



Gendered voices for climate action

A theory of change for the meaningful inclusion of local experiences in decision-making

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- Building capacity to act on the implications of changing ecology and economics for equitable and climate resilient development in the drylands.

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Bringing the perspectives of local women and men who have experienced climate impacts into relevant policy arenas is seen as key to just decision-making and meeting the Paris Agreement commitment to a country-driven gender-responsive approach. But there is a lack of robust evidence on how these experiences can increase the ambition, urgency and quality of climate responses at different levels. This paper reviews existing evidence and proposes a theory of change for how the systematic inclusion of women and men with lived experiences of climate change could strengthen climate action. This could be through grounding policy narratives with the realities of daily life, changing ideas of whose knowledge should be included, shifting power dynamics, and increasing accountability.

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Summary

Including local women and men who have experienced the impacts of climate change in decision-making forums is key to developing a just process hearing local voices and experiences. The Paris Agreement signs up the international community to delivering country-driven, gender-responsive climate action. Including local women and men will be critical to this transition and to achieving the scale and pace of change needed through both procedural and distributional justice. However, there is scarce evidence on how these voices and experiences can impact on and strengthen climate responses, or how best to enable and facilitate this participation.

In this paper we review the evidence of how the inclusion of local women and men could improve climate decision-making and construct a theory of change for how meaningful inclusion might result in more effective climate action. We then explore how much empirical evidence supports our theory of change and propose what evidence is still needed to strengthen policy and practice in this area.

The inclusion of all marginalised individuals and groups in climate change processes is important and has the potential to disrupt dominant policy discourse and ground technical debates in practical realities. We focus on the inclusion of women and gendered experience for two reasons:

- women are often the most vulnerable individuals in community groups;
- they often have the least power to influence responses.

We recognise however that the relationships between women and men are key to how gender inequality plays out in different contexts, and that men may also have few opportunities to ground climate debates in their local experiences. We therefore include the gendered experiences of both women and men whilst recognising that women need particular support to overcome the structural constraints to meaningful participation at different levels.

Our review shows that despite widespread commitment to participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes, there is limited evidence of its impact on development outcomes and the effectiveness of interventions even at the local level (Holland et al. 2015). In relation to national and international policy spaces and the field of climate change the evidence is even sparser due in part to the complex and long-term nature of these processes.

The available evidence is fragmented and needs to be pulled together to be applied to climate change. We draw insights from three domains identified through expert consultation and apply the lessons to climate change. The three domains are: the evaluation of and research into donor-funded programmes focusing on participation, voice or governance (DFID, 2009; Mansuri and Rao, 2013; Gaventa and Barratt, 2012; Holland et al. 2015); research into gendered approaches to community-based resource management and co-production of urban services (Leisher et al. 2017; Mitlin 2008); and qualitative research on the role of NGOs, transnational networks, social movements and civil society in advocacy and shaping climate and other policy fora (Fisher et al. 2015; Batliwala, 2001, Patel et al. 2001).

Through the review we identify critical factors that shape how involving grassroots women might strengthen climate action such as: the type of participation and the content of the input; the policy context, space for intervention and decisions under consideration; and the potential change pathways including the role of individuals, networks and formal processes from agenda-setting to implementation. The literature also highlights that when considering the participation of local people in international climate policy fora it is important to consider the impacts of their intervention broadly. This means going beyond a narrow framing of change in a specific policy, to shaping the space and policymakers they seek to engage with. The issues they bring may not be those under discussion at the global level. But their impact may be through expanding and/or disrupting the discourse in an agenda-setting phase of policy debate, framing how the problem is perceived, increasing the emotional connection of key decision-makers with climate change and/or bringing a sense of urgency to individuals and networks (Holland, 2018).

We explore these ideas through three case studies – a gender-focused Talanoa dialogue process with community-based adaptation practitioners, the Listening Circles of the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice, and an IIED project focusing on women and land rights. The case studies help elucidate some of the mechanisms through which grassroots women’s stories can influence policy and policymakers.

We propose a theory of change for how bringing grassroots women and gendered experiences of climate action into climate policy discussions might strengthen climate action in different ways and in different policy arenas. We identify the possible mechanisms through which change might happen and then assess how much evidence there is to support each pathway. There are still significant gaps in the evidence supporting some of the pathways in our theory of change. These evidence gaps prevent a strong case being made to include local women and men in decisions taken at the national and international levels, that affect their lives. Filling these gaps would support the procedural justice of climate action with evidence of improved outcomes and lead to evidence-based guidance of how best to do this in different contexts, through which mechanisms.

We therefore propose to develop further primary research to develop the theory of change and understand under what conditions and in what contexts different pathways lead to change. There will be three key elements to this process:

- Putting the experiences of local women and men at the core of the research;
- Partnering with organisations with experience of involving women and men to construct an evidence base of how and where local women and men have raised the ambition, urgency and quality of climate action;
- Conducting in-depth analysis to understand how and why changes have been achieved and connect these insights and experiences into learning networks.

The results will be used to test and refine the theory of change as necessary with input from grassroots women, practitioners and policy makers; helping us to understand and demonstrate the value of bringing local gendered experiences of climate change.

1

Introduction

Including local women and men who have experienced the impacts of climate change in decision-making forums is key to developing a just process and a normative commitment to hearing local voices and experiences. The Paris Agreement signs up the international community to delivering country-driven, gender-responsive climate action. Including local women and men will be critical to this transition and to achieving the scale and pace of change needed through both procedural and distributional justice¹. However, there is scarce evidence on how these voices and experiences can impact on and improve climate responses, or how best to enable and facilitate this participation. In this paper we review the evidence of how the inclusion of local women and men could improve climate decision-making and construct a theory of change for how meaningful inclusion might result in more effective climate action. We then explore how much empirical evidence supports our theory of change and propose what evidence is still needed to improve policy and practice in this area.

