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Adaptation Research Alliance

Enhancing gender equality and social inclusion through climate action

CHAIR'S SUMMARY | CONSULTATION FINDINGS | DECEMBER 2021



Canada

About the Adaptation Research Alliance



The [Adaptation Research Alliance](#) (ARA) brings together funders, researchers, and practitioners to catalyse increased investment in action-oriented research, providing a common platform for planning research and its uptake. It builds on the United Nations [2019 Call for Action on Adaptation and Resilience](#) and is intended to provide the pioneering science and technical expertise to inform and underpin the work of the Adaptation Action Coalition. To date, over 110 organizations across 40 economies have joined the Alliance.

About the International Development Research Centre



Part of Canada's foreign affairs and development efforts, [the International Development Research Centre \(IDRC\)](#) invests in knowledge, innovation, and solutions to improve lives and livelihoods in the developing world. [IDRC is an ARA member.](#)

About Inclusive Innovation



[Inclusive Innovation](#) delivers workshops focused on topics aligned with the [UN's Sustainable Development Goal](#) mission of bringing 'peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future'. An international team of facilitators design and deliver interactive and engaging meetings, workshops, and other events that facilitate novel and unexpected ways to solve complex challenges.

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Executive Summary

As a member of the Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA), [launched at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change conference](#) (COP26), the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is working with the Alliance Secretariat to oversee a consultative process to ground the perspective of action-oriented research within a set of themes. The aim is to surface opportunities for cooperation, the barriers to action research, and how the Alliance can act on these.

From September to December 2021, IDRC hosted a two-part consultation on addressing gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) within climate action. The consultation consisted of a survey and virtual consultation, to surface priorities and recommendations for research that advances gender equality and social inclusion in the context of climate change. This report summarizes the findings from that consultation.

Experience supporting action-oriented research on climate change tells us that vulnerability to climate change is influenced by a wide and intersecting range of social and economic factors. We therefore need to pay attention to the differential vulnerability between groups in order to achieve just and effective action, and outcomes that can be sustained. Currently, considerations of gendered and social inequalities are not always systematically or effectively integrated within research programs or project design. This undermines the benefits to women, girls, and other marginalized groups. Strategies to enhance adaptive capacity and resilience need to be socially inclusive and gender-responsive—or even transformative—or they risk perpetuating patterns of power and marginalization.

Four entry points for action research were surfaced and explored in this consultation, and are presented in detail in this summary:

- Take an intersectional approach to **participatory and inclusive research**
- Integrate GESI within climate-resilient development **interventions**
- Advance GESI outcomes by **informing institutional and policy action**
- Enhance the **access to resources and agency** of marginalized groups

These entry points exist along the action research continuum. They offered participants the opportunity to expand on how GESI outcomes can be strengthened through research design and methodologies, in action research interventions, by engaging with climate action policies at various levels, and by empowering marginalized groups and increasing their access to resources, including funding and training.

42 survey responses informed the entry points for workshop discussion. They also identified barriers and opportunities to address GESI in climate change action research. A summary of the priorities, barriers and actions identified in the survey can be found in Annex B, with more details on the survey process and respondents in Annex A.

An interactive online workshop hosted on December 1 allowed 28 participants to expand on and refine the opportunities for action related to each of these four entry points, and discuss in further depth the value added by taking a collaborative approach to addressing GESI in climate change action research. The outcomes of additional brainstorming and discussion on these entry points are captured in Section 2 of this summary, while Section 3 highlights cross-cutting observations that emerged across multiple entry points. These included the need to:

- address inequality and exclusion within the research process itself, and the composition of teams and networks — embracing women’s rights organizations, labour groups and others with the capacity and agency to mobilize marginalized groups and challenge prevailing power structures;
- diversify the pool of expertise and experience needed to support more participatory research and inclusive outcomes;
- create opportunities for peer learning across initiatives and networks, including with marginalized groups; and
- be ambitious in bridging between local action and national/ regional influence, recognizing that challenging exclusion at the local level demands tackling wider social norms and national policies that underpin systems of discrimination.

Finally, Section 4 presents reflections on the consultation process itself.

1. What we set out to achieve

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is working with the Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA) Secretariat to oversee a consultative process to ground the perspective of action-oriented research within a set of themes. As the Alliance looks ahead to catalyze and scale investment in adaptation research and innovation to strengthen resilience in vulnerable communities, it aims to identify barriers to action and opportunities to overcome them by collaborating across disciplines and stakeholder groups.

