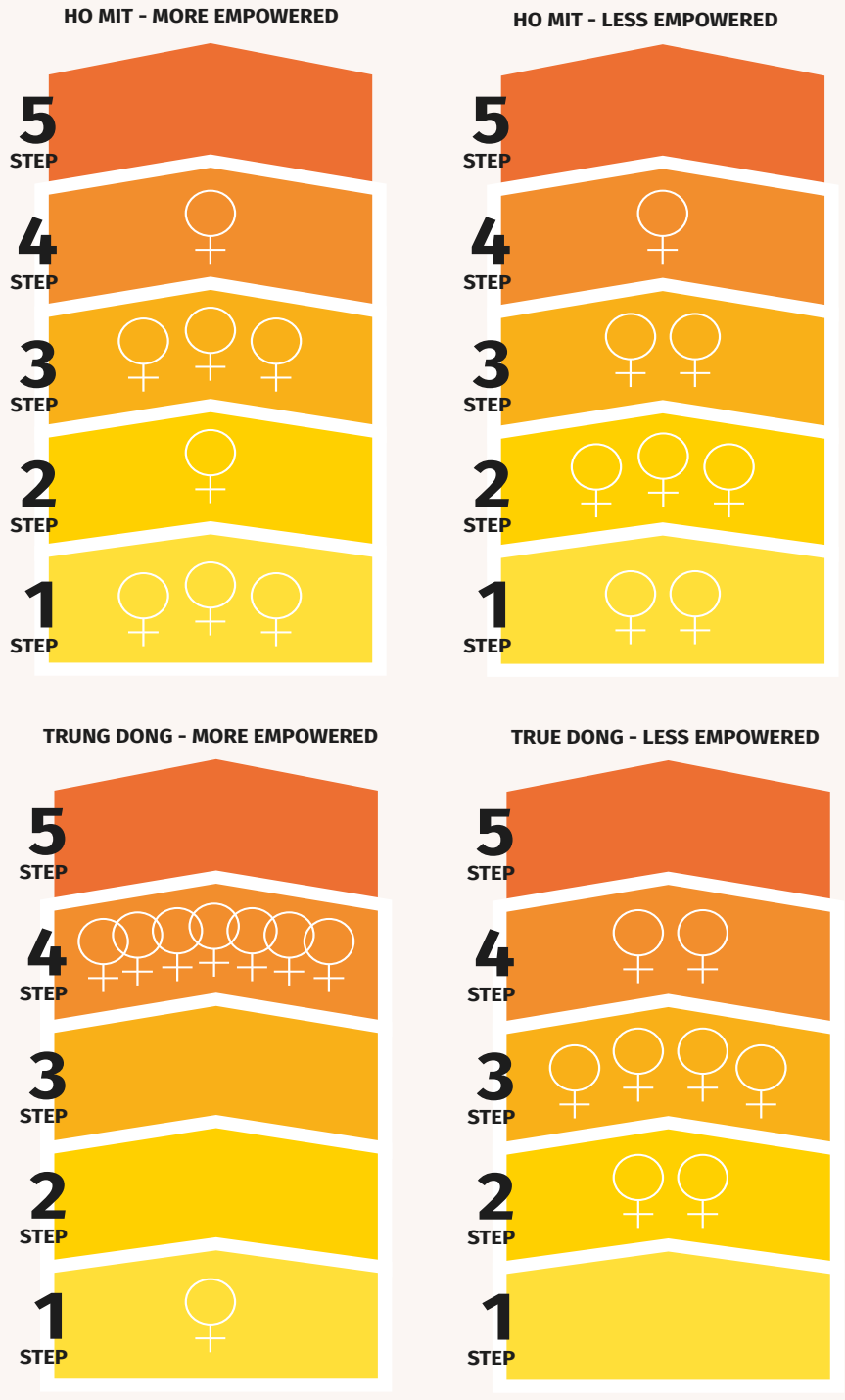
5.1.2.3 To what degree are women participating?

Following the definition of each step of the ladder (figure 8), women in the FGDs were then asked to add stickers on the step of the ladder where they consider that *the majority of women in their community* are positioned. Figure 9 shows the different perceptions of women FGD participants, disaggregated by commune and with each commune having one FGD representing 'more empowered[10]' and one representing 'less empowered[11]' members. As each FGD defined the specifics of the step on the ladder for itself (shown in the aggregate in figure 8), positioning is relative to their interpretation of the ladder.

10 More empowered groups here are considered to be more influential in decision-making e.g., people who are relatively more educated and better off financially, local village leaders and SPO representatives.

11 Less empowered groups here are considered to be less influential in decision-making, e.g., people who are relatively less educated and poorer, not involved in leadership position, and farmers.

Figure 9: Women-only FGD participants' perceptions of where the majority of women in their community stand on the ladder of participation.



Note: Perception of where the majority of women in the community are positioned on the ladder, as identified by women FGD participants in Ho Mit and Trung Dong ('more empowered' group on the left and 'less empowered' group on the right).

Source: data from all four women-only FGDs, this study.

From Figure 9, three main observations can be made. First, a common pattern across the four women-only FGDs is that no participant perceived the majority of women in their community to be on the highest step of the ladder (i.e., having influence).

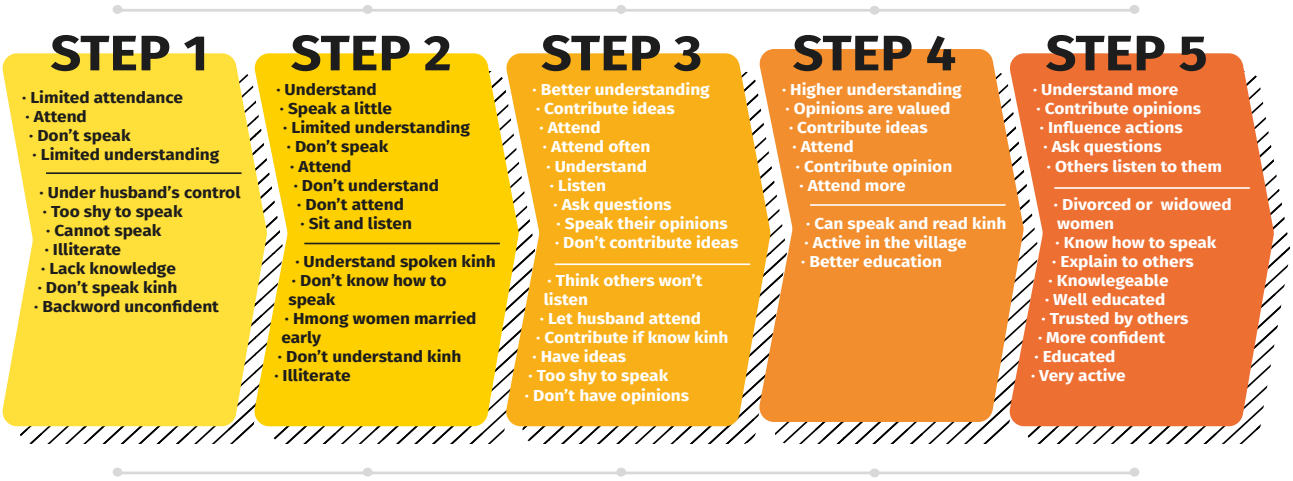
Second, we observe that three of the FGDs (both groups from Ho Mit and the 'less empowered' group from Trung Dong) elucidate a significant and overlapping range of perceptions. Specifically, participants diverge and place the majority of women to be at a range spanning three or four different steps. This range and pattern of distribution is relatively similar for the two 'less empowered' groups (convergence around a midpoint and some higher and lower); the 'more empowered' FGD's range however is somewhat distinct from these and is more similar to the other 'more empowered' FGD (a more distinct high and low pattern). Unpacking this range further across these three groups (and noting the limitations, as the specific definitions of each step varied slightly by group) from 24 participants: five participants (just over 20%) indicated that the majority of women in their community are at Step 1; six participants (25%) indicated Step 2; and nine participants (just over 36%) indicated that the majority of women in their communities are on Step 3 (the mid-point of the ladder), while four participants identified women as being on Step 4 (just over 17%). Despite the varying definition of each step, the findings here indicate that the majority of women in the community are perceived to have attended the meetings at some point, but they either "do not understand" or "do not speak/contribute" and are not valued nor have influence.

Third, the pattern from the Trung Dong's 'more empowered' group diverges from the other three FGDs in that it presents a majority convergence and a minority view. Specifically, seven out of eight participants in this group indicated a perceived majority of women in their community to be on Step 4 of the ladder. Factors that likely explain this include that Trung Dong is more economically empowered compared to Ho Mit and that this 'more empowered' FGD group involved many women from the Tai ethnic group. The Tai ethnic group, one of the main ethnic groups residing in Trung Dong (which also includes Kinh and Hmong groups), is recognized locally as having less gender-biased practices related to access to education and marriage practices, compared to the Hmong community. These findings signal a positive interrelationship between access to education, less gender-biased norms and more gender-equitable participation in community climate adaptation decision-making. However, one woman in this FGD chose Step 1 to describe the majority of women in her community. Unpacking this further, she herself was from the Hmong community, and she indicated that "*this is where Hmong women are*". In fact, according to conversations within all four FGDs, Hmong women tend to be less involved in village meetings and "less confident" than women from other ethnic groups (see section 6.3.3). While these insights are limited to the two case study communes and with a relatively small sample, it appears that in this specific context, Hmong women are less involved in climate adaptation decision-making processes than women from other ethnic groups. This line of inquiry is further explored in the following subsection.

6.2.3.4 Unpacking characteristics of women associated with different degrees of participation

The FGDs generated further insights that nuance the above observations regarding the location of the majority of local women on the ladder. Specifically, participants described characteristics of (different) women on different steps, thus elucidating which women (from which backgrounds) tend to be more engaged (and influential) and which tend to be more marginalized. These are presented in figure 10.

Figure 10: Characteristics of women associated with different degrees of participation.



Note: This figure adds a layer to Figure 8. The women FGD participants' perceptions of the characteristics of women at different degrees of participation offer some nuance to the definition of the steps itself.

Source: data from all four women-only FGDs, this study.

Box 4: Insights on the different degrees of participation

The findings of this exercise are interesting to compare with the five degrees of participation framework (Johnson et al., 2021). The framework distinguishes five degrees of participation, starting from attendance (1), understanding (2), sharing (3), being valued (4) and decision making (5). Yet, the exercise conducted with women in FGDs suggest that the borders between steps 1 to 3 are less clear, with for example attendance still being debated as a characteristic in step 2, and step 3 suggesting the capacities to input but barriers that prevent women from actually doing so before step 4. The characteristics listed for women in step 1 are also predominantly expressing a lack of capabilities, skills and resources, and although to a lesser extent, such narratives are also used to describe women on step 2 and step 3. However, an important shift in narratives can be noted starting at step 4, with only positive attribute and acquired skills used to describe the characteristics of women at this step. This is also where the exercise echoes the five-degree framework, as respondents noted that the ideas and opinions expressed by women at this step are valued. Similarly at step 5, the characteristics describing women on this step are positive and note that their inputs "influence action" which here again echoes the higher level of participation – decision-making, on the five-degree framework.

In terms of the characteristics of women on Step 1, there appear to be no contradictions among the responses. Characteristics converge around those related to a lack of education such as illiteracy and lack of knowledge, which explains "limited understanding". Participants further identified educational and language gaps that are specific to ethnic minorities who "don't speak Kinh". Another key characteristic identified was that of being so-called "backwards". This term was further explained by participants as referring to women who "cannot catch up with news and activities in the village" and also those who strictly conformed with traditional constraining gender and social norms. Another important characteristic identified of women in Step 1 are

women who are "under their husbands' control" and thus "cannot raise their voice". An agency-related characteristic was also identified for Step 1: participants suggested women are at this step of nonengagement perhaps because they are "unconfident".

Similar to Step 1, illiteracy and limited Kinh language skills were mentioned as characteristics of women in Step 2, as they "cannot understand Kinh language" and "don't understand the content of the meeting". According to one woman, this step is also where "Hmong women who were married early" are positioned (see box in section 6.3.5).

Step 3 marked a shift towards more active participation, though at differing degrees. For example, while Step 3 is characterized as women can "*contribute ideas*" or "*speak opinions*", in terms of characteristics of women who are at this step, some suggest that women at this level "*have opinions*", but do not necessarily share as they "*think others won't listen*" to them or they would only "*contribute if they know Kinh*". Similarly, some women at this step were described as "*too shy to speak*". Others expanded on this, sharing that as a result, some participants perceived that women at this step "*don't have opinions*". In sum, in Step 3 women have more understanding and, in some cases, opinions regarding climate adaptation, but they lack the agency to ask questions and share their opinions in the given social and gender context and decision-making processes.

The characteristics of women at Step 4 are more consistent with the definition of this step in the Five Degree of Participation Framework (Johnson et al., 2021b) and show a clearer consensus between FGD respondents. The respondents share consensus that women in Step 4 have "*better education*", they "*can speak and read Kinh*" and are more involved on village activities aside from village meetings.

The description of Step 5 builds on the trend of Step 4, with only positive characteristics and no mentions of gaps and limitations. According to respondents, women at Step 5 are "*well educated*" and "*knowledgeable*", they "*understand more*", "*know how to speak*" and are "*more confident*". These characteristics and skills are associated with what makes them "*trusted by others*" and their capacity to "*influence action*". Some participants shared that in households where divorced and widowed women are the main breadwinners and decision-makers of the household, they are the default participants from their household in village meetings. This underscores the role of power relations as well as norms in married households. This particular group of women has not been mentioned in previous steps. Box 4 above elaborates further on this exercise in relation to the Five Degrees of Participation Framework.

Box 5 below summarizes the key findings on the current status of women's participation in climate adaptation decision-making in Vietnam.

This overview of how women in both communes perceive different steps of participation as well as the characteristics of women situated on each of these steps enables identification of some of the critical barriers, enablers and strategies to gender-equitable participation in decision-making. These are further elaborated in the next sections.

Box 5: Key takeaways: current status of women's participation in decision-making in Vietnam

A surprise finding is that despite Vietnam's stronger status in terms of gender equality (relative to the other 'She Grows the Future' countries) and its investments in quotas, no interview respondent or FGD participant of any gender, at any level, had experienced gender-equitable participation to date. Respondents' perception of potential benefits of gender-equitable participation can be classified into four groups as follows: i) benefit to women themselves in terms of enhanced knowledge and skills, confidence and social exposure; ii) benefit to women's families and immediate communities in terms of improved information and knowledge on climate adaptation practices; iii) benefits to their community in terms of enhancing solidarity and unity; and iv) benefits to society at large in terms of more inclusive climate adaptation policies, actions and outcomes. A minority of men respondents expressed reservations about there being any significant benefit from (value of) more gender-equitable participation. At the national level, while ministries are approaching gender balance in terms of key positions, there are fewer women in leadership roles and substantial gaps in the main climate-related bodies. While at the national level institutions are slowly progressing towards reaching their target quotas for women's representation, women are still highly underrepresented at the sub-national levels (provincial, district and local). This is particularly true for leadership positions, with for instance only 8.5% of women in leadership roles in the Provincial Peoples' Committee.

At the local level, village meetings serve as primary forums for climate change information dissemination and climate adaptation decision-making, often centered around farming, crop schedules, livestock care, water management, disaster response, forest protection, and broader development measures. In terms of gender equity in participation in village meetings, attendance was perceived by respondents in both communes to be relatively gender balanced, occasionally with more women than men attending the meetings. This is mainly attributed to the increasing out-migration of men to work outside the village, and that women were reported to function as ''stand in" when their husbands were away, busy or did not want to attend. In terms of gender equity in inputs and influence in village meetings, all respondents indicated that men dominate discussions in these meetings, regardless of meeting attendance gender ratios. Through the 'ladder of power and freedom' exercise, women from communes outlined their own framing of the different degrees of participation. The bottom 3 steps of the ladder reflect the local perception of a progression from non- or low attendance, through passive attendance with limited understanding and speaking to more understanding and speaking (albeit with sometimes slightly divergent or contrasting views within groups about what is on what step). Participants clearly identified and agreed upon definitions of the two highest steps of climate adaptation decision-making, namely being heard/valued for one's inputs and influencing decisions and/or actions implemented in the community.

Perceptions of where the "majority of women in the community" stand in terms of degree of participation vary between the women participating in the exercise. Three main inter-related points can be derived from the findings: i) the majority of women are not currently at the highest step of the decision-making ladder; ii) the majority of women in the community are perceived to have attended the meetings at some point, but they either "do not understand" or "do not speak/contribute" and are not valued nor have influence; and iii) even in the commune that is more economically empowered, there are notable differences in women's participation along intersectional lines, in this case, with woman of the Hmong ethnic group being at the lowest step of the ladder, while women from other ethnic groups were perceived as being at Step 4 (being valued). When asked to identify the characteristics of women in each step of the ladder, it appeared from women participants' responses that education, literacy and Kinh language skills, greater social interactions, and more balanced and supportive relationships with women's husbands (e.g. co-decision making two-way communications, and supports for each other's pursuits) are enablers to greater gender-equitable participation in decision-making.

6.3 Barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate-related decision-making

This section outlines the different types of barriers to participation as reported by men and women FGD participants and interview respondents (at all levels in Vietnam) during the study. Barriers have been grouped by themes and are presented from the most local to the most structural and analyzed in relation to the 'degree of participation' (i.e., step on the ladder of participation), when possible.

6.3.1 Remoteness and poor infrastructures

Villagers are informed of the village meetings though speakers or bells, and meetings are held in communal spaces, but for some residents, distance, poor roads and lack of transportation can be a barrier to attending the meetings. Indeed, several respondents mentioned that houses that are too remote often do not have access to information as they cannot hear the speakers and bells. Some residents mentioned a telephone tree starting from the village leader down to residents to inform them about the meetings. However, as shared by a woman living in particularly remote area, being at the end of the telephone tree means that information about the exact time and place or topics of the meetings are often incomplete.

In addition, those living far from the meeting venue also experience the lack of transportation as a challenge. In particular, men and women respondents reported that women were less likely to know how to ride a motorbike, while men can drive to the meetings. Remoteness and lack of transportation particularly becomes an issue to attend commune meetings which are farther than village meetings.

6.3.2 Intimidating meeting environment

According to some respondents, the meeting structures and environments are not always conducive to participation. In some specific cases, respondents mentioned that their village had been merged with others, which means a lot more people are attending meetings and the issues discussed are not necessarily relevant to them, and thus some meetings were perceived as a "*waste of time*". In other locations, several men and women mentioned that the size of the meeting makes it intimidating to speak out.

Women in particular, and specifically in the Trung Dong commune, reported that these settings dissuade them from asking their questions, especially when men are leading the meeting. They also reported that as a result, women prefer to ask other women for clarification rather than speaking out:

> *"It's not so convenient to ask a man because the women feel more comfortable to ask another woman. It's easier for women to discuss between each other"*

This was reported by respondents to contribute to chatter (background noise), which makes it even harder for all participants to understand:

> *"Sometimes [women] chat too much. We just attend the meeting to be present, we don't listen to the information. Most people cannot listen, just a few do"*

The findings suggest that current meeting leadership, environments and processes may present barriers to participation in that they are not conducive for all people, especially women, to fully understand the issues being discussed.