The inclusion of all marginalised individuals and groups in climate change processes is important and they have the potential to disrupt dominant policy discourses and ground technical debates in practical realities. We focus on the inclusion of women and gendered experience² for two reasons:

- women are often the most vulnerable individuals in community groups;
- they often have the least power to influence responses.

We recognise however that the relationships *between* women and men are key to how gender inequality plays out in different contexts, and that men may also have few opportunities to ground climate debates in their local experiences. We therefore include the gendered experiences of both women and men whilst recognising that women need particular support to overcome the structural constraints to meaningful participation at different levels.

The inclusion of women and men with lived experiences of climate change may impact on climate responses in numerous ways. They can challenge the technical discourse of policy discussions and ground those narratives in experiences of daily life, as well as shifting power dynamics. They can also humanise the issues for individuals, raise the profile within organisations, and lead to direct and indirect policy changes over time. However, to understand these mechanisms in practice and unpack in what contexts and under what conditions they are effective, we need more evidence and examples of these impacts and how they lead to raising the ambition, urgency and quality of climate decisions. Finally, we need to understand how the local women and men themselves experience these processes and how it helps them shape and improve their own contexts. This paper starts the process by reviewing available evidence, creating a theory of change, and proposing a way forward to fill the evidence gaps.

¹ Procedural justice refers to fairness in processes in terms of who is able to be involved and how they contribute, whereas distributive justice refers to the fairness of how the outcomes of the process are shared amongst different actors.

² By this term we mean the different experiences that men and women have in their local area.

2

What do we mean by inclusion of local experiences in climate decision-making?

Supporting the meaningful participation of men and women in development processes has been an ongoing debate in research, policy and practice and is a recognised priority within international climate change policy frameworks (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Mosse 2005; Collins and Ison, 2009). There are normative arguments based on theories of procedural justice which support the participation of men and women in decision-making processes as a point of principle, and participation is proposed to ensure distributive justice in adapting to climate change (Paavola and Adger, 2006). However, debates have emerged over the extent to which power is delegated in these types of processes (Cooke and Kothari, 2001); how apolitical such invited spaces are when the questions under discussion are inherently political (Ferguson, 1998; Fisher, 2015); and the politics around defining and validating the needs and claims of different groups (Fraser, 1997; Kabeer, 2016).

Engagement in climate change processes happens across multiple scales – participation in decision-making in local governments, customary institutions and resource management; participation in climate-relevant policy processes at regional or national scales; and participation in the international processes of the climate negotiations. These processes are influenced

by a complex set of pre-existing and dynamic power relationships and any process is likely to sit within these. For instance, in the context of formal government processes, participation is occurring within pre-existing relationships between citizens and the state (Corbridge, 2005). Participation in formal institutional processes is also likely to be influenced by and influence intra-household decision-making.

Types of participation

There are different types of participation which offer distinct inputs into climate decision-making. These can range from consulting community groups in a formal government policy process to inviting young people to international negotiations or working with local groups to co-produce local and national climate plans. There are also participatory or engagement spaces created by community groups themselves through local protests; or working with civil society to generate useful data and/or undertake local service provision or activities related to climate. Arnstein's work on the ladder of participation is a seminal attempt to categorise these levels of participation. He defined eight levels of participation and conceptualised the processes as a power struggle

between citizens and the organisations/institutions with whom they participate (1969). These levels of participation go from manipulation, to therapy, informing, consulting, placating, partnership, delegated power and finally citizen control.

Critiques of Arnstein's model say citizen control is not necessarily the objective of participants, nor is there a linear relationship between the types of participation. Different types of engagement might be appropriate for different policy problems at different scales (Collins and Ison, 2009; Hurlbert and Gupta, 2012). The roles and responsibilities of actors within different policy processes may change over time and are also a function of participants' interests and incentives as well as the engagement process itself. Other scholars and practitioners have proposed approaches that go beyond participation to more equal control over the process through co-production. For example, Collins and Ison (2009) propose social learning as a form of collective learning and knowledge generation and a way to understand complex problems like climate change. The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) has sought to better define how governance programmes can measure their impact in increasing voice and accountability (Holland and Thirkell, 2009). This work has framed the areas of change around capabilities, responsiveness and accountability, including both horizontal and vertical accountability and responsiveness. The authors argue key dimensions of change include those around behaviour and power relationships which can be measured using perception measures of behaviour change and panels of citizens. There is also a study on using deliberative dialogues to address problems such as climate change (Dryzek, 2000).

Social learning, "where learning occurs through some kind of situated and collective engagement with others" (Collins and Ison, 2009 p364), has been proposed as an approach going beyond participation, engaging stakeholders in a participatory process to reconceptualise "the nature of the issue itself and how it might be progressed" (p369) and creating collective solutions. Reed et al. (2010) argue that to be social learning the process needs to "demonstrate that a change in understanding has taken place in the individuals involved ... [and] go beyond the individual to become situated within wider social units or communities of practice within society and occur through social interactions and processes between actors" (p6). This focus on the scales of change within social learning – from individuals, to common networks and communities, and finally systemic change within

institutions and policy – is a helpful way of considering the outcomes of participation, which may not in the first instance have any direct impact on policies themselves.