Over September through December of 2021, IDRC hosted a consultation to surface priorities and recommendations for action research that would advance gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) in addressing climate change.

This summary captures the priority entry points, barriers, and opportunities surfaced by 42 survey respondents and deepened by 28 workshop participants in the course of this consultation. It aims to inform forthcoming research calls related to advancing GESI through action research on climate change, and to jumpstart further sessions designed to co-create new projects and programs.

This consultation is part of a wider consultative process within ARA. Other topics explored include:

- Food Systems (organized by IDRC)
- Global Health (organized by Public Health England and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Climate Centre)
- Climate Risk Assessments in Least Developed Countries (organized by the University of Cape Town)

2. Emerging action research priorities

Here, we present the main consultation findings for each of four action research entry points explored through the consultation:

- Take an intersectional approach to **participatory and inclusive research**
- Integrate GESI within climate-resilient development **interventions**
- Advance GESI outcomes by informing **institutional and policy action**
- Enhance the **access to resources and agency** of marginalized groups

These entry points, the reasons why they matter, barriers to action, and initial opportunities for action were identified through IDRC's synthesis of findings of an initial survey. Summary tables capturing these survey findings can be found in Annex B, with further detail on the survey process and respondents in Annex A.

The narrative below captures the outcomes of a workshop held on December 1, 2021, which deepened and synthesized thinking around each of these entry points. Through a series of facilitated group

discussions, participants worked together to expand, consolidate and refine the opportunities for action. They also discussed what added value might come from taking a collaborative approach to addressing these entry points, and in some cases, they elaborated further on the importance of the entry point.

More detail on the workshop process can be found in Annex A, with participants identified in Annex C.

Take an intersectional approach to participatory and inclusive research

Focus: *Practical mixed-methods research that makes visible underrepresented groups, differential adaptive capacities, and the systems and structures that underpin inequalities*

Why is this important?

We need to avoid simplistic narratives that dichotomize ‘men’ versus ‘women’ and that risk reinforcing social inequalities by ignoring the unique adaptive capacities, needs, and preferences of different groups. We need to ensure research is more relevant, transformative, and appropriate to the context and brings benefits to the people and communities most impacted by climate change.

Barriers identified in the survey

- Prevailing systems of power and privilege discriminate against knowledge and research from the majority world, and limit opportunities and funding.
- There is a primary focus on biophysical sciences in climate change research and narratives of risk and vulnerability tend to emphasize what people lack rather than what they bring.
- There is insufficient investment in, and few resources to support inclusive and/or intersectional approaches and meaningful collaboration.
- The integration of GESI in projects/programs is weak and ineffective.
- Research is too often carried out in silos, failing to link with other relevant actors and sectors.

Opportunities for action

1. Encourage diverse and creative research and learning networks and research processes that interrogate the assumptions and framing of adaptation research.

- Cast the net wide for group membership and create spaces for difficult dialogue that respects where everyone is at. These networks would facilitate learning by bringing diverse people together.

- Be intentional and explicit in making space in adaptation research for critical paradigms, diverse voices, and different kinds of knowledge, in order to surface power structures and deal with them "head on". This includes recognizing historical and institutional inequality, racism, and power imbalances. It requires researchers and funders to be committed and open to addressing challenges, implicit biases, and prejudices—beyond paying lip service. Consider how to change behaviour.
- Promote research that links up with 'unlikely' stakeholders—like politicians, school students, and women's movements—who are not necessarily in the climate adaptation space but needed for broader gender-transformative action.

“We need to develop a more open and inclusive process to research and action, drawing on participatory approaches, which respect different perspectives and voices.”
Survey respondent

Why collaborate?

To achieve a critical and reflexive approach to co-production so research is more inclusive and makes space for leadership from women’s rights organizations and other marginalized groups.

2. Provide funding for capacity building (for researchers and implementers/practitioners) on the concepts, methods and implementation of gender and intersectional approaches.

This requires investment in longer-term programs and collaboration, rather than one-off projects and opportunities, so that local capacities are built and strengthened and learning can be sustained and applied through collaborative research and analysis. This should include spaces for South-South peer exchange, local knowledge, and learning on good practices and how to overcome obstacles.