6.3.3 Lack of confidence and "shyness"

As shared by many women respondents, lack of confidence or "*shyness*" was identified as one of the main barriers to participation, especially for women and ethnic minorities. While some men respondents—mostly Hmong—identified themselves in the FGDs as shy in general, "*shyness*" as a specific barrier to all the degrees of participation except attendance was identified only for women. Both women and men respondents indicated this as a constraint for women. Unpacking this further, being shy does not appear to be a barrier to attendance, as respondents noted that shy participants "*just listen*". However, it was identified as a barrier to understanding, as those considering themselves shy suggested that they do not dare to ask questions or clarifications. According to both men and women, women who are shy may have opinions on the matters discussed and might benefit from speaking up, but their shyness holds them back from inputting. On the other hand, women note that "*men talk a lot because they are not shy*".

For most residents, *"being shy"* is considered a personality trait, as suggested by this woman:

> *"I'm shy. I don't know why I'm shy, when I'm about to say something, I just feel so shy. [...] [Some people] are just more open to share and talk more"*

Other studies with rural Vietnamese women found similar statements and found that women tend to report being *"shy"* when they have to interact with men in positions of power, as they internalized gender and social norms and do not feel comfortable speaking to men other than those in their family (McKinn et al., 2017). Considering that village leaders in the study sites and most people speaking in village meetings are reportedly men, it is possible that the same phenomenon makes women feel *"shy"* and prevents them from asking questions and inputting in meetings.

Respondents of all ethnic groups generally reported that women from ethnic minority groups lack confidence or are *"naturally"* shy:

> *"Ethnic minorities lack confidence [...] especially the Hmong, Kho Mu and La Hu"*

> *"The main challenge is that ethnic minority groups are not confident, which makes it difficult for them to participate"*

> *"Hmong people, their characteristic is to be shy. It's not about poverty etc., if they want to participate more in these activities [village meetings] they need to be more open and confident"*

> *"Women from ethnic minority are unconfident and rarely go out [...] so they don't have much to contribute"*

The above statements were made by either policy makers or representatives of SPOs at the sub-national levels. The statements suggest that shyness has been interpreted as a natural characteristic, particularly more associated with Hmong women, attributed to "*the Hmong traditional customs*" , community's relative poverty and their "*habits that hold them back*". Such interpretations arguably may perpetuate stereotypes of ethnic minorities.

"Being shy" does not appear to be a barrier to attendance, as respondents noted that shy participants "*just listen.*" However, it was identified as a barrier to understanding, as those considering themselves shy suggested that they do not dare to ask questions or ask for clarifications. Other studies with the Hmong community in Vietnam suggest a correlation between the language barrier and the feeling of shyness. Indeed, in a study focusing on student's participation in Vietnamese classrooms, researchers observed that "Vietnamese language proficiency was considered to be a sizable obstacle for the Hmong in expressing their thoughts and ideas. Consequently, it made Hmong students shy and unconfident in their classroom interactions" (Luong & Nieke, 2013, p. 25).

From our study, *"being shy"* also appeared to be associated with low self-esteem, as some women doubt the value of their contributions and therefore hold back from sharing in meetings:

> *"I am not good enough to provide ideas. I am shy"*

This statement is another illustration of how what is described as shyness may be usefully interpreted in ways other than a personality trait. Sociologists who study shyness suggest that being shy is the result of complex social processes, and that individuals are shy relatively to someone and in particular contexts. This means that people who perceived themselves as relatively less skilled, less capable or less 'good' than others in situations where participation is expected might suddenly feel shy, while they might not feel shy in situations that are more comfortable or safer (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2019; Scott, 2004). Applied to our study, this can suggest that shyness as a barrier might in fact be a combination of overlapping barriers. Importantly, as presented above, these include barriers related to the individual (such as limited education, limited Kinh language skills and associated confidence), as well as those relating to structures (in particular,

underlying gender and social norms in a patriarchal society) and those related to the decision-making processes (such as the facilitation or the gender of the leader or, as outlined in 6.3.4, the language used).

Elaborating on the process aspect, responses also signal that non-supportive or non-enabling meeting environments and/or spaces (subsection 6.3.2 above) in which people feel judged likely drive experiences of feeling shy as a barrier. As respondents who described themselves as shy were encouraged to reflect on what they fear would happen if they spoke up, it appeared that the responses differed by gender. In general, women residents explain that they do not speak up because they "*don't have anything important to say*" and that they are worried that their ideas will not be received well. On the other hand, some men reported not speaking out even if they want to by fear of "*not being right*" or "*saying something wrong*". While several of these relate to the fear of being judged (DiAngelo & Sensoy, 2019), they also link to a lack of confidence which affects both men and women. Moreover, from a gender perspective, the emphasis in men's explanations may tie into gender and social norms, and in particular, masculinities. In many contexts, including Vietnam, the social expectation on men is to be 'right' (as they are decisionmakers and leaders) and not to appear 'weak' (in this case 'wrong').

In sum, the barrier of "shyness" is a complex one that is far more nuanced than personality or culture. Individual, structural and process factors—and the embodied power dynamics—significantly influence what is perceived as "shyness" in relation to participation in local climate adaptation decision-making. As such, re-framing "shyness" as "lack of agency[12]", and recognizing the multiple factors shaping this, may be more accurate as well as offering more possibilities for potential interventions.

6.3.4 Limited education, knowledge, language and related capacities

Education was often mentioned as an overall barrier to participation by all types of stakeholders and at all scales, although to various degrees. When asked specifically about barriers to participation, some respondents mentioned lack of education such as "*not educated*", "*low educated*" or "*low qualifications*", while others mentioned that people who do not participate "*didn't go to school*", "*don't know the language*" or are illiterate. Similarly, during the ladder exercises, many also identified lack of education, illiteracy, and language barriers as characteristics of people who participate the least in decision-making (Steps 1 and 2).

According to local leaders in Ho Mit, roughly 70% of residents have finished secondary school, while women in one of the FGDs in Ho Mit shared that only about half of local women went to school. Education gaps were mentioned both by men and women as affecting all genders. A woman in Ho Mit suggested that these wider knowledge and skills-related barriers are almost insurmountable for women and are holding them back from participating more in decision-making:

12 Agency defined here as capacity to make choices and act on them to fulfill one's intentions and/or potentials (UNFPA, 2023; World Bank, 2012).

> *"Women do not have enough knowledge, skills and experience to be a better version of themselves [...] Their knowledge and awareness is so low, so there is no hope for them to climb up the ladder"*

Some respondents also identified limited education as a barrier to understanding, speaking up, and being valued and influencing in the village meetings. Specifically, education, literacy and language proxies do not appear to be a barrier to attendance. However, they were identified as the main barrier to understanding the information in meetings, and there is a consensus that the language used in meetings impacts participants' understanding. In some villages where most of the population is Hmong, meetings have been reported to be conducted in Hmong, but the language spoken by officers in the meetings is Kinh and translation is sometimes missing or inadequate. Indeed, respondents whose mother tongue is not Kinh often noted that their basic understanding of the language is not sufficient to follow the discussions:

> *"I can understand Kinh, but I cannot understand when there is too much information. [...] I didn't learn Kinh so I cannot understand much."*

Following on from the above, several respondents mentioned that the Hmong community is particularly affected by lack of education and language barriers. Local leaders in Ho Mit noted that illiteracy rates are particularly high among Hmong people. In Trung Dong, residents observed that "*only a few Hmong men are literate in the whole village, less than 10 % of the village are literate [...] only the children are literate*", echoing previous research suggesting that educational challenges among ethnic minorities are systemic. Several studies have found important educational gaps among ethnic minority children as compared to students from the Kinh majority ethnic group. One of the main drivers of this inequity is the language barrier, as the language of instruction is Vietnamese (Kinh) (Lavoie, 2011; Lavoie & Benson, 011; Nguyen & Ha, 2021), which is not the mother tongue of many, including the Hmong community. Another study found that ethnic minority children tend to drop out of school earlier and have lower test results than Kinh students (Glewwe et al., 2015). These inequalities have been drawn back to lack of cultural sensitivity in school curriculum, lack of support provided to teachers for teaching ethnic minority children, and shortages of human and physical resources affecting schools in areas where ethnic minorities are predominant (Lavoie, 2011; Lavoie & Benson, 2011; C. D. Nguyen & Ha, 2021).

In addition, previous research noted that another challenge common among Hmong students is the necessity to discontinue schooling to help their parents in the field during harvest time, which relates to a broader issue of widespread poverty among ethnic minorities in rural Vietnam (Imai et al., 2011; Pham & Mukhopadhaya, 2022).

Limited education also affects the capability to share inputs and speak up in meetings (i.e., the third degree of participation) and is blended with related capacities, as respondents of both genders say themselves "*I don't know how to talk*" or "*I cannot express myself clearly*", or as this Hmong woman in Ho Mit says:

> *"I have that idea in my mind, but I don't know how to frame the question, so I don't ask"*

While limited education and related capacities seems to dissuade many to speak up, in relation to being valued, one man suggested that women who try to speak up despite their limited level of education might not be valued for their inputs. Interestingly, in this framing, women appear to be blamed for this (not the meeting culture or environment):

> *"Women who are 40 and above are often not heard because they are not educated, they don't know how to talk"*

One story from Ho Mit represents both an individual exception, and capacity and systems/rules-related barriers. An elderly and illiterate woman in Ho Mit was a VWU village leader for many years. In 2023, she had to step down due to a new regulation requiring the the VWU village to be literate so they could write reports. She shared that even after she had to step down, she continued to actively support the work of the VWU and the new VWU village leader. Even if she could no longer contribute to the climate adaptation decision-making process from a VWU village leader position, she still contributed actively as a citizen by continuing to speak up for others, raising concerns, and facilitating discussions on climate adaptation and more recently on natural resource management. Her inputs were reported to be highly valued and having influence. On the one hand, her story is encouraging in terms of defying gender and social norms and stereotypes. On the other hand, it confirms education and literacy as barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making processes, particularly in women accessing leadership positions. Moreover, it signals that governance-related rules (such as literacy requirements in this example) may inadvertently reduce women's leadership in climate adaptation and development more broader, unless there is explicit attention to gendered implications (see Box 6).

Box 6: Education as a barrier to accessing leadership positions

The educational challenges discussed referred in particular to the barriers to secondary and tertiary level education. One policymaker at the national level mentioned education as a barrier for women to access leadership positions in the climate change adaptation field:

"Looking at the whole system, it comes from education. There are less women in technical fields in university, in science universities. As a result, there are fewer women technical expert staff in organizations"

This observation is particularly important when considering climate-related fields which tend to favor technical approaches and solutions, as well as gendered educational patterns where women and girls are more likely to be oriented towards social studies while technical and "hard science" subjects are traditionally male dominated, therefore contributing to lesser women representation in climate-related fields (Resurrección & Elmhirst, 2020).

Overall, these results show that gaps in formal education, language and related knowledge and skills present significant barriers for participation in climate adaptation decision-making at all levels, particularly for women who are illiterate, from ethnic minorities, and at later life stages. Further findings from the validation process of this study highlight that the main drivers for the existing gaps in education, knowledge and language skills are child, early and forced marriage and unequal division of labor within the households (once married). We engage with these two key barriers in the following section.

6.3.5 Gender and social norms, attitudes, stereotypes, roles and practices

Norms, stereotypes and roles

Gender and social norms, gender attitudes, gendered stereotypes and roles emerged from inputs of all types and genders of respondents as shaping participation in decision-making at all scales and in relation to all degrees of participation. Gendered stereotypes are found to be common among residents in both communes, whereby men are considered as "*strong*" and women "*weaker than men*". Similarly, hierarchical gender attitudes (beliefs, values) are also evidenced in the inputs of men and women in both communes. In the Hmong community in particular, people expressed that a common social value (attitude or belief) is that "*men are better than women*", or "*more important*", or that "*men have higher power and then more rights*".

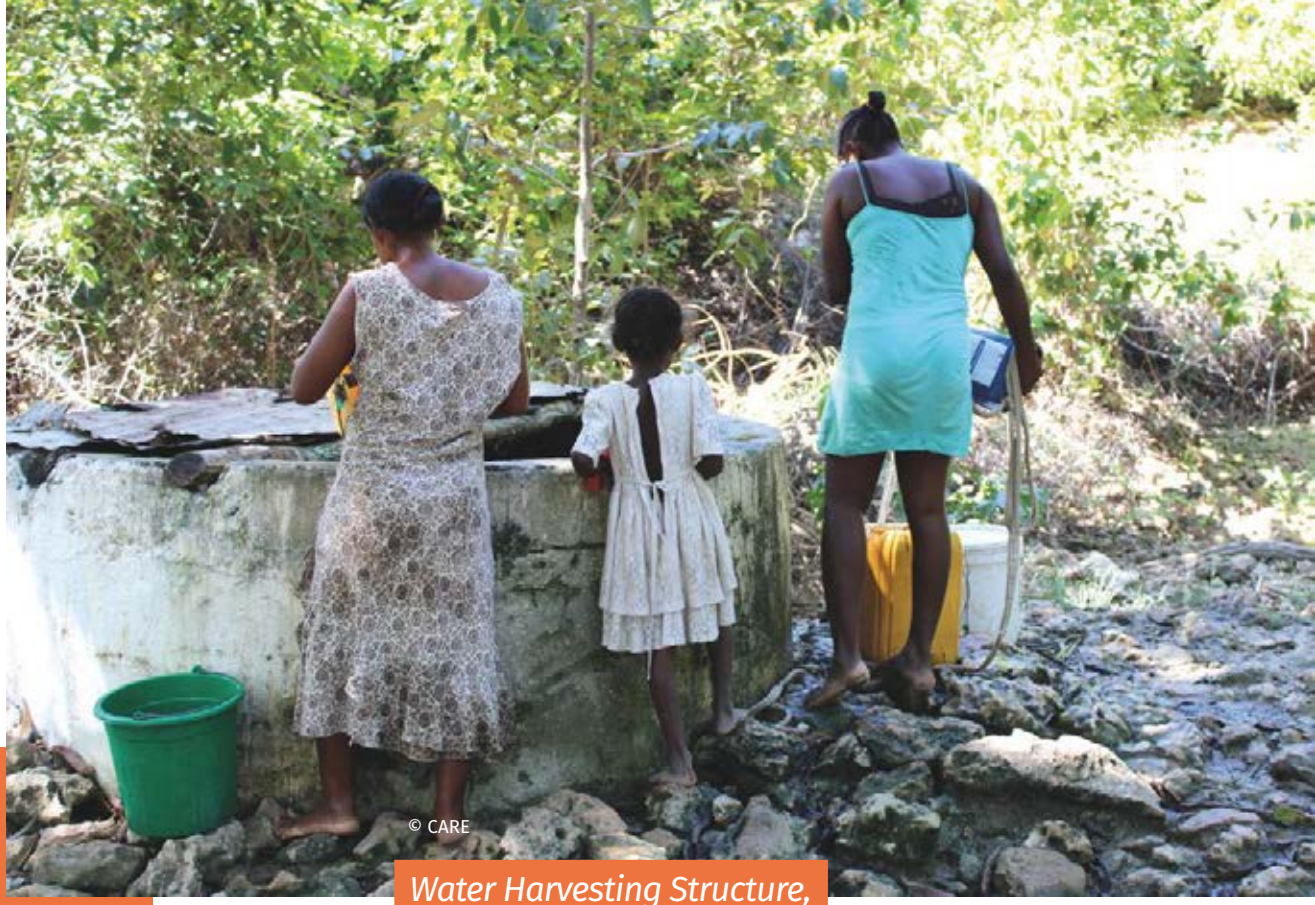
The above stereotypes and attitudes are directly related to the gender and social norms that prevail among men and women in the study sites, whereby men are seen as the "*backbone*" and the "*head*" of the family. These translate into gendered roles and division of labor in which men engage in income-generating work, while women themselves talk about their routine as "*just stay[ing] at home or work[ing] in the fields*". This gendered division of labor in households, with women in charge of care and housework as well as subsistence farming, was identified as one of the main barriers to women's attendance to meetings and community activities and has been noted by all types of stakeholders of all genders, including policy actors, at the local level.

This holds particularly true after women get married and when they have to care for young children. In some cases, it was identified also in terms of caring for the elderly and sick members of the household. Hmong women were reported in the FGDs to have less time to spare because they also make traditional clothes for their families. Women noted that these domestic chores and responsibilities are often heavier at the end of the day, which conflicts with the time that the meetings are usually organized, limiting their attendance. Policy actors at the district level also noted that women are less likely to take part in meetings when they get older as they "*engage less in agricultural production*", which suggests a correlation between productive work and participation.

Linking gender division of labor and beliefs, while women work in the fields in addition to care work and household chores, because they spend less time than men in the fields, there is a local belief that men "*do more work than women*". Similarly, one woman shared that women are told by their husbands that they "*are stupid and cannot earn money*". Despite the triple burden of work that women shoulder in the study sites, women suggested that they are still undervalued. At the same time, men—local leaders and residents—suggested that women may internalize beliefs considering themselves as inferior, which in turn shapes their participation in community activities:

> *"The role of women in the household and in the society is not highly valued […] they themselves feel like their position in society is not high, so they don't speak up"*

> *"In some families, the men make all the decisions, so the women feel that their position is very low, so that's why they are very reluctant and very shy in activities"*



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Water Harvesting Structure, Madagascar, 2022

Norms to practices: child, early and forced marriage

Relating norms to practices, as noted above, marriage is interconnected with participation opportunities and constraints. While it is not the case for everyone, marrying before the legal age of 18 was reported to be a common practice in both communes. Some reported that girls usually get married around 14–15 years old and boys at 17–18 years. Others reported marriages involving children of 12–13 years old. There was a diversity of perspectives, factors and situations shared about the drivers of early marriage. Some women argued that it is a common belief that keeping girls in school will get them pregnant because they have more interactions with boys. They also indicated that with the trend in the village of getting married young, girls are afraid of not finding a husband if they wait until the legal age of 18 and thus feel pressured to marry early. According to one respondent in the same FGD, sometimes children make the decision for themselves to get married at that age, going against their parents' advice; another respondent reported that children are "*in love*" and then are pressured by their parents to get married.

Early marriage has been highlighted not only as a barrier to gender equity and gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making in its own rights, but also as a main driver behind the barrier related to education, knowledge, and language skills, as indicated in the above section[13]. Respondents also added that this constraining practice is more prominent among Hmong ethnic communities. Box 7 elaborates on marriage practices that contribute to these dynamics.

Box 7: Forced early marriage practices in the study sites

Cases of forced early marriages were also reported, particularly in the Hmong community. The traditional customs in this case were described as a boy kidnapping a girl and bringing her to his family to marry her, sometimes also requesting a dowry from the girl's family. While illegal, as one woman stated *"the police won't interfere because it's a custom"*. While some women in FGDs stated that these kidnappings are no longer practiced, others quickly added recent examples. Several respondents were victims of forced early marriages themselves and expressed that they were still traumatized by it:

"I was kidnapped at the age of 14. I had never seen my husband before. At that time, my husband was 19 years old. At that time, I was just a child and didn't want to get married. I was so terrified but didn't know where to hide. Now, the kids fall in love over the phone and still get married early. My daughter is 13 years old now [respondent had her when she was 16], and I don't want her to get married. If she wants to go to school, I'll send her to school".