Much of the literature on participation, co-production and social learning has focused on policy areas that directly impact on the day to day lives of the local people participating. The additional dimension with climate change is how to include meaningful participation and inclusion of lived experiences beyond the local level – in sub-national, national climate and climate-relevant planning and international negotiations. At the sub-national and national level this has often involved some element of collective organising by groups to strengthen their voice and amplify messages to decision-makers through groups such as women's savings groups and forest users' groups. Local people have also played active roles in more oppositional spaces such as parallel civil society events at national and international scales, days of protest and acts of civil disobedience (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). These types of activities have sometimes been supported or organised by social movements or NGOs at larger scales. Internationally, there have been various participatory processes, including spaces created within formal policy processes such as the Listening Circles of the Mary Robinson Foundation (see more below) within the United Nations Framework Convention for Climate Change (UNFCCC) (Holland, 2018); panels at side events to bring local voices to a wider audience; and using transnational advocacy networks to amplify stories and messages through a range of campaigning techniques within and beyond the negotiating space (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Fisher, 2015).

One aspect of bringing lived experience of climate change into different policy fora is the disjunct between local experiences such as struggles over resources and living conditions, and the broader climate debate, which can seem far removed from day to day life (Fisher, 2015). It can be both a challenge to make local experiences relevant to the discussion but also an opportunity to ground technical discussions and reconnect policymakers to everyday realities. Brugnach et al. 2014 identify scale, issues of knowledge and power as being three challenges in incorporating indigenous knowledge into climate discussions. They argue the challenge lies in "how to include knowledge systems that are so different in nature, whose rules of production, acquisition and shareability, as well as the ontological assumptions they embed, amply differ". They highlight how by shifting their discourses to fit with national and international debates, indigenous people also risk losing the 'specificity of their knowledge'. One

of the values of local lived experience however, can be that it speaks outside of the technocratic nature of the discussions at hand and so grounds the debate and challenges the policy discourse with a sense of urgency, saliency and local realities. Rather than shifting the discourses and narratives of local people to align with the framings of the policy spaces, their voices

and experiences can be offered strategically at key moments, with key individuals.

Reflecting on the literature above, we outline the main areas and spaces for the inclusion of gendered lived experience relevant to climate change in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Spaces and types of engagement in climate decision-making

SCALE	SPACES	TYPES OF PARTICIPATION/ ENGAGEMENT	ACTORS INVOLVED	POSSIBLE LINKS BETWEEN SCALES AND SPACES
Local / National / International	<p>Local meetings on climate relevant issues, national climate hearings and testimonies, parallel spaces and events to formal fora.</p> <p>Invited engagement on climate change plans and invited speakers within UNFCCC formal sessions.</p> <p>Closed such as policy discussions with no external inputs.</p>	<p><i>Can take variety of forms such as:</i></p> <p>Consultation</p> <p>Speaking on a panel/event</p> <p>Co-production</p> <p>Social learning</p> <p><i>Can be framed or perceived as:</i></p> <p>Consensual / collaborative / adversarial</p> <p><i>Messages can be:</i></p> <p>Specific to policy discussions or focused on increasing urgency/ general issue framing.</p>	<p>Local women and men</p> <p>Community-based organisations</p> <p>Customary institutions</p> <p>Other civil society organisations</p> <p>NGOs</p> <p>Local and national networks</p> <p>Federations</p> <p>Unions</p> <p>Donors</p> <p>Governments</p> <p>Private sector</p>	<p>National engagement feeds back into local fora.</p> <p>International engagement feeds back into national and local fora.</p> <p>Local interlocuters gain skills to engage at national scale.</p> <p>National and local interlocuters gain skills to engage internationally.</p> <p>Local engagement improves local, national and international climate decision-making.</p>

3

How could the inclusion of local women and men improve responses to climate change?

Despite widespread commitment to participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes, there is limited evidence of its impact on development outcomes and the effectiveness of interventions even at the local level (Holland et al. 2015). In relation to national and international policy spaces and the field of climate change the evidence is even sparser due in part to the complex and long-term nature of these processes.

The available evidence is fragmented and needs to be pulled together to be applied to climate change. To initiate this discussion, we draw insights from three domains identified through expert consultation and apply the lessons to climate change, however the next stage will be a systematic scoping review. The three domains are: the evaluation of and research into donor-funded programmes focusing on participation, voice or governance (DFID, 2009; Mansuri and Rao, 2013; Gaventa and Barratt, 2012; Holland et al. 2015); research into gendered approaches to community-based resource management and co-production of

urban services (Leisher et al. 2017; Mitlin 2008); and qualitative research on the role of NGOs, transnational networks, social movements and civil society in advocacy and shaping climate and other policy fora (Fisher et al. 2015; Batiwala, 200, Patel et al. 2001).

Participation in development interventions

Literature on donor-funded programmes focuses on what has been called 'induced' participation, rather than 'organic' organising. There is a substantial literature on how participatory processes have been used within international development programmes (Mohan and Hickey, 2004; Li-Murray, 2009) but this tends to focus on critiquing the processes themselves and their impact on citizens as 'subjects of the programme'. Holland et al, 2015 argue there is increasing interest in the empirical evidence on the impact of participation and "there

is a case for unpacking the ‘politics of participation’ by describing the variety of forms that participation can take for different people in different contexts and examining the variety of factors that can motivate participation” (p78).