Why collaborate?

To enhance capacity on GESI, promote networking among diverse actors to extend reach and impact, and create safe spaces for learning and support—i.e., a community of practice. Social learning opportunities are critical for successful capacity building.

3. Clarify where and how the ARA can best intervene.

ARA should seek to learn from and be guided by what’s already being done around GESI and adaptation by its members. How can the ARA improve on what’s there? What else needs to be done? What are the gaps and where are the strengths ARA can draw on to inform Alliance activities?

Why collaborate?

There is an opportunity to fill gaps in this space, building upon past and current work.

4. Consider the potential of various methodologies, tools, and approaches.

Pull together a framework for how to work and how to synthesize emerging learnings in a way that grapples with power dynamics, the need to include diverse stakeholders and knowledge systems, and various challenges. Some examples:

- Include **territorial analysis**, combining geospatial and socio-economic data, to better understand GESI opportunities and limitations in different spaces.
- Support opportunities for telling the **real-life stories** of how different people—including Indigenous people—experience climate risk, how they understand the challenge, and what they are doing to confront the risks and adapt.
- Collect and synthesize **best practices** on GESI and climate change research to educate local and national actors—including policymakers, planners, and community representatives.
- Support **collaborative approaches** that surface issues of interest to the range of people who are not typically involved in dreaming up research ideas.

Why collaborate?

To avoid small, fragmented, and siloed projects that do not build on other’s lessons and results, and to learn from different initiatives and how they contribute to the general goal.

Integrate GESI within climate-resilient development interventions

***Focus:** In particular, considering GESI within interventions in agriculture, climate finance, disaster preparedness, conflict-affected states, and value chains.*

Why is this important?

Climate change impacts are not uniformly experienced, nor are the benefits from interventions intended to build resilience. Marginalized groups deeply affected by climate change have important knowledge to contribute to interventions, to ensure that benefits are equitably shared. But many—especially women and Indigenous people—are too often ignored. People on the frontlines of climate change have the right to be recognized for their contributions. Marginalized groups may not participate in research for development interventions unless they are deliberately sought out.

“Interventions that are not inclusive of GESI can actually exacerbate vulnerabilities.”
Workshop participant

Interventions that do not consider gender equality and social inclusion can actually exacerbate vulnerabilities. As well as looking at how to ensure those most vulnerable have a voice in shaping interventions, and benefitting from them, we need to address the forces driving vulnerability—such as global corporations, industrialization, colonialism, and the resulting land and labour inequalities. Ending these processes and paying reparations for historical harms is needed to achieve justice.

Barriers from the survey

- There is a lack of financial mechanisms that invest in climate action for women, especially in agriculture.

- Vulnerable groups are seldom at decision-making tables or included in discussions to inform interventions.
- There is not enough systems thinking and too much focus on individual interventions and 'solutions'.
- Research funding is still oriented toward scientific achievement and less toward benefitting end users.
- Researchers and implementation agencies are limited in their understanding of gender-transformative strategies and opportunities.

Opportunities for action

Discussion on interventions focused on the 'what', 'who' and 'how' of transforming research to more effectively include and benefit marginalized groups.

1. *What needs to change? Transforming systems that perpetuate inequality*

In looking across scales at the structural causes of inequality—including cultural and social barriers—interventions should have a broader systems perspective and be implemented over the long term.

Why collaborate?

We need to think about users, including decision-makers, and how they can be brought into the conversation.

2. *Who is most vulnerable? Disaggregation*

Identifying who is most vulnerable and excluded is the starting point for looking at redistributive policies that support marginalized and vulnerable populations and social mobilization. We need to include these marginalized groups in research and policy design processes that surface social and environmental concerns that may otherwise be invisible in economic valuation. This includes social and reproductive work, which is highly gendered, and the burden of care work that is disproportionately borne by women and those with low income and status. Nature is also commodified in dominant economic models, whereas other knowledge and decision-making systems value the human relationship with nature and the duty to care for natural ecosystems.

Why collaborate?

Communities are not homogenous, and there are power differences even within communities. It is often difficult for one actor to address different vulnerabilities, so collaboration here becomes important.