In fact, most of the women respondents who discussed forced early marriage made direct connection between these practices and education, either by explaining the practice by a lack of education, sharing personal experiences of being married off at 16 because parents were too poor to keep them in school, or by causal links between these practices and girls dropping out of school to take on domestic responsibility and become mothers. These insights on forced early marriage can be linked to the educational gaps that become a barrier for gender-equitable participation, which are further reinforced by gender stereotypes and roles.

These primary qualitative findings are supported by the secondary data from the UNFPA for Vietnam which indicate that "women with only primary schooling had the highest risk of violence by husbands. However, women with education above primary school were less at risk of such violence compared with women with no education or only primary education" (UNFPA Vietnam, 2019, p. 1). Furthermore, the data reveal that women in the Central Highlands, where the study site is, experienced the highest rate of physical violence[14] from a husband at 40%, compared to the Red Delta region at 30% and the Southeast and Mekong River Delta at 20% (UNFPA Vietnam, 2019).

Forced early marriages, a form of gender-based violence, were discussed in a FGD with 'more empowered' men in the Ho Mit commune. All the men in the group agreed that this is a key barrier in advancing gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making in the commune, and elsewhere with similar social and cultural contexts. One man firmly stated that if the issue of forced early marriage is not fully addressed in practice, none of the other strategies aiming to overcome the gender barriers to equitable participation in decision-making would be effective. The whole group agreed.

14 Gender-based violence refers to any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will based on gender differences, norms, roles and expectations. There are different kinds of violence including (but not limited to) physical, verbal, sexual, psychological and socio-economic violence (CARE, 2018a, p. 11). See Glossary (Annex1) for details.

Influence on participation

For married women, household power relations and dynamics (reflecting the above norm of the man as the breadwinner and "*head*") emerged as a critical determinant of attendance to meetings and taking part in climate adaptation decision-making processes.

Many respondents mentioned that husbands are the ones deciding who goes to meetings and that men are usually the ones attending (if they are not busy, away or do not want to attend); other women indicated that husbands do not "*give permission*" or "*allow*", or that "*some husbands beat their wife if she wants to participate*". However, there are local perceptions that husbands' authority over their wives may vary among ethnic groups. One respondent reported that "*the Tai let the women go to the meetings more*". One non-Hmong respondent indicated, especially in cases of forced early marriages where women are being told by their husbands that they "*have no rights*". Women also suggest that men do not trust their wives to contribute and make decisions, as some reported that "*husbands say that the wives don't know anything so they shouldn't go to the meeting*". In turn, "*women contribute ideas, but indirectly through their husbands*". Note that this barrier was not identified for women who are divorced or widowed; as identified in section 6.2.3.4 above, it appears that women who are divorced or widowed are more likely to participate and have more voice in meetings.

Gender stereotypes and social norms were identified as also playing out in and shaping meetings, whereby women who participate are discouraged from speaking up or are undervalued for their inputs because of their gender. For instance, several women and men respondents stated that women in general do not contribute meaningfully to the meetings, that they "*only talk to each other but don't propose solutions*" or "*beat around the bush, but men share their opinions directly*". Women in a FGD all shared the same experience that people usually think "*the opinions of women have no value*". This was confirmed by a man in the same commune saying that "*pretty much the majority of the women, their opinions are not well received*". Many respondents, both women and men, shared that men speak more in meetings than women, regardless of level of education, Woman respondents suggested that "*because they are men, the village leader will listen to them*". Later in the conversations, women from the same FGD added that "*women are not the breadwinners and that's the norm here. We can't change the norm*". Such narratives express an understanding of how gender and social norms and income influence status and participation; while this signals some level of critical consciousness regarding of gender imbalances, it also suggests a sense of resignation to the systemic and structural inequities.

These stereotypes, gender and social norms and dynamics also affect the higher degree of participation (i.e. ability to influence decisions). At the local level for instance, even if women attend village meetings in their husband's absence, a policy actor observed that "*women have to come back home to ask their husbands for the final decisions*".

Box 8 expands on the limiting effects of care and domestic work on women's participation, both indirectly and directly. These findings confirm previous research done in Vietnam which outlined care and housework as key barriers to women's participation, from attendance to decision-making (Nghi et al., 2021), while meetings are dominated by men (Ty et al., 2023), as well as leadership and decision-making positions (Pham et al., 2016).

Box 8. Care and domestic work holding women back

At the local scale, in addition to directly limiting the time available to attend and input in climate adaptation discussions and decision-making forums, women's time poverty (due to unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work) also *indirectly* limits women's participation. Specifically, our study found that time poverty is one of the main drivers behind of women's limited education, knowledge and language skills at the local level[15]. This was reported to be more prominent in (by) the Hmong ethnic community respondents. As indicated above, these barriers then limit women's participation in climate adaptation decision making.

Beyond the community scale, a respondent from an INGO at the national level shared that gendered domestic and care responsibilities explain why there are less women in leadership positions in Vietnam. This is echoed and further elaborated by a policy actor:

"Women are disadvantaged because they cannot work as long hours as men due to occupation with domestic responsibilities. [...] A number of women have good capacities, but the selection appointment of leaders is influenced by relations. Men are quite advantaged for that because after working together they gather and build relationships between them. Female staff have to come back home for domestic responsibilities [...] so when nominations happen you choose someone you have good relations with".

6.3.6 Disillusionment and lack of scope to influence decisions

According to some men and women respondents, there seems to be a shared feeling that speaking in meetings or even attending is "*pointless*" because they feel like decisions are already made. Respondents suggested that "*people can't help*" and nothing can be done to influence decisions. Some recalled first-hand the experiences that dissuaded them from speaking. A woman in Ho Mit shared:

"We used to bring opinions to the commune meetings, but nothing changed so we just stopped. [...] I talked many times, but no one listens so I just don't want to talk anymore. [...] Some people when they talk no one hears and nothing happens so they get fed up with that and don't raise they opinions anymore. [...] We all want to speak but we just get tired because nothing changes when we raise our voices. We just wait for a long time, and nothing happens"

Some also reported being negatively impacted by decisions for which they were not consulted. As a woman in Trung Dong noted that "*sometimes the village leader asks for opinions but sometimes not*". For instance, residents in Ho Mit reported that a lot of trees had been cut to build a dam. When asked follow-up questions about their involvement in the decision-making process about the construction of this dam, they stated that they were not consulted about the decision. Moreover, one of the men in the FGD expressed that when they raised the issue at the commune level "*they said it's the decision at the national level so nothing can be done about this*". Although related to climate mitigation rather than adaptation, this example demonstrates a perceived lack of space for residents' participation in important decisions made at the national level to be implemented at the local level. More broadly, it signals a gap in the implementation of free, prior and informed consent procedures, which are normally required for such large-scale projects and presumably may also be needed in relation to climate adaptation measures.

15 *Reported during the Community Validation Process in December 2023*

Farmer with wool, Ecuador, 2024

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Overall, respondents' insights suggest that village meeting processes skew more towards one-way information dissemination rather than inclusive consultation or participatory decision-making. This and the lack of agency, particularly among women and marginalized individuals and groups, act as barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making.

6.3.7 Lack of awareness about gender inequalities and barriers

Despite the extensive gender barriers presented above, some respondents were not aware of the existing barriers to women and marginalized groups' participation in climate adaptation decision-making. According to some men residents, "*women are free to speak [in village meetings]*" and "*we are very open to one another in the village*". While these observations might be true in terms of there being no formal restrictions (e.g., rules against women speaking), they also suggest a gendered lack of awareness regarding the overlapping informal and invisible barriers that hamper women's participation in village meetings. When asked what can be done to increase women's meaningful participation in meetings concerning climate adaptation, men, including commune leaders, suggested that it is women's own responsibility to "*try harder*", and that they need to "*fight more for themselves [...] they have to help themselves*". These insights underscore a perception amongst men that any barriers are more personal and individually rooted and that they reflect a weakness or failing of women, rather than a structural issue that can be proactively addressed.

Similarly, a local man leader noted that there are no barriers for women to access higher levels of decision-making, while a man SPO representative noted that "*there are no barriers from the government to limit the participation of women*". As with the above, both these statements are accurate only in reference to formal barriers (directly discriminatory policies preventing women from participating in climate adaptation decision-making) in this context. They also similarly reflect an assumption that women can freely participate if they want to, which has an implicit co-related assumption that it is women's responsibility and not a shared, social or institutional responsibility.

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Data collection for project baseline survey, Lai Chau Province, Vietnam, 2021

A different aspect of lack of awareness relates to gender bias and stereotyping. This is illustrated by the responses of a man local leader, when asked about the potential benefit of greater women's participation in climate adaptation decision-making. He remarked "*the more women the better*", while immediately following with a comment that seemed to imply an objectification of women, rather than referring to the value of women's inputs. Together the above highlights that while multiple gender barriers are present, they may be not only informal, they may also be 'invisible', and internalized and naturalized.

To wrap up section 6.3, Table 5 synthesizes and links the barriers identified to both the different degrees of participation they relate to, as well as the specific demographics affected by these barriers. Following this, Box 9 offers a summary of the key messages from section 6.3, which relate to formal and informal barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making.

Table 5. Summary of barriers to different degrees of participation and affected demographics

Barriers to attendance	Who does not attend
Time poverty due to care and domestic work	Women, particularly mothers of young children and/or caring for elderly
Gender roles, making men the default attendants to village meetings	Married women, particularly those who married young
Husbands' authority over their wife's attendance	Married women, particularly in Hmong communities and those who were victims of child, early and forced marriage
Labor migration	Men working outside the village
Belief that women have less knowledge and expertise to contribute, compared to men	Women
Distance, quality of roads, lack of transportation e.g., lack of skills to ride a motorbike	Women living far from the meeting venue or living in remoted houses connected by agricultural and in poorly lit roads
Lack of access to information about meetings	Household situated far from the center and from speakers
Barriers to understanding	**Who does not understand**
Illiteracy	Middle-aged and more senior populations, especially women and Hmong women and men
Low education	
Limited Kinh language skills/inadequate translation – ethnic minorities in particular	Ethnic minorities, especially among the Hmong community, and especially women
Being too shy or self-aware to ask questions	Women generally, and men and women from Hmong community
Chatter caused by meeting participants asking each other for clarifications and translation	All participants
Barriers to speaking	**Who does not speak**
Self-awareness about limited education and Kinh language skills	Women and ethnic minority men with low education and Kinh language skills
Intimidating environments due to large audiences and usually men-led meetings	Women
Internalized feeling of inferiority, based on belief that men's opinions are more relevant	
Experience or anticipation of being dismissed for one's inputs	Men and women
Lack of confidence, expressed as shyness	Women, and Hmong men and women
Lack of inclusive facilitation proactively engaging with less vocal participants	People self-identifying as shy
Barriers to being valued	**Whose inputs are not valued**
Being dismissed because of difficulties to express oneself	Men and women with low education and ethnic minorities who do not speak Kinh fluently
Belief that men's opinions are more relevant	Women, especially those married early
Village leaders' reported tendency to favor men's inputs	Women
Barriers to influencing decision-making	**Who does not influence decision-making**
Belief that breadwinners—mostly men—should be the ones making the decisions	Women
Village meetings being mostly consultative/information sharing processes, with participation having limited to no influence on critical decisions	All villagers
Low representation of women in technical environmental sciences education, professions and leadership positions	Educated women
Promotions to leadership positions favoring social relationships established outside of work hours, conflicting with women's time poverty	Women with formal administrative or technical employment

Source: Summary of findings from this study.

Box 9: Key takeaways: barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making in Vietnam

- There are multiple, interconnected barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making.

- The Vietnam case study surfaces the following barriers: i) non-conducive meeting environment due to distance and delivery formats; ii) the resulting "perception of shyness" or "lack of agency", stemmed from a nuanced and complex combination of other existing and overlapping barriers at individual and structural levels; iii) limited education, knowledge, information, language and related skills; iv) underlying gender and social norms and gender stereotypes including the resulting constraining practices of early marriage and unequal time spent on unpaid care and domestic work; and v) limited awareness of existing gender barriers and disillusioned attitudes regarding the value of participation.

- Issues related to lack of education or lack of confidence primarily affect women and ethnic minorities, and these inequalities suggest deeply rooted, longstanding (and compounding) marginalization and constraints that limit the potential of these groups and underutilize their inputs in decision-making processes, resulting in (lack of) climate adaptation decisions that might reinforcing their marginalization instead of addressing it. Lack of women's representation in higher levels of education and professional positions in the STEM sector also hamper progress in gender equity in climate adaptation.

- Gender and social norms, gender attitudes, stereotypes and associated roles are particularly critical and 'sticky' barriers. These include common perceptions that care and domestic work are women's responsibilities, while men who generate income are therefore more entitled to raise their voices and their input is more likely to be considered valid.

- Despite being illegal, forced early marriage continues informally in practice in some communities, which undermines women's participation in climate adaptation decision-making. Unless this practice is addressed, other strategies to overcome the barriers would be not as effective. There is some indication that some men in the given context are concerned about the effects of forced early marriage and support the elimination of this gender constraining practice.

- The framing of lack of participation of ethnic minorities as being due to an inherent trait or personal characteristic of "shyness" potentially takes attention away from a call for potential intervention. If "shyness" is re-framed as constraints on agency and related to the influence of the wider and (constraining) decision making processes, this would facilitate more interventions by policy and/or development actors.

- The non-conducive meeting environments are due to distance, remoteness, timing, processes formats and languages of the meetings. While these factors have been reported as barriers by all genders, they particularly affect women more acutely as women reported: i) often lack means of transportation (and do not know how to ride motorbikes); ii) being busy with household responsibilities in the evenings; and iii) having limited language skills. Moreover, meeting environments where men dominate the discussions were also noted as less conducive for women residents to participate more actively (sharing and influencing) in the climate adaptation discussions.

- There was a notable lack of recognition of gender barriers, particularly the underlying and more invisible barriers related to gender and social norms, by men at different levels and in different stakeholder roles. This suggests a significant gap between genders in the understanding of women's experiences and the systemic and structural drivers of marginalization in climate adaptation decision-making. Given that men still hold most leadership roles and have more influence in climate adaptation decision-making at all scales, it seems unlikely that the range of barriers identified will be successfully addressed until these underlying "invisible" barriers are addressed.

6.4 Existing enablers and respondent-identified potential strategies

This section synthesizes primary data relating to context-relevant interventions for promoting gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making in Vietnam. It is based on respondent-identified existing enablers and possible strategies. These strategies were drawn from the SII findings and confirmed in the FGDs. This section shares findings which, along with secondary data, inform the recommendations presented in Part C at the end of the report.

6.4.2 Make village meetings more accessible and inclusive.

One of the foundational assets that Vietnam has in place to enable participation in climate adaptation decision-making is that village meetings are already part of people's routine, and climate adaptation issues are often discussed on these occasions (see section 6.2.3.1.). Most respondents in Ho Mit and Trung Dong were satisfied with the amount of information provided about upcoming meetings. However, some particularly isolated households reported not being able to hear the speakers, nor receiving adequate information on time to be able to attend the meetings. At the same time, women in these isolated households reported some challenges in going to meetings as reported earlier. The following strategies were suggested by respondents to optimize this existing enabler.

- Village leaders or village VWU representatives could go door to door to invite and encourage women to attend the meetings. Some respondents suggested to invite both husbands and wives to attend meetings together.
- To address women's time poverty, a short-term action would be to adjust timing of the meetings, starting by surveying women to identify what time of the day would enable greater gender-equitable participation. While this does not address the root causes of the issue, namely the gendered division of labor and perceptions that men are the default head of household, this practical measure can enhance more gender-equitable participation and promote gender mainstreaming in climate adaptation policies and programs.
- To improve accessibility to meeting venues, a few women proposed to convene meetings in locations that are more accessible to all villagers. Suggestions also included creating a transportation system (e.g., bike-pooling) and teaching women to learn riding motorbikes.

Considering the language barrier between different ethnic groups in the case study sites, as well as the common use of Kinh as the official language, translation is a necessity. While residents in both communes mentioned that bilingual villagers usually provide translation, many respondents and FGD participants mentioned limited language skills as still being a key barrier. In addition, many respondents considered themselves "too shy" and intimidated to speak up directly in meetings (see section 6.3.3 above) and reflected on alternative ways to contribute. The following strategies have been suggested by respondents:

- To help residents better understand the contents of the meetings, one SPO representative suggested using pictures and visuals to help participants understand complex topics.
- One woman self-identifying as "shy" suggested installing suggestions boxes so that people who know how to write but do not feel comfortable speaking could still input.
- Some women shared that they would feel more comfortable speaking to women. Having women leaders visit households to speak directly with women residents would then be their preferred strategy.

In addition to this, these meetings can also offer space and opportunities for locally led adaptation planning[16], granted there is institutional and financial support to carry out such participatory and inclusive decision-making processes.

6.4.3 Reduce social exclusion and build confidence and agency of women and ethnic minorities.

Women, ethnic minority groups, and especially women of ethnic minority groups are critically lacking confidence and agency, particularly as a result of internalized gender and social norms and stereotypes. To address this, the study surfaced that *several strategies are already being implemented locally* to encourage women to participate in climate adaptation decision-making; these could be built on and/or replicated to reach more people. For instance, the Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU) meetings gather mostly women. As such, women residents reported to feel more comfortable speaking up in these spaces, as compared to village meetings because there are less men. Similarly, women residents taking part in CARE Vietnam's Village Loans and Savings Association (VSLA) also shared that they participate more there because "*they all know each other in the group so they don't feel shy and it's all women in the group, no men*". Building on these existing strategies, the following were suggested by respondents to build the confidence and agency of women and ethnic minorities.

- To encourage women and ethnic minority people to speak up in meetings, women residents and policymakers agreed that providing opportunities for meetings in smaller group settings based on shared identities (such as by gender, by ethnicity, etc.) would create safe spaces for them to raise their concerns and be heard and supported, share advice, practice public speaking and inspire each other before aiming to participate in more diverse and intimidating groups.
- Establishing women role models has been suggested by a diversity of stakeholders as a way to inspire women to become more confident and proactive in community activities, but also to change stereotypical perceptions of women. For example, this could entail celebrating women who are particularly successful in agriculture production or women who take up roles that defy traditional gender and social norms, for instance by engaging in disaster risk reduction activities.

Additionally, respondents identified that there could be strategies related to events as a means of increasing interactions with other people in the village and beyond as a means of building up the confidence and agency of women and marginalized groups. Unpacking this further, many residents articulated that they enjoy the community activities and events that are organized from time to time, and that these may be great opportunities for women to get out of the household and have more interactions with villagers. In both communes, events are regularly organized by local leaders or the VWU, and include art performances, sport and cooking contests, folk games, quizzes, and more. However, while these activities are usually open to all, women in a FGD in Trung Dong—which is characterized by its high ethnic diversity—noted that some groups such as the Kho Mu and the Tai tend to participate more than Hmong people, who only rarely take part in these. Respondents thus suggested some strategies to improve such events and reduce social exclusion as follows:

16 *See World Resource Institute WRI, "Principles for Locally Led Adaptation," World Resources Institute, accessed October 10, 2023, https://www.wri.org/initiatives/locally-led-adaptation/principles-locally-led-adaptation.*

- Organizing art performances, cultural activities, folk games, sports competitions and similar activities more often so that people are less intimidated to participate. In terms of location for these events which are currently organized at the commune level, local leaders in Ho Mit noted that greater participation could be achieved by organizing them at the local level to address transportation barriers, but noted a lack of resources to implement this proposal. Some women in a FGD mentioned that organizing events at the commune level allows for a greater diversity of participants and is better for women to practice their social skills.
- Most men and women respondents suggested that these activities should involve both men and women. However, some commented that some husbands might not allow their wives to take part in these, so inviting women only to some of these activities might increase their participation. Ensuring that men support women's participation in these activities has indeed been mentioned as a pre-requisite for success.