A World Bank report reviewed 500 studies of participatory development looking at programmes using participation as a tool to help citizens have a say in programmes that affect their lives (Mansuri and Rao, 2013). It states that “on balance, greater community involvement seems to modestly improve resource sustainability and infrastructure quality. But the evidence suggests that people who benefit tend to be the most literate, the least geographically isolated, and the most connected to wealthy and powerful people” (p6). The review also shows that it is generally more likely to be men and wealthier sections of the community who participate. The review shows there is limited evidence that participation increases social cohesion and in some cases it worsens it. The authors conclude that participation works best in a context where the state is responsive to community demands; local and national context is vital; and the trajectory to effective civic engagement is not necessarily a predictable one.

Gaventa and Barrett (2012) use 100 qualitative case studies of citizen engagement across 20 countries from the Development Research Centre on Citizenship, Participation, and Accountability to identify outcomes. From this they identify four processes where citizen engagement and participation can influence state-society relations in a positive or negative way:

- construction of citizenship (increased civic and political knowledge, greater sense of empowerment and agency);
- practices of citizen participation (increased capacities for collective action, new forms of participation, deepening of networks and solidarities);
- responsive and accountable states (greater access to state services and resources, greater realisation of rights, enhanced state responsiveness and accountability);
- inclusive and cohesive societies (inclusion of new actors and issues in public spaces, greater social cohesion across groups).

Local management of resources or services

In a systematic mapping of the role of women in community management of fisheries and forests, Leisher et al (2017) argue that “generalizable association between mixed-gender forest or fisheries resource management and better resource governance and conservation outcomes currently remains limited”. They develop a theory of change based on the evidence available showing that social norms, leadership and sufficient numbers of women within the group are important factors in how women participate, and can lead to the following impacts within the resource management groups (list below cited from Leisher et al. 2017 p5):

- Stricter rule-making and greater compliance with resource rules (Agrawal et al. 2006, Sultana and Thompson 2008, Agarwal 2009a, b);
- Greater transparency and accountability (Acharya and Gentle 2006, Clabots 2013);
- Better conflict resolution (Westermann et al. 2005, Clabots 2013, Coleman and Mwangi 2013, Staples and Natcher 2015);
- Increased patrolling and enforcement (Agarwal 2009a, Clabots 2013);
- Greater equity for women and/or the poor accessing natural resources (Acharya and Gentle 2006, Agarwal 2009a);
- Better resource governance leading to local resource regeneration (Agrawal et al. 2006, Agarwal 2009a, Ray et al. 2016).

There are many examples of local organising and co-production of urban services between slum and shack dwellers and the state, that can provide insights into the role of supporting slum dwellers to participate in changing policy frameworks (see for example Patel, 2004; Satterthwaite and Mitlin, 2013). Although this had not focused specifically on the role of women, the insights are still relevant. The federation of urban slum dwellers, Slum Dwellers International (SDI), is a good example of how people with local lived experiences of urban poverty have worked together to change local, national and international policies that affect them.

Their strategy is “not to provide learning opportunities for professionals but, rather, learning opportunities for representatives of urban poor groups – through community-to- community exchanges. ... Community savings groups visit each other to learn from each other. Perhaps as importantly, the NGOs that support each federation (and the savings groups that form it) have redefined the role of professionals away from being the talkers, managers and solution generators to being listeners and supporters of community-generated solutions” (Satterthwaite, 2001). Mitlin (2008) argues that co-production of urban services with slum dwellers is not just about service delivery but also a political project that can “strengthen local citizen organization, and in so doing provide a platform for wider civic engagement and greater political engagement by the urban poor. The synergy that emerges is not just between state and citizen but also between the movements’ engagement in the practical day to day needs of citizens, and their political aspirations for political inclusion and redistribution goals; goals that, arguably, can only be achieved with an organized mass of citizenry negotiating improved outcomes from the state through a political process” (p11).

Moving beyond the local level

Creating opportunities for participation or sharing of local experiences beyond the local level usually involves an intermediary or network such as SDI; national or international NGOs; or supported processes such as the Listening Circles of the Mary Robinson Foundation.

Batliwala (2002) discusses two grassroots movements that have sought to have impact across scales – *Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing* (WIEGO) and SDI, both with a strong focus on women. She argues they have been effective at bringing grassroots perspectives to the table citing policy successes such as the formal recognition of the claims of pavement dwellers to government-supported resettlement programmes and the legitimacy for slum census data generated by its member federations as the basis for official resettlement policy. At the international level, too, SDI has lobbied the World Bank in India to open up its tendering system for development of urban sanitation projects to NGOs and community federations. WIEGO has worked with various statistical offices and multilateral agencies to create better statistics on women in informal economies. Batliwala argues

there are several factors underpinning their success in getting these grassroots struggles into international policy arenas:

- High levels of legitimacy due to a broad base of stakeholders across multiple countries;
- A gendered approach often led by women;
- An empowered stance focusing on roles and rights;
- Strategic use of research and evidence;
- Wide-ranging partnerships combining grassroots strength with other forms of expertise;
- Bringing concrete solutions.

Patel et al. (2001) reflecting on SDI’s experience stress that “lessons are taken from the local to the global, this is to ensure that the experience of the global provides benefit to and strengthens the local. The most essential task is the creation of capacities in the many local groups to work together to further their own activities and ensure that global fora are increasingly relevant to the poor. By strengthening the capacity of local activists from community groups and NGOs to address global debates with their own priorities, the SDI network seeks to ensure that standardization and the setting of norms does not ignore local issues and concerns and neither does it forget the negotiations needed to accommodate this” (p59).