3. *How should it happen? Co-design of longer-term interventions with marginalized groups and decision-makers*

This would involve participation, collaboration and networks for research and action, involving long-term partnerships, co-creation of knowledge, and co-design of interventions, recognizing that academia and research is largely still disconnected from change on the ground. The focus would be on

transforming structures that cause inequality such as by co-designing microfinance or insurance interventions that increase the resilience of marginalized groups such as women, Indigenous peoples, etc. Action research should not overburden the most vulnerable, and should include transnational and national actors, with attention to regulations and laws. We need to intervene across scales, including the policy scale.

Why collaborate?

The task is huge. Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration will bring in different kinds of expertise and diverse actors involved in bringing about effective outcomes. Collaboration helps us in making changes across scales in ways that do not overburden the most vulnerable.

4. *Recognize existing capacities: Support women's collectives and cooperatives to drive empowerment, rights and systemic change.*

Addressing the unequal social responsibility for providing care can't be done without changing norms and structures and this requires investing in women's collective agency. We also need to link with or draw connections between diverse collective actions, locally and globally.

Why collaborate?

Certain forms of social subordination or difference are normalized. Changing these norms requires collective action—at the community level, but also at higher scales as within markets, or by negotiating policy change.

Advance GESI outcomes by informing institutional and policy action

Focus: *To ensure that climate action policy frameworks, such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), are informed by disaggregated data and analysis that is feminist and intersectional.*

Why is this important?

Evidence-based decision-making on gender equality and social inclusion in the context of climate change will benefit marginalized groups. Gender-responsive adaptation and mitigation measures delivered through national climate plans will lead to better policies, plans and allocation of resources.

Barriers identified in the survey

- Prevailing and dominant systems of power and privilege are discriminatory. When both the demand for and supply of quality disaggregated data and analysis are low, it is challenging to design and implement effective policies to deliver GESI outcomes.
- Lacking an intersectional lens in both research and action impedes progress toward GESI outcomes.
- Resistance to systemic change is due to unequal power structures.

- Progress on GESI outcomes is impeded by the lack of a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach in the context of climate change.

Opportunities for action

1. *Seizing the design of national-level climate policies as a window of opportunity*

The ownership of country-driven climate policies such as NDCs and NAPs usually lies within ministries of environment and climate change, although things have been improving recently. There is currently opportunity and momentum to engage closely with key policymakers government-wide to build this ownership and align macroeconomic and fiscal policies with efforts to meet countries' climate commitments. This requires coordinated action not just across ministries of finance, economic development, and environment, but also those responsible for labour, agriculture, health, etc. While NAPs and NDCs set out national climate priorities over the medium and long term, there are still knowledge and capacity gaps related to how these key ministries will be involved, how climate change action will be financed, and how countries can mobilize domestic and international climate finance to scale up investment in adaptation and mitigation.

“We need to build bridges among those working on GESI and those working on climate actions within the political context by providing strong evidence to boost climate actions that integrate climate justice.”

Workshop participant

Why collaborate?

The Alliance and its members need to work through coordinating mechanisms for climate action and ensure GESI integration informs their work. A critical challenge is to ensure this national-level work is effectively linked to the [NAP Global Network](#) and the [NDC Partnership](#). The Alliance can also support bridge building between those working on GESI and those working on climate action policy by providing strong evidence to adaptation and mitigation actions that integrate climate justice. The NDCs and NAPs will impact multiple sectors and it is essential that key government agencies and all other stakeholders (specifically those from marginalized groups and civil society) have a voice in their design and implementation. This cannot simply be driven by a single government department or a small group of government or private sector actors. It is also important to ensure that special interests (from a specific industry) do not unduly influence or derail the design and implementation of these programs. For that, a broad and effective coalition of government agencies and actors working towards the same goal of climate action that also supports GESI outcomes, is necessary.

2. *How can ARA support transformation through research and action coalitions?*

ARA should design research and action programs that are truly innovative, consultative and collaborative from the outset. Economy-wide policies, such as macroeconomic, labour, and social protection policies that integrate GESI and climate action, should be targeted. The Alliance should explore how to support connections with those outside “the usual” actors, such as by integrating civil society actors and leadership from marginalized groups in research and action coalitions. Funding should

be designed to support this non-traditional approach and channel support to those outside the traditional research community as part of the coalition building necessary for collective action.

Why collaborate?