6.4.4 Improve literacy and education among adults

To address educational gaps among older generations, both communes offer literacy classes to residents. According to district-level policy actors, most of the students attending these classes are women between 30 and 40 years old who did not go to school in their youth. The class format appears to be similar in both Ho Mit and Trung Dong, with classes usually held in the evening and lasting about two hours, covering primary level literacy skills such as reading and writing. In the study sites at the commune level, in practice the study found that the age of the women and men students ranged into the 60s.

Some challenges remain to be addressed so that women can effectively participate in these classes. Firstly, classes are currently not available in all villages within both communes, so respondents suggested offering such opportunities in all the villages. Yet, some mentioned that classes that were previously available in some villages closed because they did not have enough students, so the main challenge is to increase enrollment and attendance. The main issue appears to be women's time poverty, as they combine agricultural work, domestic work and care for their children. At the moment, classes are organized in the evening, but walking alone in the dark for sometimes long distances and on bad roads prevented many from attending, with women either making the decision for themselves or being forbidden to go by their husbands. Women respondents offered suggestions for improving attendance as below.

Farmer on plot, Mahajunga, Madagascar, 2022

- To enable women to attend the classes provided, women pointed out the need to engage with men to convince them of the relevance of the classes so they would allow their wives to attend.
- To mitigate dropouts during harvesting season, women in a FGD suggested organizing literacy classes according to agricultural schedules in times where less work is needed in the field. They also noted that these schedules vary between villages, so the timing for the classes would have to be context specific.
- Women from both communes also suggested recording the classes so women could watch the videos whenever they have time, noting however that this option would limit their interactions and not be suitable for elderly people wanting to improve their literacy.

For those who want to continue learning after graduating from literacy classes, continuous education centers are available at the commune level. Many women also expressed that in addition to being taught literacy, they are interested in learning other subjects as well and want to improve their overall education.

- Aside from formal education, many residents, particularly women, emphasized that education can also happen through experiences and interactions with others, thereby suggesting women could "*go out and learn*" or "*interact with other villages*".
- One suggestion was to organize language exchanges between Kinh and Hmong speakers so that both could practice concretely and increase their confidence. Women in a FGD in Ho Mit suggested that this could be done either in tandem, pairing two people from different communities together, or with trained language teachers.
- Communications campaigns should be considered to address lack of awareness about continuous learning opportunities (e.g., using village speakers). However, considering that such classes are only available at the commune level, a system of collective transportation would be important.

6.4.5 Increase education rates and attainment

Education rates appear to have been increasing in the past decades, as respondents across the two study sites reported that nowadays, most children attend school until grade 9 or 12 (i.e., complete at least lower secondary school). Respondents also mentioned that households officially classified as poor will receive incentives in the form of subsidies and are exempt from tuition fees to encourage them to send their children to school. Focusing on younger generations, the majority of respondents in both communes agreed that the goal should be to reach and complete at least secondary school education. Residents added that this would give them knowledge and confidence to contribute to discussions, as well as better livelihood opportunities. Some women also noted that making education mandatory until higher secondary levels would help prevent child, early and forced marriage. However, men and women residents in both communes reported that the main challenges to achieve these ambitions are the costs associated either with tuition fees, or the loss of help in the fields. The following suggestions were given by respondents at the local level:

- To encourage parents to send their children to school, local leaders in Trung Dong as well as women in both communes suggested awareness-raising and advocacy targeted to parents, highlighting the benefits of education.
- Women in Trung Dong observed that monetary incentives do not solve the problem of the financial pressure associated with sending children to school, and suggested to instead support poor people to develop better livelihoods so their children can stay in school longer.
- In terms of content, policymakers pointed out the need to better include climate change into the school curriculum.

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Farmer with cow, Ecuador, 2024

6.4.6 Amplify awareness and engage men, boys, women and girls in addressing constraining gender and social norms

Policymakers at the district level reported on their efforts to disseminate information about gender equality even in remote areas, which helps to slowly change gender stereotypes. While beyond the scope of this study to assess effectiveness, at least one respondent noted the connection of awareness-raising activities and outcomes: *"In my family we think that we are all equal and we help each other to do the housework. Some people say it's only women's role but we share. [...] My husband is educated, he attended the publicity on gender equality. [...].*

In relation to addressing constraining gender and social norms, many stakeholders raised the need to engage with men to change mindsets and create dialogues between men and women to increase understanding of diverse points of views, as well as mitigate conflicts that can arise from challenging gender and social norms. At the national level, the VWU representative shared that campaigns have been conducted to challenge the common narratives around women being framed as passive victims in times of disasters and targeting both men and women to change these narratives. Building on this promising practice, the main suggestions from respondents to address constraining gender and social norms related to capacity-building activities, highlighting also the need to be mindful of language and literacy barriers that can limit the reach of such campaigns.

- Gender equality-related capacity-building has been proposed as a strategy to change mindsets of both men and women. While a woman policy actor at the provincial level suggested focusing primarily on women to build up their confidence and their awareness about their own rights, a woman representing a mass organization in Trung Dong suggested instead starting by separating men and women to discuss the same issues from different points of view in safe spaces, and then bring them together so they can understand perspectives and find solutions together. To reduce childcare and pressure on income associated with having many children, men in a FGD in Trung Dong suggested to provide family planning training to women as "*giving birth to children is the natural duty of women, not men*". This perspective also suggests a need to involve men in trainings to communicate shared responsibilities over family planning and care work. We note that while not framed using the language of gender transformative approaches, the strategy of engaging men and these suggestions dovetail with such approaches (see section 7).

- To end the practice of child, early and forced marriage, respondents suggested awareness-raising campaigns on the negative impacts of child, early and forced marriage targeting parents specifically as well as young adults.
- Noting that younger generations might be more receptive to change than the elderly, women in a FGD in Ho Mit suggested targeting the elderly specifically when trying to change gender and social norms over women's access to education, their participation in climate adaptation decision-making or child, early and forced marriage. This can take the form of awareness-raising campaigns or training.

6.4.7 Sustainable, climate-resilient livelihoods trainings supporting women's economic empowerment

Respondents at all levels mentioned livelihoods training as a strategy to help vulnerable communities to adapt to climate change and to address poverty. Respondents in charge of policy and program implementation noted that training opportunities are already offered to residents from time to time, focusing on resilient agricultural livelihoods and including techniques such as adapting farming schedules to a changing climate or adopting new crops that are more resilient and/or have higher market value. However, stakeholders implementing these trainings noted that unless women are directly targeted, they tend to participate less and benefit less from these than men. Some also noted that trainings with men have proved to be less efficient due to labor migration, a time during which women are primarily in charge of the fields, or when men attend training related to activities mostly performed by women such as raising chickens. Besides agricultural livelihoods, some respondents also shared aspirations to explore different livelihood opportunities, such as cosmetology, hairdressing and tailoring, and diversifying income sources constitutes an important climate adaptation and livelihood strategy. To address these gaps in livelihoods trainings, respondents suggested:

- Seeking the participation of women in livelihoods trainings to allow them to gain more experiences and social interactions, and focusing on providing actionable knowledge and skills that improve current agricultural practices, taking better advantage of the land outside of rice farming calendars and using adequate business models to increase efficiency and income.
- Building climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction directly into agricultural trainings to ensure new livelihoods are resilient to climate change. However, implementers of such trainings noted a lack of resources as they depend on government funding and suggested diversifying funding sources by working with international agencies and NGOs to ensure sustainability and replicability of promising approaches.
- Some men suggested reviving old craftmanship, like sewing and embroidery, would be a good occupation for women, while women proposed that women could sell cosmetic products online. One respondent who did try the latter, however, relayed that they had had difficulty finding customers and had eventually gone out of business.

In the rural and remote case study sites, women often stay home and alone handle care and domestic work; this considerably limits their time to engage in trainings and subsequent livelihood activities. Moreover, respondents indicated that bringing women into trainings and income-generating activities could result in backlash, as traditional gender roles are affected and masculinities may be challenged. In order to mitigate these constraints and risks and create an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment, the following suggestions were shared by respondents:

- Campaigns challenging gender and social norms around income-generating activities to mainstream the idea that women can also be breadwinners, directly engaging with men and boys.
- Campaigns and activities to encourage sharing of care and domestic work, for instance replicating a childcare competition for men that the VWU already piloted in other provinces.
- As women tend to have little social interactions outside their families, respondents noted that any income-generating activity should be complemented with support in developing their social skills and gaining confidence.

6.4.8 *Increase resources and capacities for gender-responsive climate adaptation programming*

Policy actors, INGOs and SPOs shared some promising practices that aim to increase women's participation in climate adaptation decision-making. Specifically, disaster risk reduction seems to be an area of climate adaptation where decision-makers and implementing agencies are particularly active in seeking gender-equitable participation. Such efforts are not yet seen in other areas of climate adaptation. The strategies suggested by respondents to address gaps revolve around increasing resources to agencies focusing on gender equality and enhancing coordination between stakeholders. These are:

- Some national-level respondents suggested to accelerate efforts in sensitizing staff to gender issues in key state agencies. Noting that at the moment mainly women are sent out to attend any types of trainings on gender equality in government institutions, respondents suggested that requesting men to participate in gender equality trainings could help bridge knowledge gaps and provide avenues for men to also become champions for gender equality.
- Suggestions to improve gender mainstreaming efforts included having sectoral gender focal points able to understand a variety of contexts to guide project implementation in ways that facilitate the participation of women.
- As an implementing partner of the NCCS and NAP, MOLISA developed its own action plan to ensure women and marginalized groups benefit from the strategy. Some respondents suggested that greater resources would allow MOLISA to better implement this plan and achieve better outcomes.
- Some respondents suggested streamlining government monitoring and reporting, which would enhance accountability towards meeting gender targets.
- Despite the VWU's considerable coverage across the country, some respondents noted challenges in the VWU accessing the most remote communities and in particular ethnic minorities. Investing in human resources was suggested as a strategy to address this gap, both through the VWU recruiting women from ethnic minorities and training local representatives to better support ethnic minority women.
- To ensure diverse perspectives are taken into account in climate adaptation policymaking, national-level respondents suggested to amplify the role that multi-stakeholders' platforms such as the Climate Change working group already play, but also to seize more opportunities to learn from other countries to tackle barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation.

6.4.9 Engaging with men to support women's access to higher spheres of decision-making

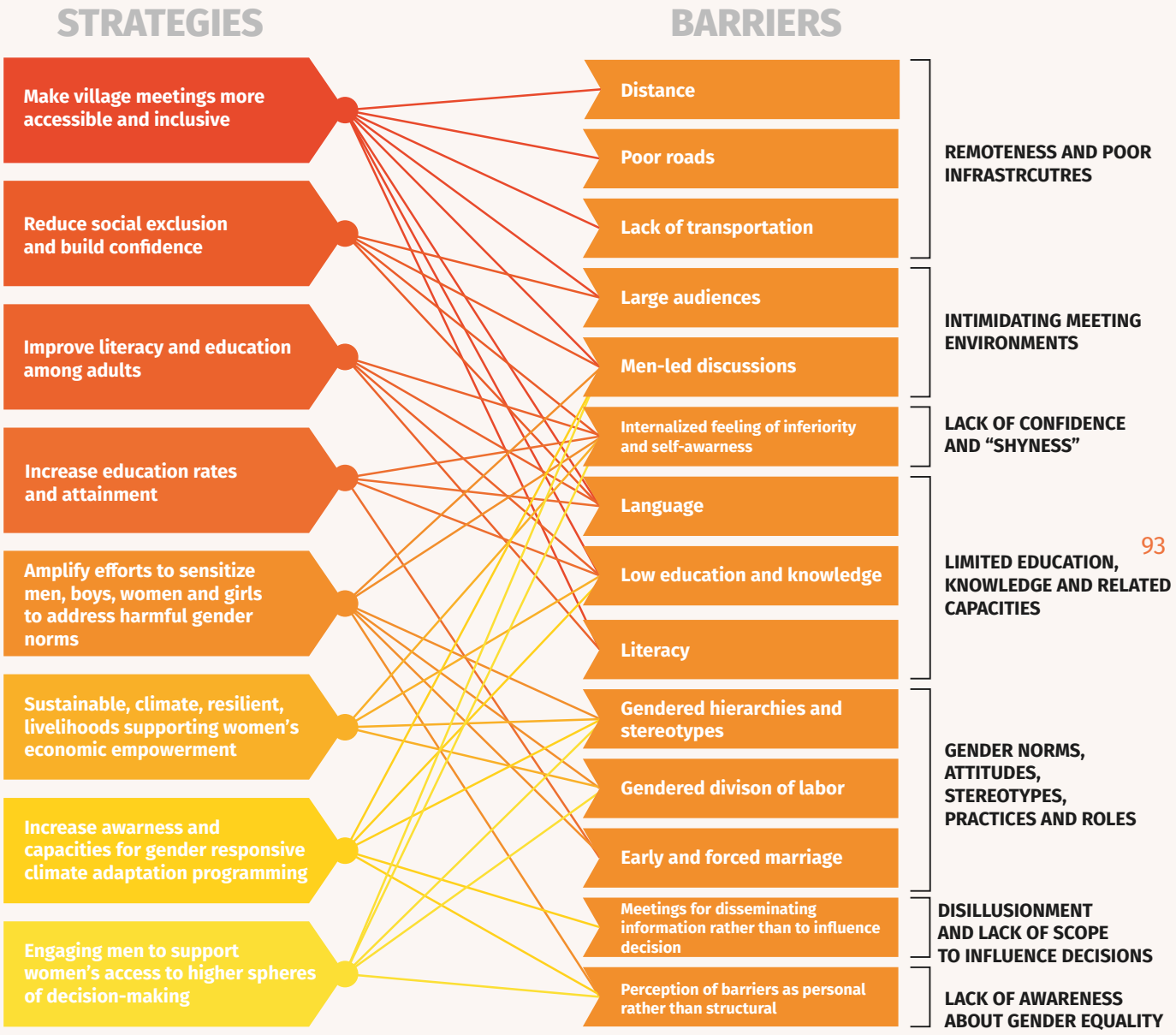
Vietnam has embraced quotas as a strategy for equity in decision-making, implementing them and requirements for women's representation in different types of activities, agencies and at different scales (see section 6.2.2.). In support of this mechanism, a previous study found that Vietnam's use of quotas over time has contributed to a gradual rise of women into decision-making, as well as an improvement of their capacities to influence decisions (Joshi & Thimothy, 2019). At the same time, however, gender quotas have been widely critiqued and their risks underscored, in terms of being token or instrumentalized (e.g. only increasing women's representation rather than influence [McDougall, Del Duca, et al., 2023]). Moreover, despite the use of quotas in Vietnam, as indicated in section 6.2.2, women continue to be underrepresented in higher decision-making spheres. This underscores that quotas as a mechanism need to be strengthened and/or complemented with other strategies or mechanisms.

In response to this need, some respondents pointed to the VWU as an example and a source of wider lessons for women's access to leadership. Specifically, one respondent shared that she was able to overcome the common barriers hampering most women's access to leadership by engaging in and through the VWU. She explicated that because the institution is mostly made up of women, women do not have to compete with men for access to higher level positions while having to take career breaks when they have children, further adding that promotions are based on capabilities and experience. A national-level policy representative noted that in most institutions, promotions are made through appointments that favor interpersonal relationships established outside of working hours, which inadvertently discriminates women who shoulder care and domestic work in the evenings. Other respondents (women in leadership positions) signaled more broadly how important the support of their husbands and families was key for them to access such positions, be promoted, and thrive in positions that sometimes require travels. These insights led to the identification of potential strategies by respondents as follows:

- Strategies and programs sensitizing men to become allies of women's leadership overall and specifically catalyze men to take on part of the household and care work in order for their wives to climb the ladder and strive in their leadership positions.
- At the national level, policy and INGO actors suggested to shift away from appointment processes that favor personal relationships to rather focus on candidates' skills, experience, and on the new perspectives they can bring to decisions-making processes.

Figure 11 below summarizes the strategies proposed by the respondents and matches them with the barriers identified in the case study of Vietnam.

Figure 11. Respondent-identified strategies to address the barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate-adaptation decision-making.



Source: primary data from interviews and FGDs with men and women, at national, sub-national and local scales in Vietnam case study, including policymakers, civil society, local leaders and residents.

Climate Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment Exercise, Lai Chau Province, Vietnam, 2021

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PART C

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Part C

Key insights and recommendations

Based on the findings on barriers and participant-identified enablers and strategies (chapter 6), chapter 7 offers an integrative analysis that surfaces ways forward. Chapter 8 then concludes the report with proposed recommendations for Vietnam and broader contexts.

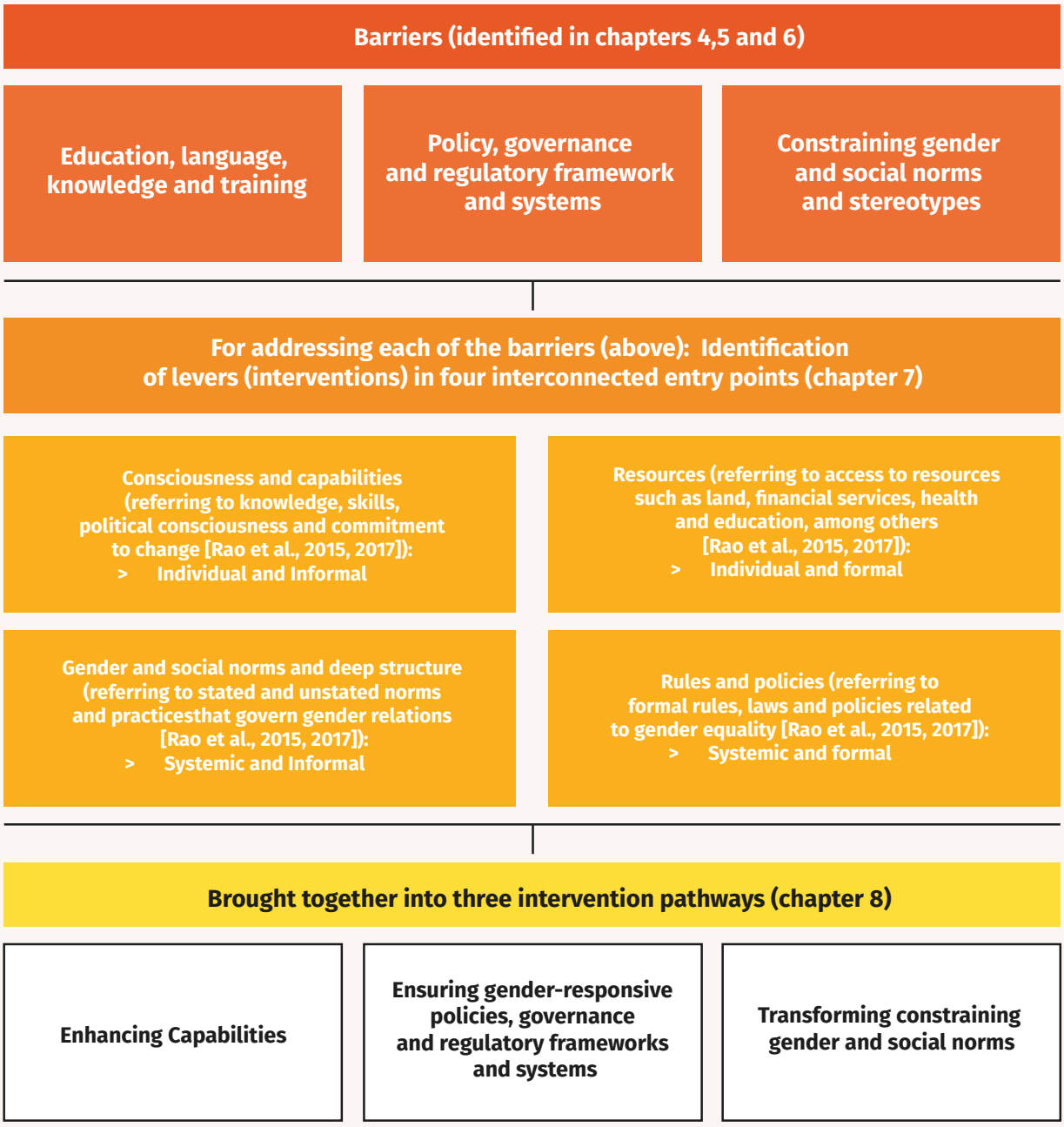
7. Discussion: Entry points and levers for overcoming barriers

To better enable engagement with the considerable range of identified issues, here in chapter 7 we cluster the barriers (identified in chapters 4, 5 and 6) into three main groups: i) education, language, knowledge and training; ii) policy, governance and regulatory systems; and iii) constraining gender and social norms and stereotypes.