Rigon (2014) analyses lessons from participation in global policy processes of 10 CAFOD projects to inform the post 2015 agenda and notes the importance of the nature of the messages coming from local communities: “government authorities can have welcoming or hostile attitudes depending on how much the issue at stake represents a challenge to them. Therefore, the nature of the issue is a crucial factor in determining the chances of success of specific claims” (p27). Rigon also notes the potential tension between individuals participating for themselves and representing communities. He argues the “degree of representation increases vis-à-vis direct participation with the scale of the participatory spaces: i.e., in a regional or national process, people living in poverty are represented by a smaller number of people who have to act for the constituency they represent. This sliding scale may also alienate them from their community. If representation becomes too distant and too institutionalised, then the central question is: what is the difference and the added value compared with existing political institutions? Are participatory processes simply duplicating state institutions?” (p26). This issue of representation is a key one for this paper

and area for further investigation. No community is homogenous and particularly when communicating individual lived experience, the issue of whose experiences travel and have impact in different spaces is an important one.

In one of the few studies of participation in climate politics across scales, Fisher analyses the work of NGO and civil society networks in India seeking to bring the voices of local marginalised communities to national and international climate policy spaces in the build up to the Conference of Parties (COP) in Copenhagen (2012; 2015). Although this work does not seek to explore the impact of such efforts on decisions per se, Fisher highlights how the “process of seeking to bring the roots of the networks into global processes has sought to address the gap in representation of marginalised communities in the national delegation, and through ‘forum shopping’³ give the voices of the marginalised in India maximum power and agency”. However, she goes on to argue that “multiple claims for developmental and environmental justice, many of which have a climate element, are side-lined as the re-scaling privileges those framings that will resound with an international scale” (p79). She concludes that the “isolation and rescaling of climate justice as an international issue with solutions between nation-states can lead to its separation from the pressing concerns of Indian activists or social movements, as well as losing local agency and possible solutions” (p81).

When considering the participation of local people in international climate policy fora therefore it is important to consider the impacts of their intervention beyond a narrow framing of change in a specific policy, to shaping the space and policymakers they seek to engage with. The issues they bring may not be those under discussion at the global level. But their impact may be through expanding and/or disrupting the discourse in an agenda-setting phase of policy debate, framing how the problem is perceived, increasing the emotional connection of key decision-makers with climate change and/or bringing a sense of urgency to individuals and networks (Holland, 2018).

BOX 1. TYPES OF PARTICIPATION

How participation of local women and men and their gendered experiences?? might improve climate decision-making will depend on the:

- Type of participation and the content of the input;
- Policy context, space for intervention and decisions under consideration;
- Potential change pathways including the role of individuals, networks and formal processes from agenda-setting to implementation.

³ Forum shopping here refers to actors choosing the most appropriate forum for their messages.

4

Putting ideas into practice: consultation and case studies

We now explore these ideas in practice. IIED and partners held a gender-focused Talanoa⁴ in the 12th Community-Based Adaptation conference in June 2018 to consult practitioners on these questions and key issues emerging from this consultation are outlined below. We then look at two case studies illustrating how local women have engaged in climate-relevant fora. Although there is limited evidence on the effectiveness of these engagements, the examples can help identify mechanisms for more effective participation. We then bring these examples and the insights from gender Talanoa into a theory of change.

Gender Talanoa consultation

The gender-focused Talanoa brought together practitioners working on climate change decision-making at different levels to consider the status of grassroots women's representation, where we want to get to, and how we might get there. The full consultation will be submitted to the UNFCCC as part of the Talanoa Dialogue. In this paper we summarise a few key messages relating to this paper, to help frame the theory of change.

In terms of where we are now, participants recognised that gender is key in climate action largely because women face specific vulnerabilities due to their responsibilities, the resources they have access to and control of, and their exclusion from wider decision making. However, their agency – as holders of solutions – is less recognised. Key messages from participants were:

- **Women's representation still low at higher levels.** Women may be well represented at local community level and be strong agents of change, but this doesn't usually translate to national and global levels.
- **Which women participate (and what their perspective is) is important.** Participants felt that some elite women in international spaces do not see their role as bringing gender perspectives. When women do have representation, they may not be in positions that influence decision making. Therefore, we need people willing to bring a gendered perspective rather than just having a woman. At higher levels, lack of education is a barrier to engagement, but even at local levels, women may be present but lack confidence to challenge men or even speak in front of them, and so remain passive participants.

⁴A Talanoa is a traditional word used in Fiji and across the Pacific to reflect a process of inclusive, participatory and transparent dialogue. The purpose of Talanoa is to share stories, build empathy and to make wise decisions for the collective good. The process of Talanoa involves the sharing of ideas, skills and experience through storytelling (<https://unfccc.int/topics/2018-talanoa-dialogue-platform>).