For research to be credible, feasible, do no harm, and have sustained impact, it is important to integrate societal groups that are directly impacted, but not usually involved in climate action initiatives—specifically civil society actors—in the research and policy design process, the. It is important to identify the right stakeholders, including key business and financial organizations, and industry associations, that can jointly work on GESI outcomes and climate action.

3. Local-level climate action to meet GESI outcomes

Needs and priorities can be clearly articulated at the local level and local policy needs are very different from national level. Local policies and community-level action and mobilization are crucial to shifting GESI outcomes. For instance, municipal policies are critical for climate action and represent a significant opportunity to support GESI outcomes (in areas such as housing, food security, transport, health, and waste). The ARA needs to support the leadership of women’s organizations at this level, connecting them with national-level policy development and opportunities for private sector action and financing. The ARA should explore mechanisms for creating space for community and local groups, including women’s organizations, to drive the policy agenda and to have more influence during key policy windows.

Why collaborate?

While climate issues cut across scales and sectors, communities need to be engaged at the local level, and within multi-stakeholder collaborations. National level actors can help link with global frameworks, while setting a national agenda. However, local actors are implementers and providers of locally grounded solutions. There is strong value in building networks, such as the [C40 Cities](#) network of mayors, for peer learning and strengthening the ability of local actors to influence national and regional policy. Women’s organizations and media are critical for providing political muscle and momentum. These synergies of action are needed for sustainable development approaches that integrate GESI and climate change.

4. Getting implementation right on national-level climate policy and action

While many good policies exist, translating these policies into action is a challenge. It is important to look at country-level governance structures on gender and climate change, along with how resources are allocated, including for capacity development and implementation monitoring. Establishing mechanisms for NDC and NAP implementation and ensuring the capture of disaggregated data on gender are equally important.

Why collaborate?

To produce strong cases that demonstrate the effectiveness of mainstreaming GESI in ongoing policies. Collaboration at this scale does not happen organically. Adequate time and resources are needed to create networks that can exchange information, mobilize action and ensure GESI integration informs the work of existing coordination mechanisms for climate action.

Enhance the agency and access to resources of marginalized groups

Focus: Research that is outcome-driven to enhance participation, capacity and access to information, technology, natural resources

Why is this important?

Marginalized groups, communities, and society as a whole would benefit from greater climate justice based on the principles of fairness, equity, and inclusion. We need to reduce the gendered inequalities brought upon by climate change and support groups that are most affected by the climate crisis. Rather than just pointing out the advantages of GESI, in terms of framing the opportunity for greater inclusion, we also have to show how ineffective policy design and delivery is when it is not inclusive.

Barriers identified in the survey

- Affected groups are unable to claim their rights due to unequal power relations, and the lack of political will to devolve resources or support gender integration in policy.
- Research efforts don't reach affected communities and stakeholders are reluctant to participate due to other priorities. Engagement is undermined by a lack of expertise and capacity among the actors involved.
- Cultural barriers, norms, and social structures do not recognize equality or inclusion in decision-making nor cultivate diverse leaders.
- We lack understanding and data on how climate affects different groups of people.
- There is insufficient attention to longer-term, gender-responsive, Southern-led responses and approaches to finance are inappropriate.

Opportunities for action

1. Knowledge generation on structural and social barriers

We need further knowledge and evidence on who is excluded and included, and how relationships and entitlements change over time and across scales, paying attention to power relations and social norms. This includes understanding the process, policy, and technology barriers that make it difficult for marginal groups to access information and resources to adapt. Regarding women's vulnerability and needs, we need to listen to what they are asking for, rather than assume which interventions are needed. We must better understand existing power dynamics and determine how to ensure that women's voices are at the table.

Approaching the adaptation challenge openly means questioning existing assumptions and narratives. Revisiting these assumptions from a more inclusive perspective demands co-creation of knowledge. This could include combining "toad eye" and "eagle eye" points of view, contrasting locally grounded with larger scale perspectives to support action research that enables policymaking.

Why collaborate?

The issue of who gets excluded and why is often context specific. Collaboration with diverse partners (in terms of geography, approaches, and disciplines) will help in generating knowledge specific to the context.

2. Resourcing

Finances and other resources should be directed toward including excluded groups and building their capacities. This should include financing and action to support women's ownership of land and other assets, and funding women's organizations and collectives representing diverse populations (e.g. Indigenous women, women with disabilities, young women, migrant women etc.) as equal partners in research.