For each of these groups, in the sections below we first summarize and note interconnections with the other barriers; next we present levers (interventions) to address the given barriers. In recognition of the inherent complexity and systemic and structural nature of the issues, the levers are generated and presented in relation to formality (informal to formal) and scale (individual to systemic).

To do so, this section employs the Gender at Work Framework (Rao et al., 2015, 2017), which enables mapping of these interconnections into quadrants (see Figure 12, middle). The levers both build on the participant-identified enablers and strategies (section 6.4), and round these out (filling in gaps or blind spots) by drawing on external literature and author expertise. As illustrated in Figure 12, after the 3 groups of barriers are unpacked into levers (interventions) organized into the Gender at Work Framework's quadrants, chapter 8 translates these into 3 corresponding intervention pathways.

Figure 12: Strategies to overcome barriers analyzed through the Gender at Work Framework along axes of formality and scale, leading to 3 intervention pathways:



Note regarding the center of Figure 12: These four quadrants draw on and are adapted from the Gender at Work Framework (Rao et al., 2015, 2017). This analysis -- long the axes of individual to systemic and informal to formal (see section 2.3) -- enables insights into each set of levers in relation to four discreet, albeit interconnected, quadrants or entry points. The entry points related to consciousness and capabilities are found in the informal-individual quadrant; entry points related to access to resources are in the formal-individual quadrant; entry points related to rules and policies are in the formal-systemic quadrant; and entry points related to gender and social norms and values are in an informal-systemic quadrant.

7.1 Overcoming barriers related to education, information, knowledge and training

As identified in chapters 5 and 6, inadequate access to education, information, knowledge and training are key barriers to gender-equitable participation in decision-making processes across the four 'She Grows the Future' countries at multiple scales.

Unpacking this further, the in-depth Vietnam case study (chapter 6) revealed that the lack of basic education is perceived as one of the main barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making at the local level, particularly in terms of understanding and sharing inputs in participation at the local level. Higher education was found to be more associated with capabilities to influence decisions (the highest degree of inclusion) at the local and national levels.

Similarly, the Vietnam case study, together with secondary data for Ecuador, Madagascar and India, surfaced that a lack of information and knowledge about climate change and adaptation was reported to be one of the key gender barriers to understanding the decisions being considered and to sharing inputs in the climate adaptation decision-making processes.

In terms of interconnections between barriers, the results (chapter 6) reveal that the lack of education, information, knowledge and training are shaped by other barriers, including harmful gender and social norms (see also 7.2.2). For example, due to traditional discriminatory norms, such as child, early and forced marriage or girls being taken out of school to help with family chores, access to education for women is more limited in practice (UNFCCC 2022a). The same UNFCCC report continues to suggest that "as a result of gender norms, women are often not the primary recipients of [...] information, despite them usually being the first responders to disaster on account of their caregiving responsibilities. As such more inclusive information systems would reduce disaster risk for all individuals while empowering women to take decisive action, thus benefiting social equity generally" (UNFCCC, 2022a, p. 17). This norms-education-climate nexus and potential actions align with the primary data findings from this study (chapter 6).

Moreover, the lack of education, information, knowledge and training contribute to the manifestations and/or the exacerbations of barriers, such as the underrepresentation of women at leadership positions, lack of confidence and reported "shyness", and languages and literacy as elaborated in Box 10. As such, improvements in access to education, information, knowledge and training for all genders may also contribute to addressing these related barriers, at least in part.

Farmer Field School, Mahajunga, Madagascar, 2022

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Box 10. Education, information, knowledge and training barrier: influence on other barriers

Underrepresentation in leadership and implementation positions (see also 7.2)

Women are underrepresented in climate change policymaking roles at all levels and across countries worldwide. In terms of ways forward, findings from the primary data collection in Vietnam (chapter 6) revealed that, from the perspectives of respondents, higher education is positively associated with women's capabilities to be in leadership and implementation positions in climate adaptation policies and strategies. These findings are also supported by a recent UNDP Vietnam report (Rivoal & Thanh Nga, 2022), which indicates that men still outnumber women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) fields and that inadequate education or technical skills obtained by women, particularly in STEM, limit women's opportunities to hold technical and higher paid jobs (Rivoal & Thanh Nga, 2022). This, in turn, limits women's opportunities to progress to leadership positions in climate adaptation decision-making. As such, overcoming barriers related to education, knowledge and training, particularly in science and technology, may also contribute to overcoming the barrier related to the underrepresentation of women in leadership and implementation roles.

Lack of confidence and "shyness" (see also 7.2)

As evidenced from the primary data collected at the local level in Vietnam (chapter 6), a lack of confidence was reported by the majority of the women residents as one of the main barriers to sharing their opinions and concerns. As such, access to climate-related education, knowledge and trainings that could equip women to be better informed and skilled in climate adaptation, as well as soft skills such as public speaking, communication and negotiation skills, could enhance their confidence and the value of their contributions to climate adaptation decision-making processes. Evidence from UN women also confirms the vital role that education plays in developing women's and girls' self-confidence (UN Women, 2019).

Language and illiteracy

The literacy barrier came across most strongly from the primary data in Vietnam (chapter 6), particularly among Hmong women interviewed in Ho Mit and Trung Dong communes. Literacy, language and communication barriers were found to be particularly pronounced among low-income rural ethnic minority groups who communicate mainly in their dialects and local languages.

Based on the Gender at Work Framework's four quadrants, Table 6 identifies proposed levers (interventions, 'in what to invest') and enablers across all four main intervention spaces or entry points. For ease of use, the enabling factors (already existing) are presented for all four 'She Grows the Future' Countries as well as for Vietnam specifically.

Table 6. Overcoming barriers to education, information, knowledge and training

Entry point: consciousness and capabilities

Levers

L.A1: Raise awareness of parents or guardians about the value of keeping their children, of all genders, in school. Strategies include behavior change communications and improving communications and support between parents, schools, communities.

L.A2: Create interest in and motivation for individuals of all genders to engage in climate adaptation education training. For example, this could include invitations being extended to two people from each household (of different genders), having mixed gender trainers, and/or incentives such as provisions of farming tools, seeds or equipment that participants are likely to need in order to apply the knowledge and practices acquired.

Enabling factors

'She Grows the Future' countries: Recognition of the importance of education, information, knowledge and training by all relevant stakeholders.

Vietnam: Keen interests of local residents to participate in trainings related to climate adaptation skills and vocational trainings.

Entry point: access to resources

Levers

L.A3: Develop and maintain incentive and assistance systems for lower income and rural families, especially from marginalized groups, that encourage and enable girls and gender minorities to stay in school or in higher education, including those likely to leave due to child, early and forced marriage or family finances. This may include scholarships, free lunch schemes, and opportunities to work part-time (for those above minimum age requirements for paid work) to ensure that they can manage/afford to stay in higher education.

L.A4: Increase access to adult education, language and literacy classes by ensuring that the timing and structure of the meetings accommodates these courses (in logistics and delivery)

L.A5: Develop and maintain mechanisms for equitable access to information on climate change adaptation and how to engage in climate decision-making in context-specific channels. Supporting Step 2 (Understanding) on the ladder of participation, these should be designed to enable access and understanding by diverse groups, taking into consideration gendered and social differences and barriers in terms of languages, venues (distance and structure) and modes (one-way or participatory).

L.A6: Provide climate education, adaptation and livelihood trainings including vocational and soft skills for adults and youth, ensuring safe and equitable engagement of girls, women and gender minorities. Based on local needs and circumstances and delivered via suitable communications (e.g., language) and environments (e.g., venue and time). These may include bottom-up and participatory pedagogies that build on local knowledge and are empowering and include gender equality as a topic and outcome (e.g., Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools).

Enabling factors

'She Grows the Future' countries: Well-accepted recognition and support for education, information enhancement and training from all relevant stakeholders. Established concept, and existing networks, of women-led groups in India (Pyburn & Eerdewijk, 2021).

Vietnam: Existing infrastructure of adult education and language classes as well as cultural events at local levels.

Entry point: access to resources

Levers

L.A7: Eliminate gender discriminatory practices that are rooted in traditional norms, in particular child, early and forced marriages, that often prevent girls from continuing in their education.

L.A8: Invest in strategies that enable more gender-equitable division of unpaid labor among different individuals in households and communities, to allow sufficient time and energy for girls and women to pursue their education.

L.A9: As the means to L.A8, L.A9 and more broadly, invest in gender-transformative methods and strategies, which are adapted and integrated into climate adaptation programming and above-noted livelihoods training at the household, community, and up to the national and intra-organizational levels (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020; McDougall, Elias, et al., 2023). For example, Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools, or Community Conversations, community theatre as a gender-transformative method, or gender-transformative methods integrated into technical CA training (FAO, IFAD and WFP, 2020; McDougall, Elias, et al., 2023). These are critical to reducing backlash, including GBV that can be associated with women's increasing opportunities and agency.

Enabling factors

'She Grows the Future' countries:
• Increasing awareness about gender equity at all scales
• Wealth of traditional knowledge and know-how held by women and marginalized groups including elderly people.

Vietnam:
•Extensive network of SPOs already working on and advocating for gender equity and social inclusion.
• Some men and women are already aware of the importance of gender equity and the need to distribute unpaid care and domestic work more equally between women and men. The next steps would be to firmly move this to the concrete shifts in behaviors in practice, as well as engaging these men as role models for other men.

Entry point: rules and policies

Levers

L.A10: Develop and maintain gender-responsive social protection systems to ensure inclusion education for girls and marginalized groups, as these would help to enable poor households to keep their children in school.

L.A11: Invest in systematization of communications in climate education, adaptation training and related programming designed for diverse audiences, particularly the most marginalized and climate vulnerable groups such as women or gender minorities, nonliterate people and/or people living with disabilities. This includes systematically using visual, auditory and written communications in relevant languages, including local dialects and language of ethnic minority groups.

Enabling factors

'She Grows the Future' countries: Existing public awareness and importance of promoting gender equity and inclusive governance at all levels (Calvin et al., 2023; UNDP, 2023b; UNFCCC, 2022a).

Vietnam:
• In village meetings at the local level, some bilingual residents unofficially help to translate Kinh into local languages to those who do not speak Kinh. This current practice can be formalized.
• Existing regulatory and policy frameworks such as quotas to include women in parliament and administrations at all scales.
• Establishment and involvements of organizations working to serve women and marginalized groups, such as MOLISA in Vietnam, in climate policymaking processes.

Woman Gardening, Vietnam, 2022

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7.2 Overcoming barriers related to policy, governance and regulatory frameworks and systems

As signaled in chapters 4 and 6, gender-equitable participation in decision-making is crucial in achieving effective and sustainable climate adaptation outcomes (Calvin et al., 2023; UNFCCC, 2022a). Yet key gaps remain, including: i) women in decision-making positions and having significant influence (associated with hidden bias in processes and prevailing unequal power relations, discussed in 7.1.3); ii) gender-disaggregated data to inform the formulation and implementation of gender-responsive and transformative policies and initiatives; and iii) finance and resources to address the two aforementioned gaps (Calvin et al., 2023; UNDP, 2023b; UNFCCC, 2022a).

In terms of connections, addressing barriers related to policy, governance frameworks and systems can also contribute to addressing other barriers. For example, gender-transformative programming in climate adaptation can have positive multiplier effects on power relations and access and control over resources, thereby contributing to closing gaps in unequal access to resources and livelihood opportunities as well as improving the imbalanced representation of women in leadership roles.

Table 7 presents the entry points, levers and enabling factors for addressing barriers related to policy and governance frameworks and systems. As with each group of barriers, it does so in four quadrants, based on the Gender at Work Framework.

Table 7: Overcoming barriers related to policy, governance and institutional frameworks and systems

Entry point: consciousness and capabilities

Levers

L.B1: Increase awareness, particularly among women and marginalized groups, about their procedural rights and available opportunities to engage in climate adaptation decision-making.

L.B2: Invest in policy- and decision-making-oriented capacity development for (individual) women at all levels, especially women from Indigenous, ethnic minority and other marginalized groups including those living with disabilities. Including building capacities of individuals in accessing and using information, public speaking and lobbying.

L.B3: Invest in strengthening women's collective agency in relation to governance, i.e., strengthening networks and alliances of and for women, particularly those oriented towards women's effective engagement in civic spaces (decision-making) at all levels and across levels.

L.B4: Design engagement program at all levels that works with men and boys to raise awareness of and address unconscious bias, especially in relation to decision-making, policy and governance, drawing on good practices and lessons to avoid backlash.

L.B5: Develop and invest in capacity development targeting men and boys in climate adaptation decision-making around participating in or leading effective, inclusive processes, active listening and related approaches.

L.B6: Develop facilitation skills for gender- and socially inclusive processes, at all levels in public and civil sector (skills needed to create safe and enabling environments in climate adaptation decision-making).

Enabling factors

Vietnam: Extensive SPOs and mass organizations networks such as the Vietnamese Women's Union and Farmer's Association throughout Vietnam. Such organizations have accumulated experience and expertise in information dissemination and communications, among others.

Entry point: access to resources

Levers

L.B7: Related to L.A6 (in enhancing access to adaptation and sustainable livelihood skills training), improve access to: i) climate finance (saving services, credits and insurance); ii) trainings in microenterprise development and financial management; and iii) access to market- and enterprise-scaling opportunities for women and marginalized individuals in order to enhance their economic security, which in turn leads to improvement in their confidence, empowerment and agency in contributing to climate adaptation decision-making.

L.B8: Develop and/or improve access to gender-responsive agricultural insurance and social protection schemes (World Food Programme, 2022). This is useful in that by "transferring the risks of agricultural loss to a third party, insurance subsidies help stabilize revenues of vulnerable smallholders, who in turn become more inclined to invest in and therefore improve their agricultural production" (World Food Programme, 2022, p. 6). Here, climate finance can play a key role in supporting climate-vulnerable individuals, including women and marginalized individuals, in managing climate-related risks through climate-related insurance (Chatterjee, 2023). With improved economic and social security, women and marginalized groups are likely to be more secure and confident in contributing to climate adaptation decision-making.

L.B9: Develop and/or maintain gender budgeting in district and national policies and finance mechanisms, as well as in INGO and others, in order to ensure sufficient funds for women's capacity development as well as their travel to and engagement in climate adaptation decision-making processes at all levels. Additionally, ensure inclusive access to information regarding such funding for women's engagement in decision-making and support.

L.B10: Invest in both hardware and software, and internet connectivity, required to enable individual women and women's CSOs/networks to connect with each other, engage in capacity development and in virtual decision-making processes.

L.B11: Enhance timely public access to data and information relating to climate adaptation decisions and their effects (including information on how funds are allocated) in order to promote transparency and accountability of climate decision-making processes at all scales.

Enabling factors

Madagascar: Establishment of inclusive social protection program in some localities, with technical and financial support from UN agencies including ILO, UNICEF, UNFPA and WFP (World Food Programme, 2022).

Vietnam:
- Recognition of the need to increase funding and investment in climate adaptation initiatives and capacity-building.
- Periodic village meetings (currently 4 times a year) where data and information as mentioned in L.B7 can be shared and discussed.
- Increasing usage of digital platforms for communications.

Entry point: gender and social norms and values

Levers

L.B12: Develop or adopt gender-transformative programming at all levels, specifically around climate adaptation decision-making and actions. Focus on making constraining gender and social norms (that limit gender-equitable decision-making) explicit, and engage men and dominant groups in developing strategies to close the gender gaps in decision-making processes at all levels.

L.B13: Identify and/or promote gender-equitable decision-making champions at all levels in climate decision-making, including champions of all genders (women, men, nonbinary), age groups and backgrounds, including from marginalized groups. Support these in being identified, funded, connected and made visible.

Enabling factors

'She Grows the Future' countries: Growing awareness of gender equality and gender mainstreaming in climate adaptation decision-making.

Vietnam: Increasing awareness on gender equality among policy actors, SPOs and residents at local levels.

Entry point: rules and policies

Levers

examples of gender-equitable participation as well as cases of successfully mainstreamed gender in policy commitments through implementation in different contexts and scales (including factors, strategies and outcomes).

L.B14: In addition to existing quota systems in political decision-making processes, institute pilot and evidenced complementary measures and mechanisms to ensure their effectiveness in actualizing gender-equitable participation, including influence in climate adaptation decision-making at all levels.

L.B15: Support policy actors in incorporating and/or operationalizing a human rights-based approach in climate decision-making processes.

L.B16: Strengthen and refine systems for collection, analysis, and systematic use of gender- and sex-disaggregated data to inform policy, including routinely collecting empirical data regarding participation in climate decision-making itself, as well as relating to differentiated climate adaptation needs and outcomes (e.g., differentiated impacts of climate policy, actions and adaptations on different genders).

L.B17: Ensure that official documents and means of communications in decision-making processes, be they written or spoken, are sufficiently available in all relevant languages, including local dialects and language of ethnic minority groups necessary, for effective decision-making of all stakeholders involved.

Enabling factors

She Grows the Future' countries: Constitutional rights regarding gender equality.

Vietnam:
- Enhanced awareness and recognition of the importance of gender equity and the needs for gender-responsive policies among international communities, governments, SPOs, NGOs and communities.
- Increasing funds being mobilized for climate finance, such as funding from Green Climate Fund which supported the NAP-Sup project in Vietnam.
- Existing quota system in political decision-making.