- **Value of lived experience to influence.** Participants argued that women can be relied on to speak the truth about how climate action or inaction is affecting their livelihoods, and this can force others to move “from talking to doing”. Women and men with limited access to resources will have a different perspective on what is working and what are the priorities.
 - **Power an issue of confidence, literacy and culture.** Participants recognised the challenge of engaging with ‘experts’ and a lack of confidence in their own knowledge. It can be challenging to get permission to attend meetings; and other barriers include work load; and lack of control over age of marriage, family planning and childcare responsibilities. These all limit opportunities for leadership, which can become an additional burden on grassroots women. Women interact and communicate in different ways to men and this can be less visible to “development practitioners”. Women also have informal networks for influencing that may not be as visible.
 - **Mind the gap.** There is a yawning gap between policy and implementation. NGO’s and others can regard improving ‘gender’ as improving participation more generally, not gendered participation specially. Financing for gender responses is limited and women’s involvement in the delivery of existing climate interventions has also been limited. There is experience from outside climate context to draw on to engage women more effectively – but we also need to prove the value in climate context.
- In terms of where we want to get to and how to get there, key messages were:
- **We need to commit to meaningful representation.** Ideas put forward were to increase representation through mandatory requirements (representation policies that bodies are held accountable for) and committing to meaningful inclusion in the decision-making process. We need to expand numbers and ratios, in terms of gender but also inclusion of different generations, those living with disabilities, ethnic and cultural dimensions. Others felt this goes beyond numbers – it’s about enabling agency and presence at the decision-making table. Some participants felt that strengthening policies requires champions and strong leadership.
 - **We need to create dialogue between men and women** to tackle power relations and cultural norms and change the gender discourse. There was a commitment to engage men by talking about gender (not just women’s rights or feminism), but also to build on the way women self-organise and communicate with each other to engage them in processes, not just expect them to attend meetings. Participants stressed the importance of shared dialogue – women *and* men – to shift power dynamics, for fresh responses to social impacts of climate change (such as male mobility and out-migration). But we also need explicit support for women to ensure women are engaged, confident and able to represent their views.
 - **We need to create spaces and feedback loops across levels of decision** – with policy fora deliberately providing women with opportunities to analyse policy and feedback their perspectives.
 - **We need to invest in leadership skills for women** to engage them strategically and effectively as well as working with policymakers to provide a receptive arena for their inputs.
 - **We need to improve the quality of climate responses through our actions.** Participants had experience of doing this through policy and legislation which can create norms for gender balance; policies can change culture as we have seen in land ownership, age of consent, age of leaving school. Another lever is more systematic financing and resource allocation for gender-responsive climate action and meaningful engagement in decisions – gender budgeting for climate change and holding governments accountable on commitments and financing. It is important to explicitly define roles and benefit sharing, ensure gender balance and consider gender relations, structures and incentives in policy as well as in technology development (reducing women’s domestic labour).

⁴This case study is summarised from the report Holland, 2018.

Case studies of participation

The following two case studies illustrate how local women have participated in different climate-relevant forums and through what mechanisms they have improved policy and practice.

The Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice Listening Circles⁵

Listening Circles are an example of bringing grassroots women's experiences directly to international fora, with support from the Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice ('The Foundation'). These policy spaces (listening circles, dinners and breakfast meetings) are convened by The Foundation within the UNFCCC negotiations, and enable grassroots women to share their testimony with high-level female decision-makers in an informal setting. The Learning Circles have a powerful impact on participants through the personal interaction that helped humanise aspects of climate change. For example, one policymaker involved in the Listening Circles commented that *"It's the power of the narrative. How do you move people? Not by paper or by reports and dry statistics. High-level people are sheltered and in a bubble, getting VIP treatment"* (Interview, February 2018). They can also change policy approaches. Interviewees reflected that when the right people are in the room, policies and budgets can move. One reflected: *"I've seen ministers go home and rewrite their entire budgets and allocation resources (after hearing testimony from women with experience of climate change)"*. They also help to strengthen the legitimacy of the global negotiations through a more inclusive process. The Foundation builds the capacity of grassroots women participants, enabling them to convince global stakeholders about the reality of climate change, and the urgent need to act.

While the testimony dimension is seen to be important, there is a risk of only reaching those already open to that perspective. As one interviewee put it: *"If the distance is too far then they just won't show up."* There is also a risk that the 'gender agenda' can get compartmentalised in these types of sessions while the 'real' business gets done elsewhere in the conference. The real challenge is to mainstream these contributions in climate change policy: *"It's not easy to get to the core of the debate"*.

Securing women's land rights in Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and Tanzania⁶

IIED and partners have been working since 2016 to strengthen rural women's voice and control over their livelihood options in the context of increasing commercial pressures on land and natural resources across East and West Africa. The focus is improving the ability of women to advocate for the needs around land rights as well as documenting and communicating these local women's voices to influence national policy debates.

The activities have been tailored to different contexts. In Kenya partners supported the integration of gender tools into an existing initiative to support local communities in the Tana Delta on civic education and rights training, boundary marking and local bylaws. The local partner worked to ensure that women could participate in project activities, have their voices heard, and their concerns considered. Partners supported leadership training for women prior to grassroots events, to build their confidence to speak out in public meetings. In Ghana, the focus was national-level lesson sharing, with events organised giving a platform to beneficiaries of land governance initiatives, where they shared the challenges and opportunities.

The four country partners organised national level enquiries bringing together key stakeholders to discuss findings. Local women shared their stories through video and case studies. The enquiries engaged a range of national policy and governance actors as well as citizens. Partners produced documentary films on tools and approaches to strengthen women's voices and participation in land governance. A series of "video portraits" highlighted the stories of local women activists campaigning on land issues, documenting the growing pressures on land, and how both inspirational women-led advocacy and practical approaches to these growing challenges can make a difference. The films were screened at the national enquiries (see below).

⁵ This case study is summarised from the report Holland, 2018.

⁶ This case study is summarised from project documents and a discussion with the IIED project lead, Philippine Sutz.

In Kenya, the forum brought together civil society actors, community members from the Tana River Delta, government officials and representatives from the company that acquired land in this area. The stakeholders discussed the issues openly and identified future opportunities for collaboration. In Ghana, the event brought together all relevant stakeholders to share innovative practices and discussed how to upscale these; priorities for advocacy around the drafting

of a new Land Bill; and customary practices which needed reforming. These national events contributed women's experiences to national policy processes. In Tanzania the event was well attended by government representatives: the Ministry of Agriculture committed to hold meetings with investors on involving women in decision making and the Ministry of Constitution and Legal Affairs committed to facilitating a review of laws and policies involving land-based investments.