Farmer in her agroecological garden, Ecuador, 2024

7.3 Overcoming barriers related to gender discriminatory norms and stereotyping

As evidenced in the earlier chapters, constraining gender and social norms and stereotyping persist in Vietnam, the other 'She Grows the Future' countries, and globally. In relation to climate change overall, for example, the UNFCCC (2022a, p. 1) highlights the "interplay of gender and social norms resulting in women experiencing greater vulnerability to the impacts of climate change than men, while emphasizing the significant role that women and marginalized groups can play in mitigating and adapting to climate change".

With regard to factors limiting women's participation in climate adaptation decision-making, as seen in the study findings (chapters 5 and 6), discriminatory gender and social norms and stereotyping manifest in women's relative lack of: i) access to education (as a result of child, early and forced marriage, time poverty due to unequal division of unpaid care and domestic work, and being asked to leave school to support household duties); ii) access to information and know-how with regard to climate change and adaptation; iii) access to livelihood and funding opportunities; iv) time poverty due to imbalanced share of household unpaid work; and v) confidence in their knowledge and potential contributions. While these five factors limiting participation are outcomes of constraining norms, they also feedback to reinforce constraining gender and social norms.

Table 8 presents proposed levers and enablers to redress constraining gender and social norms. As with the above sections, these are presented in four quadrants, by entry points.

Table 8: Overcoming barriers related to gender and social norms and stereotypes.

Entry point: consciousness and capabilities

Levers

L.C1: Design programming and educational curriculum that increases awareness of girls and women—as well that of boys, men and gender minorities—about gender equality and inequities in decision-making at all scales and in own contexts, including climate decision-making and the outcomes of these inequities. Additionally, invest in educational practices that create lived experiences of gender equality from a young age. This should be done in tandem with providing incentives for keeping girls in school and higher education (see 7.1).

L.C2: Deliver climate adaptation courses and trainings for policy actors at all levels including the local, incorporating gender- and sex-disaggregated data about participation in decision-making and outcomes to increase context-relevant awareness of gender inequities in climate decision-making and the outcomes of these inequities.

L.C3: In both the above, use of good practices to avoid increasing backlash; use of personal reflection to enhance awareness of gender equity in relation to each actors' own life and potential to contribute to change.

L.C4: Target investments in women's individual and collective capacities and confidence in climate decision-making, including knowledge and skills building to enhance confidence to contribute to climate adaptation decision making.

Enabling factors

'She Grows the Future' countries:
• Increasing awareness at the global level regarding discriminatory gender and social norms and practice as key constraints to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making.
• Recognition shared by women and men at the local level as well as policymakers regarding the importance of education for girls and women.
• Recognition by policymakers at national and sub-national levels and some local residents of important roles local women can play in climate adaptation initiatives.

Vietnam:
• Ongoing efforts and campaigns to end child, early and forced marriages in Vietnam at local, sub-national and national levels.
• Male migration for work has left women to oversee the running of households, which may have a positive effect on education: girls tend to stay longer in education system under female-headed households (UNFCCC, 2022a).

Entry point: access to resources

Levers

L.C5: Complementing LA6 and LB6, develop and implement strategies that stretch norms and challenge stereotypes via demonstrating women's increased self-efficacy, agency, and role in financial wellbeing of households. These can include programs that enhance: i) equitable access to and completion of education (see 7.1); ii) the involvement of girls and women in STEM education, careers, and leadership; iii) girls' and women's digital literacy and leadership; iv) livelihood opportunities and support for women and marginalized groups including in formal sector and more lucrative and nongender-traditional work; and v) scaled-up mentoring and supporting of women and girls in their education and/or careers.

L.C6: Enhance support for women and marginalized groups in accessing and securing rights as well as making decisions regarding land and natural resources.

L.C7: Identify and apply best practice lessons regarding mitigating backlash within L.C5 and L.C6.

L.C8: Provide knowledge and other support to financial and policy institutions and agencies that helps these agencies shift towards views and practices of engaging with women as equal clients, leaders and citizens. Including developing and supporting women-led institutions as novel climate finance channels.

L.C9: Consolidate and share evidence-based examples of gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making or relevant areas, including norms, mechanisms and outcomes at multiple scales. Could include video, infographics, short case narratives or other short, accessible formats.

Enabling factors

'She Grows the Future' countries: Ongoing efforts by governments, NGOs and INGOs in enhancing access to education and livelihood training.

Vietnam: Strong network of SPOs such as VWU.

Entry point: gender and social norms and values

Levers

L.C10: Use/invest in/form partnerships between CSOs, government and media to popularize more equitable gender and social norms in decision-making, including in climate decision-making and more broadly (e.g., children's or adult television).

L.C11: Invest in knowledge exchange platforms where women and marginalized groups are at the forefront of knowledge sharing, in the effort to enhance communities' knowledge sharing and shift perceptions of community members, including men, to viewing women as important and capable decision-makers. This will also in turn enhance women's confidence and agency.

L.C12: Invest in 'scaling out, up and in' gender-transformative methods and strategies (see meaning in McDougall et al., 2023), which include engaging men and boys as agents of change, shifting constraining gender and social norms and social hierarchies in climate adaptation decision-making in community processes, government policy and within organizations.

L.C13: Set goals to go beyond quotas (i.e, beyond Step 1 [attendance] on the ladder of participation): Consolidation and operationalization of strategies shown effective in different contexts to mitigate barriers to influence, equitable engagement and being valued (Steps 3, 4 and 5 on the ladder of participation).

These include addressing harassment, as well as hidden and micro-aggressions in climate decision-making.

L.D14: Surface insights, case studies and lessons to be shared on successful gender-transformative approaches and initiatives, including what works for regarding mechanisms for gender-equitable decision-making that can be applied to climate adaptation decision-making.

Enabling factors

'She Grows the Future' countries:
Existence of women-led collective groups such as women self-help groups in India (Rhiannon and Eerdewijk, 2021).

Vietnam:
• Enhanced awareness on gender equity and social inclusion at the national, sub-national and local levels in Vietnam (and more broadly) can help to lessen potential resistance to gender transformative change.
• Extensive networks of VWU and other SPOs at local, sub-national and national levels.
• Efforts and initiatives carried out by the government and SPOs (particularly the VWU) to build capacities for women and marginalized groups, focusing in particular on soft skills to increase women's confidence and agency.

Entry point: rules and policies

Levers

L.C15: Enhance policy commitments to gender-equitable climate adaptation decision-making, outlined in and operationalized through NAPs and NDCs, strengthening alignment to pre-existing policy commitments to equality (e.g., CEDAW). Develop and operationalize this via synergies across ministries and departments and bringing in CSCO and INGO inputs.

L.C16: Linking with L.C13, invest in enhancing accountability and means to operationalize commitments and quotas for equitable climate decision-making:

• Support to civil society, including gender equality CSOs, to hold governments accountable to the commitments to gender-equitable decision-making on climate adaptation, both within countries and in global fora.

• Strengthen linkages between gender CSOs with national and global climate bodies dedicated to gender equality.

• Support to relevant ministries in national governments to identify bottlenecks and mechanisms to accelerate progress towards more gender-equitable decision-making, at a minimum towards progress on setting and achieving quotas.

L.C17: Update language in global to local climate adaptation policies to avoid being gender-reinforcing (e.g., framing women as essentially 'vulnerable')

L.C18: Develop and enhance sex- and/or gender-disaggregated data collection, dissemination and reporting system at all levels and enhanced, routinized use of gender data. The latter can make current patterns of gender discriminations related to social norms and climate adaptation decision-making more visible; for example, the UNDP's Social Norm Indices have helped to shed light on gender bias with regard to political decision-making (UNDP, 2023a).

L.C19: Invest in broader social policies and investments from the district to national level, better reflecting and supporting gender equality and thus setting up for gender and social norms that enable gender-equitable participation in decision-making (e.g., parental leave for both parents, investments in care infrastructure).

L.C20: Increase policy and program commitments to ensure that child, early and forced marriage practices are no longer practiced. This include stronger law enforcement and provision of support for girls who are at risks of being victims of forced early marriage and for families who may perceive no other options.

Enabling factors

'She Grows the Future' countries:
Gender-disaggregated data and research on differentiated impacts of climate change on women and their roles as agents of change are gaining more recognition as necessary steps towards achieving inclusive governance and well-informed climate policies and initiatives at all levels. Perspectives of women are gradually being shifted from being 'vulnerable victims' to 'knowledge holders'.

Vietnam: Progress to build on towards quota targets.

The above analysis illustrates that entry points and levers relating to each of the groups of barriers are not narrow or singular in nature, but in fact are a multitude and range from individual to systemic and informal to formal. This abundance and distribution 'across quadrants' within each group of barriers underscores that measures to overcome barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making need to engage with multiple entry points concurrently.

Moreover, the connectivity between the quadrants and between entry points and levers across different groups of barriers illustrates that measures to overcome one group of barriers can also contribute to overcoming other barriers. For example, securing education for girls and women (and engaging boys and girls with gender equality within education) may contribute not only to increasing girls' and women's self-confidence and agency, but also to redressing language and communication barriers, addressing constraining gender and social norms, and overall, increasing women's representation in leadership (and thus decision-making) roles.

Overall, it is evident from the above discussions that both the barriers and the enablers are inter-related and intertwined. As such, efforts to overcome these barriers need to occur concurrently, in a comprehensive and holistic manner, involving a range of stakeholders (of all genders), and operating at all levels from local to global. The discussion above helps to elucidate ways forward, signaling those levers that are able to address more than one barrier and that would be relevant for different actors. The next chapter draws directly on these insights to present action pathways with specific recommendations.

Woman farmer, India, 2022

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8. Recommendations

Recognizing the positive multiplier effects of some of the levers (interventions) discussed in chapter 7, this chapter concludes the report by prioritizing and grouping these proposed measures and putting forward implications for the 'She Grows the Future' countries and other countries with similar contexts (in section 8.1) and actionable recommendations for Vietnam (in section 8.2).

The report proposes recommendations in three main pathways: i) enhancing individual and collective capabilities of women and marginalized groups; ii) promoting comprehensive gender-responsive policy, governance and legal systems; and iii) transforming underlying constraining gender and social norms. These roughly correspond to the 3 main groups of barriers (chapter 7).

The first pathway, in relation to capacity building of knowledge and skills, is well recognized globally as vital to promoting gender-equitable climate adaptation decision-making, and is the one that has been primarily invested in by actors in the climate decision-making arena. Here, the recommendations aim to nuance and strengthen this pathway, in terms of extending it from skills and knowledge-building to strengthening capabilities, and connecting it more explicitly with key resources, policies and systems, and gender and social norms. It also signals that one lever (intervention) can have multiplier effects on overcoming multiple barriers at once, if implemented in a well-coordinated and targeted manner.

The addition of the next two pathways (promoting gender-responsive policy, governance, regulatory and legal systems; tackling constraining gender and social norms) reflects the study's insight that the first pathway is insufficient on its own. Specifically, these second and third pathways respond to the study insights regarding the need to engage levers relating to systems (such as governance processes) and deep social structures (such as norms). These are required in order to create enabling environments for meaningful gender-equitable climate adaptation decision-making processes and outcomes.

Specifically, these two pathways aim to ensure that women can apply their (pathway 1) capacities and—more fundamentally—exercise their agency and rights to participate in decisions that affect them, in particular in climate adaptation decision-making. These pathways include ensuring that women (and people of all genders) can equitably and meaningfully contribute their inputs and influence climate adaptation decision-making process without implicit or explicit discrimination or bias. The below sub-sections highlight each of these three pathways, while recognizing that they need to be implemented concurrently in a well-coordinated manner, involving people of all genders in the process.

8.1 Implications for the four 'She Grows the Future' countries and other contexts

The study generates implications for the four 'She Grows the Future' countries and wider contexts in three main pathways more broadly.

Enhance capabilities pathway:

I.1) **For governments at all levels:** Build on the momentum and lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic period to provide adequate and gender-responsive social protection systems. These are critical to ensure inclusive education for girls and marginalized groups, as these would help

to enable low-income households to keep their children in school. Gender-responsive social protection systems, including those related to climate risks, are key to all aspects of sustainable development.

I.2) **For government, international communities, academic institutions, donors and private sectors:** Provide or support the provision of incentive and assistance systems for lower-income and rural families, especially from marginalized groups, that encourage and enable girls and gender minorities to stay in school or in higher education, including those likely to leave due to child, early and forced marriage or family finances. This may include scholarships, free lunch schemes, and opportunities to work part-time (for those above minimum age requirements for paid work) to ensure that they can manage/afford to stay in higher education.

I.3) **For governments, with support from local NGOs, INGO, international development actors and donors**: Enhance climate adaptation education and awareness about gender equity and social inclusion—and the intersection of gender equality and climate adaptation processes and outcomes—through processes involving diverse people of all genders and life stages. This could be carried out, for example, as public participatory events, creative art initiatives and/or participatory performances, that encourage dialogues and information sharing between all individuals.

I.4) **For governments, NGOs, INGOs, donors and international development communities**: Build/strengthen capacities of local leaders as well as climate adaptation decision-making process facilitators at all levels regarding the effective employment of participatory and inclusive process in climate adaptation decision-making at all levels.

Lead and/or support women's organizations in capacity-building activities related to climate adaptation, particularly in relation to capabilities for effective engagement in climate adaptation decision-making. The latter could include skills around access and use of relevant data, coalition building and communication skills. This may also include supporting the development of platforms, both digital and physical, where voices and opinions of local women on climate adaptation can be shared.

Identify and support collective capabilities and collective action and agency of women to engage in climate adaptation decision-making at the local, and particularly the subnational, national, regional and global scales, as well as facilitating linkages of these new or existing networks to established women-led climate networks and bodies.

I.5) **For government, SPOs, NGOs, international and national development actors, private sectors and academic institutions**: Building on levers discussed in chapter 7, contribute to opportunities for women's increased self-efficacy, agency and economic independence by enhancing: equitable access to and completion of education; access to livelihood opportunities including training and mentoring; and access to resources (rights and controls over assets) and funding (including climate finance for climate adaptation initiatives), where applicable.

Target investments to support women's individual and collective capabilities and confidence in climate decision-making, including knowledge and skills building to enhance confidence to contribute to climate adaptation decision-making. Improved agency and economic independence of women could in turn lead to enhanced participation of women and marginalized individuals in climate adaptation decision-making, beyond attendance stage.

Promote gender-responsive policies, governance systems, and legal frameworks pathway:

I.6) **For governments and inter-governmental organizations**: Raise ambitions and effectiveness of quota systems for gender-equitable climate adaptation decision-making at all scales. Set clear indicators and monitoring and evaluation frameworks and processes (with funding and capacities) to track and accelerate the progress to meet these targets.

Moreover, while setting or increasing the target percentages (the ambitions regarding attendance [Step 1]), commit to enhancing the effective operationalization of quotas that are in place, in terms of enhancing the quality of the gender-equitable participation (i.e., understanding, contributing, being valued and having equitable influence [Steps 2-5]). As a start, government units and inter-governmental organizations will benefit from acknowledging that while quotas are a step in the right direction, and necessary at this stage, they alone are not sufficient to address gender inequity in women's influence in climate adaptation decision-making. In this regard, additional complementary, evidence-based measures are needed, including initiatives to concurrently design processes and engage facilitators for safe and enabling environments, to address constraining gender and social norms, as well as stereotypes and hidden biases and microaggressions and harassment at play in or shaping climate adaptation decision-making (more details in the third pathway).

I.7) **For governments, NGOS and INGOs, international development actors, and donors:** Keep moving towards formulating and implementing gender-transformative programming in relation to climate adaptation. Draw from past experiences and lessons learnt from mainstreaming sustainability as well as good practices from national to local levels and apply them to the process of gender-transformative approaches in promoting gender-equitable participation in the climate adaptation decision-making process at every level.

I.8**) For government, international development actors and donors:** Accelerate progress in systematic development of gender-/sex-disaggregated climate data and gender data, particularly data on gendered participation in climate decision-making at all levels and gender-differentiated (intersectional) priorities and perceptions of risks relating to climate adaptation (i.e., to inform decision-making). Furthermore, these could include evidence showing what measures or actions have worked to close the gaps in decision-making.

For INGOs and NGOs: In addition to assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation methods, some of the Social Accountability tools (Khadka & Bhattarai, 2012) such as Community Score Cards developed by CARE (CARE, 2021, 2023, p. webpage) can be effective for gender-/sex-disaggregated impact data collection and analysis to ensure that public services respond to and meet the needs of individuals of all genders at every scale. Through the process, citizens can enhance their agency, and government, development practitioners and donors can strengthen relationships with the communities as well as receiving more inclusive and gender-/sex-disaggregated data in order to inform policies and services to be more responsive to the needs of local citizens of all genders.

I.9) **For governments, NGOs, and INGOs and international development actors:** Ensure that official documents and information relevant to climate adaptation strategies and decision-making, as well as official documents related to basic rights of all individuals including Indigenous Peoples and those from different ethnic groups, are available in suitable languages and delivery channels.

Transform constraining gender and social norms pathway:

I.10) **For governments, NGOs, INGOs, private sector and international development actors and donors:** Building from the levers identified in chapter 7, support the development of knowledge exchange platforms, in the forms of arts, cultures and/or local knowledge, where women and marginalized groups are at the forefront of content sharing.

I.11) **For government, SPOs, NGOs, international and national development actors, and academic institutions**: Fund and facilitate research including participatory action research or piloting with Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) on gender-transformative approaches in relation to climate adaptation decision-making at and across multiple scales. As above, this could include community-level gender-transformative programming on climate adaptation that is developed or tailored to include modules on decision-making. The latter module(s) should include a household and community scale focus, but ideally also introduce norms and decision-making at subnational, national and regional scales.

More broadly, these actors can usefully generate and share evidence and/or case studies (what works/what does not, why, where) more widely to inform transformative policies and measures at all scales. This involves research to surface how gender-transformative methods and strategies can be adapted and 'scaled-out' to multiple communities, 'scaled up' from local to higher levels, and 'scaled in' to induce transformation in constraining norms climate adaptation decision-making processes and bodies (McDougall, Elias, et al., 2023). This process requires engaging men and boys as active agents of change and implies investments in: i) sharing of successful gender transformative models and strategies from one community to others (e.g. one village to another) in a context-responsive manner; ii) the adoption of gender-transformative models or strategies at the national and regional levels; and iii) application of gender-transformative models and strategies within implementing agencies or projects and the climate adaptation decision making processes they convene. By applying successful gender-transformative models and strategies in multiple directions and spaces, along the vertical scale from local to national and global levels as well as across locations and related organizations, in context-specific manners, we can accelerate the process and enhance the scope of the much-needed gender and social transformation in the context of climate adaptation and more broadly.

Connecting to the earlier recommendations on data and policy**,** research is needed to provide high-quality data and effective data use practices in relation to how gendered impacts of climate change on physical, mental, social and economic well-being of individuals and communities can be cost-effectively and accurately monitored, analyzed and systematically (routinely) used to inform climate-related decision making and policy.