Table 2: How the inclusion of grassroots women has had an impact on climate responses

EXAMPLE	AREA OF ENGAGEMENT	HOW THE INCLUSION OF WOMEN HAS HAD AN IMPACT ON CLIMATE RESPONSES
Listening Circles The Mary Robinson Foundation – Climate Justice	Local experience to UNFCCC discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The testimony humanised and made the issues real for policymakers ▪ Some indirect and direct impacts on policies such as inclusion of gender budgeting ▪ Support given to shape testimonies and build capacity of women to share their experiences
Securing women's land rights and increasing voice and accountability in decisions around land IIED and partners	Local women's perspectives to local and national decision-making in Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Videos used to bring local and testimonies in new ways ▪ The reality of the lived experience led policymakers to re-assess their approaches ▪ Women gained confidence and wider awareness of their rights in local context

5

Towards a theory of change

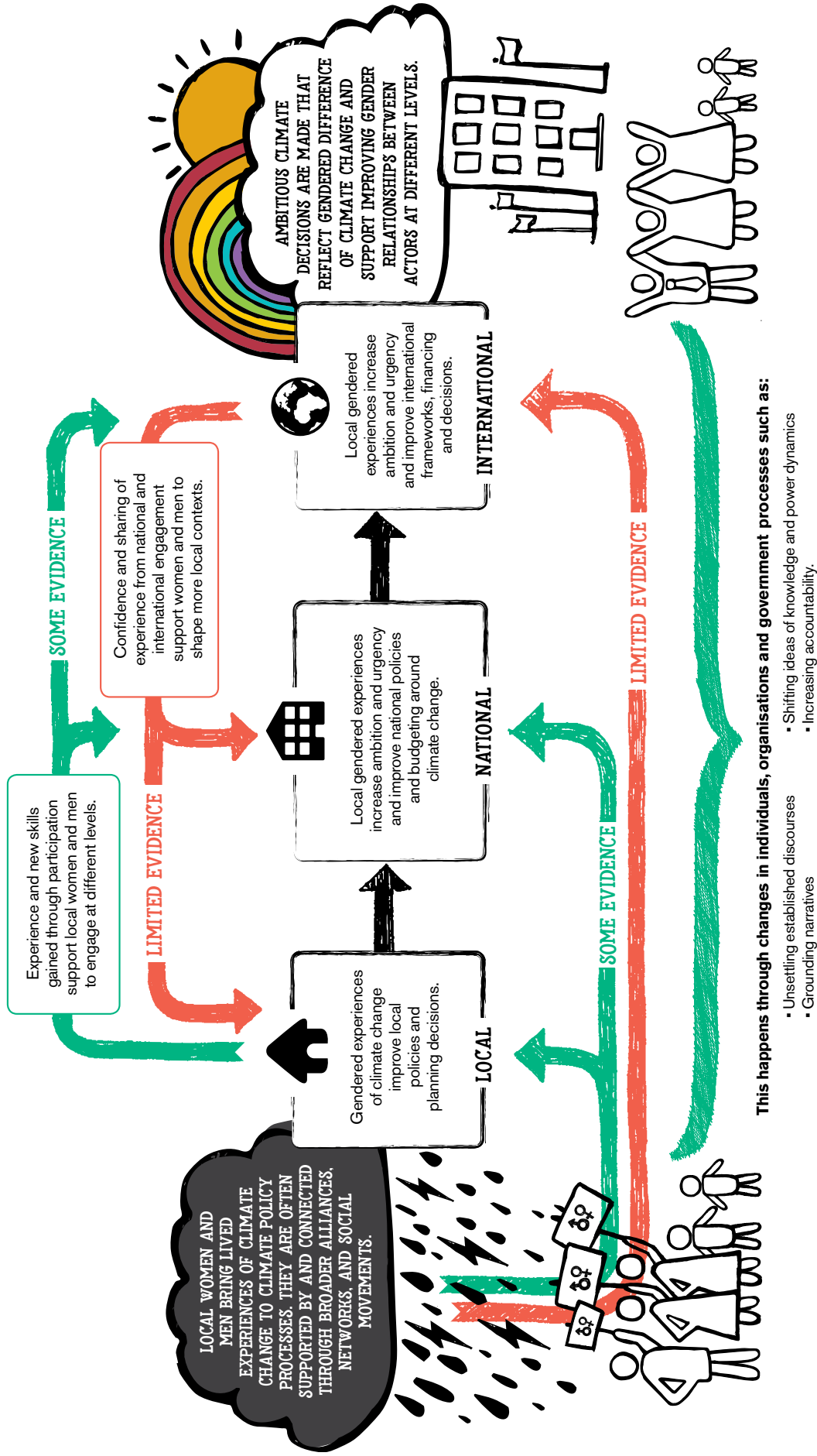
Building on the review of evidence and the practical experiences above we propose a theory of change for how the inclusion of local gendered experiences could improve climate decision-making. The theory of change is based on an initial review conducted for the Mary Robinson Foundation (see Holland 2018) and the scoping review of evidence on the impact of participation and engagement on climate change decision-making provided in this paper. Where evidence was not available we sought to draw lessons from related sectors such as international development programmes, resource management, governance interventions and urban development. These sectors were identified through expert interviews and consultations.⁷ This is a draft for discussion which will be refined based on further inputs. We highlight where we think the evidence is strong for the theory of change and where evidence is limited on the links between inputs and outcomes.

⁷ A Gender Talanoa in CBA 12 and in the CSW in New York, 2018.

Table 3: Evidence for the links in the theory of change

LINKS IN THE THEORY OF CHANGE	CATEGORISATION	BASIS FOR INITIAL ASSESSMENT AND ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES
National and international engagement feeds back to shape local contexts through mechanisms such as increasing confidence of women and men and sharing of experiences.	Limited evidence	Limited evidence from literature review or case studies. Some anecdotal evidence highlighting the potential mechanism.
Experience and new skills gained through local participation support local women and men to engage at national and international levels.	Some evidence	Some evidence from the literature review and case studies.
Including the lived experiences of women and men improves local climate decision-making.	Good evidence from related fields	Strong evidence from case studies. Participation reviews in development (Mansuri and Rao 2013; Holland, 2015; Gaventa and Barratt, 2012). Gendered resource management review (Leisher et al. 2017).
Including the lived experiences of women and men improves national climate decision-making.	Some evidence	Some evidence from case studies. UN and MRF-CJ (2016). <i>The Full View: Ensuring a comprehensive approach to achieve the goal of gender balance in the UNFCCC process</i> , Second Edition. Outside climate examples such as work of SDI.
Including the lived experiences of women and men improves international climate decision-making.	Limited evidence	Limited evidence from case studies but some anecdotal support. Studies of grassroots movements and networks such as SDI and WEIGO from outside climate change.

Figure 1: The proposed theory of change



Some of the pathways through which we envisage change occurring are given in the table below. These build on lessons drawn from research and evaluations of social learning processes; participation in development; transnational networks and the role of NGOs in policy change. In the next phase we will refine and develop

these mechanisms through further review and prepare case studies that follow different change pathways. Changes may occur only at the individual level, at the organisational level or may go through to formal policy processes.

Table 4: Potential pathways to change

ACTORS AND SPACES	MECHANISMS	DRAWN FROM
Formal (inter) government institutions and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased communication and circulation of gendered experience supports gendered framing of policy issue in formal spaces ▪ Local voices ground technical discussions and challenge policy jargon to move beyond business as usual framings ▪ Diverse forms of knowledge are accepted as valid and considered in policy ▪ Strengthened two-way relationships support input into framing and solutions ▪ Resources and evidence in combination with motivated individuals and effective monitoring supports implementation 	<p>MRJ interviews and IIED case studies.</p> <p>From development programmes: (Mansuri and Rao, 2013; Gaventa and Barratt, 2012).</p> <p>From post-2015 discussions: (Rigon, 2014).</p> <p>Social learning and formal policy processes: (Vann Epp and Garside, 2014; Fisher et al., 2018).</p>
National and transnational networks Community-based organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating alternative spaces and/or increased interface with formal processes (consensual or conflictual) ▪ Strengthened relationships, coalitions and networks – both formal and informal ▪ More effective advocacy and strategic framing with increased level of priority ▪ Sharing of experiences and aggregating messages for impact 	<p>MRJ interviews and IIED case studies.</p> <p>Literature on transnational networks and social movements (Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Fisher, 2012; 2015; Batliwala, 2002).</p> <p>Gaventa and Barratt, 2012.</p>
Individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increased understanding of issues ▪ Increased capacity to act (information, confidence, communication) ▪ Increased emotional connection and motivation to integrate gendered differences ▪ Relationships with others interested in the issues 	<p>Social learning literature (Van Epp and Garside, 2014; Ensor and Harvey, 2015).</p> <p>MRJ report interviews.</p> <p>Gaventa and Barratt, 2012.</p>

6

Evidence gaps and ways forward

This working paper has shown that while there is some relevant evidence on the most effective ways to include local gendered perspectives in climate decision-making, there are still significant gaps at several scales and in the linkages in the theory of change. These evidence gaps prevent a strong case being made to include local women and men in decisions taken at the national and international levels, that affect their lives. Filling these gaps would support the procedural justice argument with evidence of improved outcomes and lead to evidence-based guidance of how best to do this in different contexts, through which mechanisms.

The second phase will focus on primary research to develop the theory of change and understand under what conditions and in what contexts different pathways lead to change. There will be three key elements to this process:

- Putting the experiences of local women and men at the core of the research;
- Partnering with organisations with experience of involving women and men to construct an evidence base of how and where local women and men have raised the ambition, urgency and quality of climate action;
- Conducting in-depth analysis to understand how and why changes have been achieved and connect these insights and experiences into learning networks.

The results will be used to test and refine the theory of change as necessary with input from grassroots women, practitioners and policy makers; helping us to understand and demonstrate the value of bringing local gendered experiences of climate change.

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Bringing the perspectives of local women and men who have experienced climate impacts into relevant policy arenas is seen as key to just decision-making and meeting the Paris Agreement commitment to a country-driven gender-responsive approach. But there is a lack of robust evidence on how these experiences can increase the ambition, urgency and quality of climate responses at different levels. This paper reviews existing evidence and proposes a theory of change for how the systematic inclusion of women and men with lived experiences of climate change could strengthen climate action. This could be through grounding policy narratives with the realities of daily life, changing ideas of whose knowledge should be included, shifting power dynamics, and increasing accountability.

IIED is a policy and action research organisation. We promote sustainable development to improve livelihoods and protect the environments on which these livelihoods are built. We specialise in linking local priorities to global challenges. IIED is based in London and works in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and the Pacific, with some of the world's most vulnerable people. We work with them to strengthen their voice in the decision-making arenas that affect them — from village councils to international conventions.



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