I.12) **For governments, NGOs, INGOs, private sectors and international development actors and donors:** Build on and expand existing successful gender-transformative models, adapting to climate adaptation decision-making (similar to and drawing on I.10 on research). For example, the Social Accountability Analysis developed by CARE (CARE, 2018b), a community-led gender and social transformative model, highlights the importance of engaging all genders and employing participatory methods in exploring and challenging gender and social norms, beliefs and practices. In line with the above proposed recommendations in the first pathway, the model enhances individual and collective agency of people in the community in transforming the (power) relations and the underlying structures that shape their life and communities. The model also proposes similar self- and collective reflection and transformation of the implementing agency of the model. Similarly, in recognition of the intergenerational equity aspects of climate, the successful Farmer Field School model's adaptation into *Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools* can be further adapted to climate adaptation decision-making, while keeping their gender-transformative aspects including engaging with gender-based violence.

8.2 Recommendations and action points for Vietnam by pathways

Enhance capabilities pathway:

The study highlights that investing in capacity-building for women and marginalized groups contributes to addressing a number of barriers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making, particularly barriers related to: i) limited education, information, knowledge, and training for women and marginalized groups; ii) underrepresentation of women in leadership positions; iii) discriminatory gender and social norms and practices; iv) language and literacy; and v) lack of confidence and agency of women and marginalized groups. Actionable steps include R1-R3.

R1) **For government agencies**: Ensure accessibility to education, at least to the secondary school level for all, particularly for girls and gender minorities[17] from low-income households in rural areas. This objective could be supported by creating incentive systems such as free lunch schemes, scholarships, and part-time internship opportunities for university students in order to ensure that girls, young women, and marginalized individuals from lower-income and/or remote households can stay in the education system. Furthermore, for the tertiary level education, measures can include scholarships and bursaries for girls and gender minorities to pursue formal higher education, particularly in STEM, climate and environmental science, economics, politics, governances, and public policies as well as vocational or professional development training in negotiation, mediation, and leadership for examples.

R2) **For government agencies:** Provide information on climate change and climate adaptation for women and marginalized groups, and provide and/or facilitate the provisions of training for: i) sustainable livelihoods, including climate-smart agricultural skills and practices, vocational skills, microenterprise and financial management (including financial literacy); ii) adult education and literacy classes; and iii) soft skill and confidence-building workshops such as public speaking and communication skills. Training should be co-developed with the community and delivered in a gender-responsive and well-coordinated manner, ensuring the inclusion of all three crucial elements and in a sequence and/or format that best suits each community in question.

For NGOs, INGOs and SPOs, particularly VWU at the village and provincial levels: Support the dissemination of climate change and adaptation information and facilitate the co-development and delivery of the trainings and workshops mentioned above, particularly in terms of contents and logistics (time and venues) and languages, with the targeted gender and social groups to optimize the benefits of programs offered.

R3) For **government agencies, together with SPOs, NGOs, INGOs, and private sector actors:** Develop and/or scale up 'role model' schemes, whereby women and men leaders or representatives from successful organizations and initiatives support, mentor and champion women and girls in their pursuits of higher education and professional endeavors including leadership roles. Through this and by supporting and introducing the women mentees in professional networks, the role models or mentors can open doors and enable new generations of women to take on more leadership and decision-making roles in their communities, networks, and professional spheres, which pave the way and will translate to enhancing women's leadership with regard to climate adaptation.

17 Gender minority defined here as individual whose gender identity is different from their sex (male, female) assigned at birth.

R4) **For the government, with the support of SPOs, especially VWUs at sub-national and local levels, and international development actors and donors**: Develop knowledge exchange platforms regarding climate adaptation and related issues, where women and marginalized groups are at the forefront of and have safe spaces for knowledge sharing. These may support efforts to enhance and distribute local knowledge, while shifting perceptions of community members, including women and marginalized groups, regarding themselves as valuable knowledge holders. In the initial phases, mobilize more women and marginalized individuals to join and facilitate comfortable spaces where they are confident to share their insights. This could be complemented with consultations and/or knowledge-sharing workshops with different genders, ethnic groups, life stages, and physical needs separately. Once these separate workshops have been held and individuals involved feel more comfortable, these shared insights could then be shared more widely in open platforms.

Promote gender-responsive policies, governance system, and legal framework pathway:

Comprehensive, well-targeted, and gender-responsive policy and legal frameworks (including constitutions, laws and property rights) that apply a human rights-based approach, supported by high quality sex- and/or gender-disaggregated and gender data and empirical evidence, are needed to ensure gender-equitable and effective climate adaptation decision-making processes and outcomes. Actionable steps include the following R5) – R11).

R5) **For government agencies, with support from SPOs, particularly VWU at provincial, district and local levels, as data collection networks:** Establish and/or improve the collection, analysis and dissemination of sex-/gender-disaggregated and gender data relating to climate change, such as impacts and needs and climate adaptation actions and strategies. More specifically, leverage the VWU, in collaboration with the government at each scale, to collect, analyze and share data and insights regarding gendered participation in climate adaption-related decision-making processes/forums. In doing so, use the Ladder of Participation to collect data on steps beyond attendance. In measuring, as participation on Steps 2-5 of the ladder of participation is more nuanced, purposively select and monitor this using qualitative or other fit for purpose data to create sufficient, albeit not comprehensive, insights over time.

The data collection, analysis and dissemination efforts could be spearheaded and coordinated by General Statistics Office of Vietnam. Complementing the existing gender indicators[18] relating to the NAP (2022), indicators such as percentages of women attending climate-related meetings (policy formulation at the national level, policy implementation at the sub-national and local levels) and the percentages of inputs (including questions, ideas and perspectives) collected from women in these meetings could help to shed light on the nature of, and ways to enhance, gendered participation in climate adaptation decision-making in order to encourage active participation of women.

For the international community including INGOs and donors: Provide technical and financial support to develop and strengthen the data collection, analysis and dissemination as described above.

18 The most recent progress in this area is the government's decision to include two gender indicators in the monitoring, evaluation and learning system of NAP approved by the Prime Minister in 2022. These indicators are: i) percentage of women in vulnerable areas, receiving vocational training and shifting their livelihood to be more adaptive and ii) percentage of women in vulnerable areas having received trainings in soft skills, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reductions (Decision No 148/QD-TTg on the Promotion of a National Level Monitoring and Evaluation

R6) **For government agencies at all scales:** Better ensure that women's and marginalized groups' procedural as well as substantive rights are upheld and operationalized. This requires investments in internal government culture and programs enabling consistent knowledge, skills and commitment across staff at all levels. Externally, it involves government efforts in promoting understanding and awareness regarding women's and marginalized groups' rights to the women and marginalized groups and related stakeholders and policy actors, and how to claim these rights and gain controls over assets, resources, basic services and benefits more widely, and in the languages and channels most suitable to each group of individuals (based on gender, life stage, ethnicity, ability, socio-economic condition, and location, among others). Specifically, it includes getting feedback from women and marginalized groups to inform improvements to such systems (to access and claim rights) such that they are more accessible, less intimidating or opaque, and more responsive in design. Access to and control over land, natural resources, (climate) finance in terms of credits and/or insurance, as well as access to markets (in order to support the viability and expansion of income generating initiatives/enterprises) are particularly important to sustainable livelihoods as well as to effective climate adaptation.

R7) **For government agencies:** Ensure that all relevant climate adaptation-related documents, consultations and feedback processes are available in the languages and formats that are suitable to each group of individuals from all genders, ethnicities, locations, and life stages, among others, including nonliterate people. Particularly important in connection with this is to ensure that the facilitators running the consultations have effective capacities and employ the processes that are designed to enable inclusion.

For SPOs, particularly VWUs at sub-national and local levels: Play a key role in supporting translations and interpretations of the relevant documents, meetings and consultations processes in local communities. As an interim measure, VWU and/or other related SPOs may choose to run preparatory sessions with women and with marginalized groups, including nonliterate individuals and those who do not speak the dominant language, in advance of mixed gender, full commune meetings and processes.

R8) **For government agencies:** Adequately allocate human and financial resources and develop (or maintain) gender budgeting to accelerate gender mainstreaming across all climate-related programs and agencies. These enhanced resources could be used to promote: i) gender equity and social inclusion (GESI) capacity building for government officials, particularly including people of all genders in more senior positions at all scales; ii) development and dissemination of clear GESI guidelines and toolkits for practical implementations appropriate to all sectors and scales; and iii) facilitation and enhancement of women's leadership roles and participation in climate adaptation decision-making at all scales. The development and dissemination of the guidelines and toolkits could involve and draw on the expertise and inputs from MOLISA, CEMA and VWU.

R9) **For SPOs, particularly VWU at all levels, NGOs and INGOs:** Strengthen coordination amongst each other and with government and leverage existing platforms for cross-sectoral and multi-stakeholder exchanges on gender mainstreaming, such as in the Climate Change Working Group or the Gender Working Group.

R10) **For SPOs, particularly VWUs at all levels**: Optimize extensive networks and outreach capabilities by providing more capacity-building and technical trainings to field and outreach officers, particularly women from marginalized groups. This would help to enhance roles as effective local representatives and facilitators for local residents, particularly for women who may not yet feel sufficiently confident to share their concerns and perspectives in public meetings or venues.

R11) **For international development communities and donor groups:** Provide technical and financial assistance to governments and national and local level SPOs in Vietnam in developing gender-responsive policy measures, developing GESI guidelines and toolboxes in effectively integrating gender in the NDCs, NAPs, climate related policies, measures and initiatives. In addition to this, such resources can be invested in allocating and/or training up GESI experts in relevant ministries, particularly MONRE and MARD, as well as creating evaluative mechanism for progress made in gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making in each ministry and agency.

Transform constraining gender and social norms pathway:

Discriminatory gender and social norms and resulting gender stereotyping (for example where men may be perceived as more equipped leaders and decisionmakers (McDougall, Del Duca, et al., 2023) and constraining gender practices (such as child, early and forced marriage) limit women and marginalized groups from equitably contributing to climate adaptation decision-making. In order to ensure that women and marginalized groups have equitable voices and meaningful opportunities to contribute to climate adaptation decision-making where their inputs will be valued and justly influencing, a shift in gender and social norms needs to occur at every scale. In order to overcome these deep underlying barriers, actionable steps R12-R15 are proposed as follows.

R12) **For government agencies, with support from SPOs, international development actors and donors:** Raise awareness about the importance of gender equity, its benefits to all and how to improve it in organizations, communities and households. Start internally by identifying areas to engage with within the public sector at all levels and being transparent about commitments, strategies and progress. Externally, develop national to local campaigns advocating for more balanced division of time spent on unpaid domestic and care responsibilities among household members—ensuring these are not messages from the VWU, but from men in traditionally male-dominated organizations (that are now 'walking the walk').

R13) **For government agencies, with support from SPOs (particularly VWU at sub-national and local levels), international development actors and donors:** Provide, or support the provision of, workshops, campaigns and events that engage people of all genders, in iterative (over time) participatory transformation-oriented processes or events. These would draw on and adapt lessons from gender transformative approaches and embed them in technical workshops, livelihood and skill trainings, creative arts, theatre and performances and/or digital engagements through games or content sharing. Linking with the first pathway, invest in developing knowledge exchange platforms, both physical and digital, where local knowledge held by women and marginalized groups can be shared with policy actors, development practitioners, researchers and the community at large, highlighting women and marginalized groups as knowledge holders.

R14) **For governments, together with SPOs, researchers, international development actors and donors:** Linking with the above (R13), highlight women and marginalized groups as valuable agents of change and promote women's agency in participating and influencing decisions and actions on climate adaptation. This can be through co-generation of evidence, including evidenced-based research and case studies on women as agents of change, as well as piloting new methods and approaches to promote agency of women and gender minorities in climate adaptation decision-making and actions**.** Given this study's limitations regarding the small sample size and short timeline, future research can replicate and adapt this study methodology to assess the extent to which other parts of Vietnam experience similar barriers and enablers and to what extent the strategies proposed here would apply. Participatory action research, including qualitative and quantitative measures, would be a valuable next step to adapt and pilot the levers and recommendations. Additional important research questions to consider include: a) how the arts, culture, heritage and local knowledge can effectively be applied and engaged to enhance agency of women and marginalized individuals and groups in influencing and inform-

ing climate adaptation decision-making, practices, policies from the bottom up (from local to global scales); and b) how existing institutional channels, including the VWU and the feedback mechanisms, that are meant to bridge scales (moving climate adaptation inputs up from local to national) can be strengthened.

R15) **For the government, with support from VWU particularly at sub-national and local levels:** Continue strengthening and expanding the provision of social and cultural events within and between local communities engaging individuals of all genders, life stages and socio-economic backgrounds. These events can also be used as initial platforms to help enhance the confidence and agency of women and marginalized groups in participating in events and discussions, including conversations related to climate adaptation. This in turn could lead to women and marginalized groups having more confidence and agency in the climate adaptation decision-making process, beyond meeting attendance.

In connection to the third pathway, the report puts forward three main areas for future research. First, for Vietnam, participatory action research to test and evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed recommendations, co-generating both qualitative and both qualitative and quantitative data in communities with similar social and economic backgrounds in other parts of Vietnam, would be a valuable next step. Second, for Vietnam and more broadly, research to co-generate more evidence on women as agents of change in climate adaptation decision-making and actions would be highly beneficial in highlighting women and marginalized groups as agents of change in climate adaptation. Third, gender-transformative participatory action research and/or pilots that surface how gender-transformative methods and strategies can be effectively adapted and 'scaled-up' from local to higher levels, 'scaled-out' to multiple communities and 'scaled in' to induce transformation in constraining norms in relation to climate adaptation decision-making processes and bodies (McDougall, Elias, et al., 2023), engaging all genders, would be valuable next steps for all the study contexts and more broadly..

In conclusion, the study has proposed three interconnected pathways as a way forward towards more gender-equitable decision making in climate adaptation. While the first pathway focuses on capability and thus agency-building of women and marginalized individuals and groups, the second pathway works to reduce barriers in climate adaptation policies and systems (including decision-making processes) that may resist/constrain this (newly developed or enhanced) agency. Shaping both of these, the third pathway seeks to address the deep, underlying and intangible, structural factors of constraining norms and values. These otherwise lead to people (of all genders) inhibiting agency of less powerful actors and groups--and more fundamentally lead to the continous re-creation of persistent gender biases and inequities in climate adaptation decision-making. In this regard, the report highlights that these three pathways need to be implemented concurrently, at all scales, involving all genders in the processes, and paying particular attention to ensuring the more invisible and underlying barriers are effectively and systemically addressed.

ANNEX

Farmer sorting grains, India, 2022

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Annex 1: Glossary

Barriers: Formal and informal constraints. Formal barriers include, for example limited access to resources such as education and information, or rules, policies and laws that are exclusionary. Informal barriers include individuals' limited or perceived inadequate knowledge, skills or political consciousness, as well as informal norms and exclusionary practices such as discriminatory gender and social norms (UNFCCC, 2022a).

Climate adaptation: The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In some natural systems, human interventions may facilitate adjustments to expected climate and its effect (IPCC, 2014).

Enabling factor: Resources, infrastructures, services, policies and programmes already in place that can be leveraged, upscaled and/or improved for more efficiency and inclusion.

Gender: A fluid social and cultural construct that may differ from biological sex (female, male, intersex). "Gender refers to socially constructed identities, attributes and roles for women and men. Society's social and cultural meaning for these biological differences result in hierarchical relationships between women and men, and the distribution of power and rights favoring men and disadvantaging women. This social positioning of women and men is affected by political, economic, cultural, social, religious, ideological and environmental factors and can likewise be changed by culture, society and community" (CARE, 2018a, p. 10; CEDAW, 2010).

Gender-based violence (GBV): Any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will based on gender differences, norms, roles and expectations. There are different kinds of violence including (but not limited to) physical, verbal, sexual, psychological and socio-economic violence (CARE, 2018a). This definition can also be broadened to also include structural violence, acknowledging the impact of patriarchal norms—their acceptance and manifestation. Structural violence manifests in more subtle ways where perpetrators are often unidentifiable because violence is legitimized by political or cultural systems, and can include unequal access and control over resources, unequal decision-making power (Dilts, 2012; Galtung, 1990; Lee, 2019; Nguyen et al., Forthcoming).

Gender division of labor: as defined by the CARE glossary of gender-related terms, refers to "the way each society divides work among men and women, boys and girls, according to socially established gender roles or what is considered suitable and valuable for each sex" (CARE, 2018a, p. 13). Within the division of labor, there are several types of roles. "Productive roles: activities carried out by men and women in order to produce goods and services either for sale, exchange, or to meet the subsistence needs of the family. Reproductive roles: activities needed to ensure the reproduction of society's labor force. This includes housework like cleaning, cooking, childbearing, rearing, and caring for family members. These tasks are done mostly by women. Community managing roles: activities undertaken primarily by women at the community level as an extension of their reproductive role, ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources such as the collective consumption of water, health care and education. This is voluntary unpaid work performed during "free" time. Community politics roles: activities undertaken primarily by men at the community level often within the framework of national politics. This officially recognized leadership role may be paid directly or result in increased power or status" (CARE, 2018a, p. 13).

Gender-equitable participation: Equitable opportunities for women, men and non-binary peo-

ple (from an intersectional lens) to take part in decision-making processes that affect them, beyond attendance but including having access to relevant information, and being able to influence decisions by sharing one's opinions while being valued and respected (Johnson et al., 2021).

Gender norms: "Whereby ideas about how men and women should be acting. We internalize and learn these "rules" early in life. They set up a life cycle of gender socialization and stereotyping. In other words, gender norms are the standards and expectations to which gender identity generally conforms within a range that defines a particular society, culture and community at that point in time" (AWID 2004 as cited in CARE, 2018a).

Gender-sensitive: Approach whereby gender is seen as "a means to reach set development goals. Addressing gender and social norms, roles and access to resources is needed to reach project goals" (CARE, 2018a, p. 17).

Gender-responsive: Also interpreted as gender-positive by CARE, it is an approach whereby "gender is central to achieving positive development outcomes. Changing gender and social norms, roles and access to resources is a key component of project outcomes" (CARE. 2018a, p.17).

Gender-transformative: Approach whereby "gender is central to promoting gender equality and achieving positive development outcomes. Transforming unequal gender relations to promote shared power, control of resources, decision-making, and support for women's empowerment" (CARE, 2018a).

Intersectionality: The way in which various social marginalizations and discriminations interact with each other and gender to compound (Crenshaw 1990). It starts from the premise that people live multiple, layered identities derived from social relations, history and the operation of structures of power. People are members of more than one community at the same time, and can simultaneously experience oppression and privilege (e.g., a woman may be a respected medical professional yet suffer domestic violence in her home). Intersectional analysis aims to reveal multiple identities, exposing the different types of discrimination and disadvantage that occur as a consequence of the combination of identities (AWID 2004 as cited in CARE, 2018, p. 21).

Leverage points: Entry points, places to intervene within a complex system (e.g., the global climate adaptation policy arena) to produce change affecting the entire system.

Levers: Interventions, means and strategies by which to intervene in a leverage point (e.g., using enabling factors).

Annex 2. Methodology

A2.1 Overview

The desk-based research involved literature reviews of policy discussions and secondary data from academic papers and grey literature including working papers, official documents and reports (technical, research, annual or evaluation reports) from government and inter-governmental agencies, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations. The study provides an overview of climate policy frameworks and gender equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making at the global scale, reviewing the current global debates, discussions and framings, including definitions, policy commitments, gaps, and benefits of gender-equitable decision-making. Similarly, at the national scale, this study then examines the four 'She Grows the Future' countries, namely Ecuador, India, Madagascar and Vietnam, where Fondation L'Oréal and CARE have been working to empower women farmers in these four countries, as outlined in box 11. The study reviews commitments to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making (if any) in the four countries' NDCs and NAPs, and identifies common barriers and enablers to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation-related decision-making.

Box 11. She Grows the Future program by CARE and Fondation L'Oréal.

CARE and Fondation L'Oréal, through the She Grows the Future program, have been working to empower more than 5,500 women farmers in Ecuador, Madagascar, India and Vietnam, supporting their transition to sustainable, resilient and equitable agricultural practices while increasing their share of voice on climate adaptation practices within their communities. From 2021 to 2024, CARE and its local partners have established farmer field business schools, supported women entrepreneurship, and established spaces for dialogue with authorities on climate adaptation practices. This pilot phase of the program will be expanded and scaled up from 2024 to 2027.

Zooming in from the four countries, the study further investigates a case study of Vietnam. Vietnam has been chosen as a case study based on three main criteria: climate vulnerability, gender equality and socio-economic conditions. Vietnam has been identified as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change due to its long coastline, low-lying deltas and increasing exposure to hazards, with extreme weather events increasing in frequency and severity (UNDP, 2023b). Out of the four **'She Grows the Future'** countries, Vietnam ranks the first in gender equality (UNDP, 2022) and second in human development (behind Ecuador) (UNDP, 2022). In terms of Global Gender Gap, Vietnam represents the middle position among the four 'She Grows the Future' countries (World Economic Forum, 2023). As such, a case study on Vietnam offers an opportunity to better understand if, how and to what extent gender equality could translate to gender-equitable participation in climate adaptation decision-making, and if the enablers (leverage points, levers and enabling factors) present in Vietnam could offer potential implications and/ or examples for other countries with similar contexts, or those with lower levels of gender equality.

The case study of Vietnam pursues the overarching aims in relation to 3 scales—local, sub-national, national—and considers cross-scalar interactions based on a desk-based research and primary data collection, as follows. This employed KIIs, SSIs and FGDs as primary data collection methods in Vietnam, involving 113 respondents and 5 key informants.

National level discussions for Vietnam focus on the National Climate Change Strategy and the NAP, using an intersectional lens to map the stakeholders involved in the Strategy development process, their relative engagement/participation (including influence) and their role in the implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy, including stakeholders representing the interests of women and marginalized socio-economic groups, as well as the formal and informal barriers and enablers to gender-equitable participation in these processes.

Sub-national level discussions elucidate the role of sub-national authorities, SPOs and other actors in the development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the NAP at the sub-national levels, and surface barriers and enablers that facilitate or hamper gender-equitable participation in such processes.

Local level discussions surface climate adaptation priorities of people of different genders and social groups at the community scale and illuminate how climate adaptation issues are discussed and the barriers and enablers (leverage points, levers and enabling factors) that people of different genders from different social groups experience in related decision-making processes.

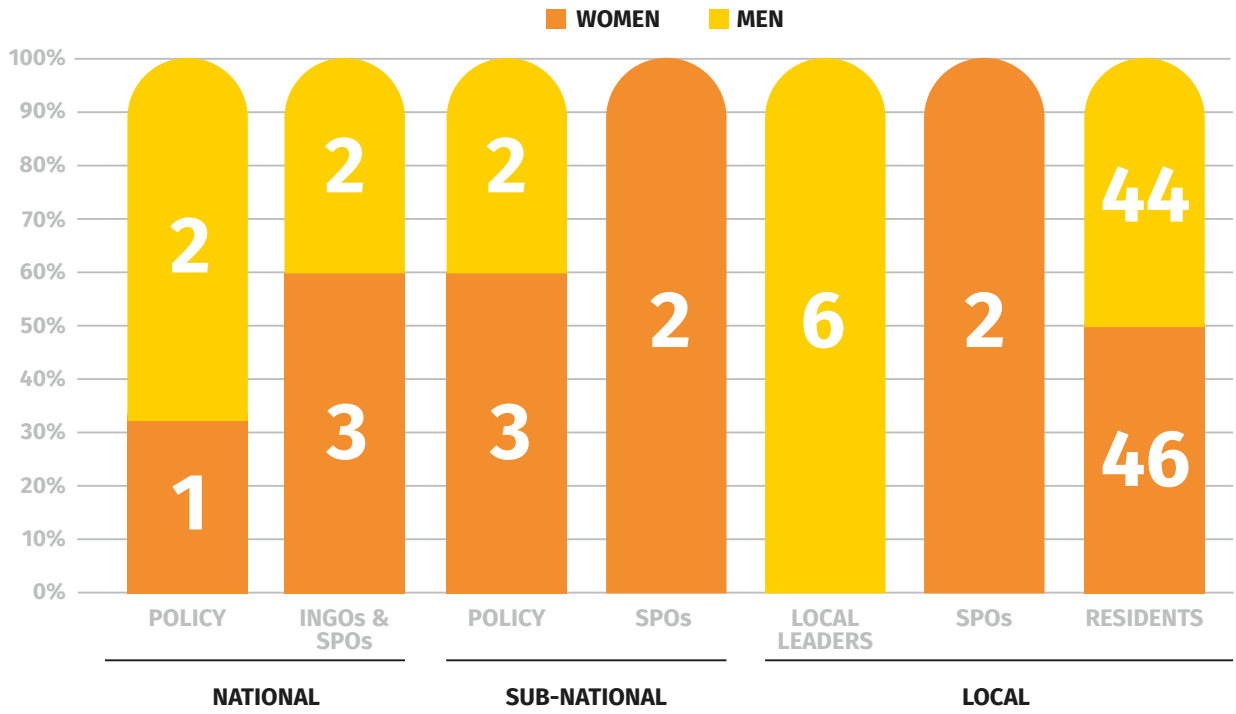
The study also discusses multi-scalar interaction, generating insights into if and how barriers and enablers of gender-equitable participation influence each other and vary between different levels of climate adaptation related decision-making, and what the implications for adaptive capacities and equity are.

A2.2 Primary data collection in Vietnam

The main primary data collection methods employed comprise KIIs, in-depth SSIs and FGDs, involving participatory tools such as drawings, voting and scorings with local residents. Guided by an intersectional gender lens, the study ensured gender-balanced representations in the sample groups, with women being slightly oversampled due to the nature of the topic under discussion, and included individuals from different life stages, ethnicities, social statuses and abilities.

For primary data collection at the national level, the study first interviewed 5 key informants prior to the data collection in order to help guide the team to: i) engage with the appropriate organizations; ii) develop suitable questions for the SSIs; and iii) gain adequate background information on the topics at hand. Based on the information shared through the KIIs, two sets of questions were developed for the national policy actors and for national representatives of INGOs and SPOs. Interviews with national-level stakeholders, including KIIs and SSIs, were conducted online. Data collection activities at the subnational and local levels were conducted in person from the 22-31 May 2023. The case study sites for this research are located in the Tan Uyên District of Lai Châu province. Lai Châu province is situated in the northwestern part of Vietnam, approximately 400 km from Hanoi. Within this province, Tan Uyên is a rural district, with a population of 85,908 (Statoids, n.d.), covering an area of 1,630 km². At the local level, two communes were selected based on their vulnerability to climate change (similar levels in both communes) and but with variables in terms of social, cultural and economic backgrounds. The Trung Dong commune is located closer to the district center and is considered more socially and economically developed as compared to Ho Mit, which is more isolated and overall poorer. In terms of ethnicity, the majority of residents in Ho Mit are Hmong, while Trung Dong is characterized by its ethnic diversity, with residents from Tai, Hmong, Kinh and Kho Mu background cohabiting. The samples by scales, stakeholders and genders are presented in figure 12.

Figure 12: Respondents sample by scale, stakeholder type and gender.



Source: Authors' original figure.

Focus groups were organized to capture group dynamics and create safe spaces for participants to express themselves among people they are relatively familiar with, and who share some social characteristics that can impact expressing oneself in a group (e.g., gender, poverty etc.). In each FGD, the study aimed to include individuals from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, particularly in terms of ethnicities and life stages, where possible. The main variables used to design focus groups are presented in table 9.

Table 9. Sampling strategy for focus group discussions.

	Men	Women
More empowered (considered more influential in decision-making, e.g., people who are relatively more educated and better off financially, local village leaders and SPO chapters)	**1 group in Trung Dong** **1 group in Ho Mit**	**1 group in Trung Dong** **1 group in Ho Mit**
Less empowered (considered less influential in decision-making, e.g., people who are relatively less educated and poorer, not involved in leadership position, farmers)	**1 group in Trung Dong** **1 group in Ho Mit**	**1 group in Trung Dong** **1 group in Ho Mit**

In terms of methodology for date collection, and in order to understand the nature of participation in climate decision-making among the local residents in both communes, the Five Degrees of Inclusion Framework (Johnson et al., 2021) was employed to shape the nature and sequences of the questions in both SSIs and FGDs. To engage with the respondents in a participatory manner, the ladder of power (Petesch & Bullock, 2018) exercise was adapted to shape the design of participatory activities in the SSIs and FGDs.

A2.3 Validation process

To validate the primary data collected at all scales, two different validation processes have been designed and implemented. For study participants at the national and sub-national scales, a two-hour online validation workshop was held on 19 October, 2023. These stakeholders were invited by email in English or Vietnamese Kinh language, and a draft, translated version of the executive summary including recommendations were shared with them to allow for written feedback. The validation workshop featured a presentation of the key findings and recommendations by the SEI research team, and ample time for questions and discussions. Simultaneous interpretation was provided in Vietnamese Kinh language and in English to facilitate communications and feedback.

To address the language, literacy and connectivity barriers at the local with communities in Ho Mit and Trung Dong, a tailored validation process has been designed. This entailed the production of cartoon stories that were then presented to the communities split into small groups based on gender and ethnicity/language, with a feedback process facilitated by local teams of trusted community organizers. Between 12 and 17 December 2023, nine validation workshops were conducted, conveying participants and respondents involved in the data collection. 27 people participated in the validation process in Ho Mit (15 women, 12 men) and 41 in Trung Dong (25 women, 16 men).

Four cartoon stories were prepared, summarizing key findings to be validated by the communities. Each story features relatable characters in villages that could be Ho Mit or Trung Dong, experiencing some barriers to a specific degree of participation (attending, understanding, speaking, being heard and influencing decisions); followed by a suggested strategy to address the barrier, and the subsequent expected outcome of this strategy. The four stories are presented in Annex 4. The stories were then disseminated through validation workshops by local partners from the VWU and the VSLA groups, and participants were asked to share any feedback by answering the following questions for each story: (i) are the barriers relatable in their community?; (ii) are the proposed solutions feasible and relevant to their context?; and (iii) what should be changed in the story to make it more accurate? The feedback collected by the facilitators was then translated into English and integrated into relevant sections of the report to provide nuance and adjust interpretation of the findings.

A2.4 Ethics

In order to prevent and mitigate potential risks associated with conducting research involving human subjects, a thorough ethics plan has been developed and approved by the SEI in-house ethics committee (reference number 35/21FEB2023). All research participants have been provided with an information sheet, outlining the interview/ FGD processes, the aims of the study and the participant rights to a) skip any questions or activities; b) not take part in the data collection; c) withdraw at any time without repercussion. Prior to this, the participants were asked to sign a consent form. Participant information sheets and consent forms were systematically read out loud, explained and, when required, translated, to ensure informed consent. Local residents have been provided with compensation for the time they spent on the study.

All respondents' personal details and quotes have been anonymized with codes, containing the following information: methods of research, scales and locations, types of stakeholders and genders.

A2.5 Limitations

The study has five key limitations as follows.

01. The global and four country analyses employ different research methods than the research methods used in the Vietnam case study. The information and data employed for the discussions at the global and national levels for Ecuador, India and Madagascar are based only on secondary data obtained from the desk-based research. As interviews and primary data collections were not conducted at this level, the richness of information is limited at the global and four country level analysis, compared to the Vietnam case study.

02. The sample used in this report for the Vietnam case study is not representative. For the Vietnam case study, while the study tried to include key stakeholders at national and sub-national levels from the policy-making and sociopolitical organizations in the primary data collection samples, the numbers were still relatively limited as compared to the local levels. At the local level, the case study sites reflect the context of rural mountainous areas with a high level ethnic diversity and high vulnerability to droughts, floods and landslides. These characteristics differ from the other regions of climate-vulnerable communities in Vietnam, particularly the low-lying coastal and river delta regions that are highly vulnerable to rising sea-levels and other regions of the countries where the Kinh ethnic group is largely dominant.

03. For the case study of Vietnam, translation was required to collect primary data in Vietnam, which comes with a certain degree of limitations of losing or misinterpreting certain information in the process. In some cases, two levels of interpretation were necessary, as the research team asked questions in English that were translated to Kinh by trained interpreters, and then translated from Kinh to the language of the interviewee (Hmong, Kho Mu, Tai) by a bilingual local representative of the women's union who supported the facilitation of some of the interviews and FGDs or bilingual local residents. It is also possible that the presence of this Women's Union representative intimidated respondents and impacted on the responses given to the research team.

04. In addition to the language and interpretation challenges, despite the research team's best efforts to create open and relaxing environments and atmospheres during the SIIs and FGDs, such as coming to the respondents' houses or locations of their convenience in an open and humble manner, it was still possible that some local residents might be apprehensive and uncomfortable in speaking and openly sharing their experiences and concerns to the team, as the team was consisted of non-Vietnamese researchers whom they had not seen before and might not see again.

05. Lastly, conducting research in Vietnam is strictly regulated by research permits, which included submission of detailed agendas of data collection activities. It was explained that this was necessary for the government to be informed of the activities conducted by non-Vietnamese research for monitoring purposes. These possibilities and awareness, particularly from the participants' parts, might have potentially created, in some cases, certain limitations or biases in their responses.

Annex 3. Background on climate policy in Vietnam

In 2016, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc issued Resolution No. 93/NQ-CP, ratifying the Paris Agreement and officiating Vietnam's commitment to joining the international community in responding to climate change.

The National Target Program summarizes Vietnam's approach to sustainable development and lists "adapting to climate change" as one of its primary objectives (Decision 90/QD-TTg 2022 Approving the National Target Program for Sustainable Poverty Reduction, 2022). These long-term strategies and programs are then translated into shorter-term plans and initiatives. The current report focuses on how these principles from the NCCS are broken down into the NAP.

In compliance with the Paris Agreement, Vietnam submitted NDCs in 2016, 2020, and 2022. In its most recent revision, Vietnam committed to achieving a conditional target of 43.5% and unconditional target of 15.8% reduction of GHG emissions from baseline, or "business as usual" amounts by 2030 (Vietnam, 2022b). This represents a 27% increase in conditional target and 9% increase in unconditional target from Vietnam's previous targets.

Since it was first ratified in 2011, Vietnam's NCCS (Decision No. 2139/QD-TTg Approving the National Strategy for Climate Change, 2011) has served as Vietnam's principal document on climate change, outlining the country's long-term strategy on how the State plans to achieve various commitments it made under international agreements, including the Paris Agreement and subsequent COPs. In 2021, Vietnam began formulating the most recent version of the NCCS (Decision No. 896/QD-TTg 2022 Approving the National Strategy on Climate Change to 2050, 2022) to reflect its new commitment to achieving net-zero emissions under COP26. Formulation of the NCCS occurred in multiple phases involving stakeholders from both private and public sectors together with civil society. Box 12 outlines this process. The NCCS also designates MONRE as having primary responsibility over implementing the NCCS. Specifically, MONRE is responsible for coordinating with other ministries and relevant stakeholders to facilitate the "formulation and promulgation action plans [...] at the provincial level," including the NAP (Decision No. 896/QD-TTg 2022 Approving the National Strategy on Climate Change to 2050, 2022).

Box 12. NCCS revision process

For the formulation of the revised version of NCCS, as issued in July 2022, the first draft document of the NCCS was produced by teams of both technical experts and policymakers. Technical experts were selected based on their subject area expertise while policymakers were nominated from relevant ministries and agencies. This first draft was submitted for preliminary review by the National Steering Committee for the Implementation of Vietnam's Commitments at COP26. The Steering Committee is comprised of 19 high-level officials that were selected and chaired by the Prime Minister. Following approval by the Steering Committee, MONRE collected written feedback on the draft from relevant ministries and mass organizations, including MARD, MOLISA, the VWU, and Farmer's Association, among others.

MONRE also led a series of consultation meetings to collect feedback from civil-society organizations, research institutes, and members of the private sector. MONRE then reviewed and incorporated some feedback into the final version of the NCCS. Following the Prime Minister's approval, the NCCS was ratified in July 2022 (Decision No. 896/QD-TTg 2022 Approving the National Strategy on Climate Change to 2050, 2022).

In July 2020 when the Prime Minister issued Vietnam's most recent NAP in the "Decision on Promulgating National Climate Change Adaptation Plan for 2021 - 2030 Period with a Vision by 2050" (The Prime Minister, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 2020). The Decision was issued at the request of MONRE, which served as the lead agency in formulating the NAP. According to in-depth interviews with key informants, the formulation of the Adaptation Plan involved similar processes and stakeholders as that of the NCCS as described in the previous section. Though the formulation process for NCCS and NAP are similar, they serve distinct purposes in Vietnam's climate change adaptation scheme. Whereas the NCCS defines Vietnam's long-term vision for addressing numerous climate change issues, NAP "concretizes the adaptation component of the NDC." Furthermore, NAP translates the NCCS into shorter-term goals that could be implemented by specific Government agencies (Decision No.1055/QD-TTg 2020 National Plan to Adapt to Climate Change 2021 2030, 2020). Consequently, the NAP includes an itemized list of tasks to be addressed by each sector. Tasks requiring coordination between provinces were assigned to national-level ministries, with the primary agencies being MONRE, MARD and MOLISA. According to the Decision, MONRE will lead a formal process for review and revision of the NAP every two years (Decision No.1055/QD-TTg 2020 National Plan to Adapt to Climate Change 2021 2030, 2020). NAP must also be periodically submitted to the UNFCCC as part of Vietnam's commitment under the Paris Agreement. Vietnam is currently (at the time of writing) engaged in its first round of updates to the NAP.

CARE staff gives speech at Cotopaxi Provincial Office, Ecuador, 2024

Annex 4: Example of visual tool used for the community validation process

Comic Story illustrating the barriers to the second degree of participation (understanding), proposed strategy and expected outcomes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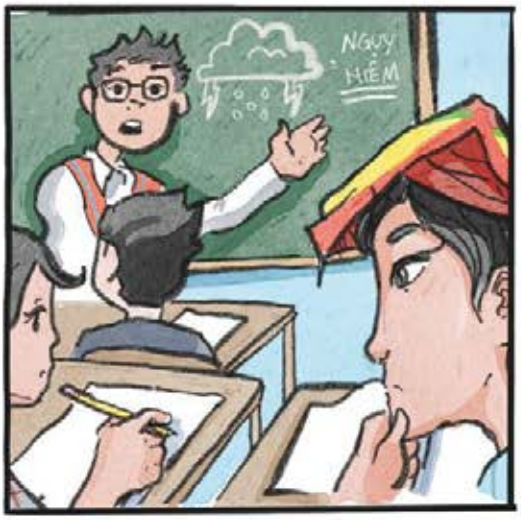
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VĂN HÓA THÔN

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