“Enhancing women’s access to financial capital is a stepping stone to the accumulation of other forms of capital that benefit the entire household, communities and nations as a whole.”

Survey respondent

Action research should be undertaken with the specific objective of increasing access to resources (including finance and technology), and justice for marginalized groups. Initial research can aim to demonstrate how this works at a small scale but with a clear pathway to scaling out. There would also be value in mapping resources that already exist (for sharing and mutual support).

Why collaborate?

Certain groups have been historically excluded from access to resources. They cannot be equal partners in action research without funding that is co-designed with marginalized groups and collectives. Funding arrangements should promote an inclusive environment and recognize the need to redress the injustices that have made adaptation research, policy, and action to date unfair and ineffective.

3. Influencing policy implementation and practice

To move beyond knowing about inequality to actually creating inclusion in practice, we need to:

- Enhance participation in decision-making, expand training on climate-resilient technologies, disseminate knowledge, and champion policy change.
- Increase women’s training and participation in action research, to ensure women and other vulnerable groups are supported during extreme climate events and coming out of these events.
- Involve local communities, especially women, in the development of policies and plans, and sensitize and train local communities and policymakers on adaptation planning.
- Maintain inclusive peer learning during implementation stages, integrating feedback into further research and learning that leads to on-the-ground implementation by marginalized groups. Building this learning and feedback into the action research cycle should help to correct measures that fail to achieve their purpose. Ensure marginalized groups are included in these peer learning and reflection opportunities.

- Focus on both direct and indirect pathways that can strengthen agency and empowerment. This could include investments in public services such as health care and education.

Why collaborate?

This entry point clearly requires collaboration with diverse actors, not only research-marginalized groups, but those with finances and other resources, and those able to catalyze communities and policy/practice action.

3. Cross-cutting observations

This consultation on how to advance gender equality and social inclusion through climate action focused on entry points related to the action research cycle. As such, discussions across the four entry points often reflected back on the process, design, and usual team composition of action research itself—how it can foster inclusion and continuous learning, and contribute towards social transformation.

Building ‘inclusion’ into the design and composition of research initiatives

Across entry points, discussion often pointed back to the need to include marginalized groups, and those most vulnerable to climate change impacts, in the design of research processes, and to the extent possible, within research teams and partnerships. As one participant observed, *who are we to address marginalization?* While there was a shared understanding that tackling gender and social exclusion demands participation beyond the “usual” research partners, there was also recognition that these alliances can be hard to achieve and sustain given the limited time and resources vulnerable groups typically have to engage in the research process—and the need to not overburden them.

Tackling GESI inherently demands challenging dominant power structures, so the inclusion of marginalized groups and voices needs to be approached with intent. Various groups highlighted the need to work with civil society groups—particularly women’s organizations, human rights and labour organizations, and other kinds of collectives—where agency already exists and which have the capacity to mobilize and represent marginalized groups.

Diversifying the pool of expertise and experience

This recognition that GESI considerations should apply to the issue of team and network composition also points to the need to do research in different ways, building outreach, reflection and feedback into the research cycle, to allow for course corrections that ensure research is locally grounded and responsive to the needs and experiences of its intended beneficiaries. This in turn highlights the need to include different kinds of expertise among the research partners, including those with skills in community engagement, knowledge brokering and co-creation, and inclusive

“There is considerable polarization between scientists and local communities. Getting local knowledge into the picture is also a science, so we need to strengthen trans disciplinary going forward.”

Workshop participant

approaches to monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

Creating opportunities for peer learning

The necessity and benefits of learning from and with diverse research partners rippled across group discussions. Those discussing more inclusive research methods, for example, highlighted the need for building capacity by investing in South-South peer exchanges and shared learning on good practices. This could take the shape of a community of practice that supports networking, outreach and spaces for shared learning among different stakeholders.

Those looking at how to strengthen GESI through policy and planning pointed to the value of networks for peer learning and strengthening the ability of local actors to influence national and regional policies. The explorations of how to empower and direct resources to excluded groups, meanwhile, pointed to the value of maintaining peer learning through implementation stages, and ensuring marginalized groups are included in these learning opportunities.

Balancing between local and national scales

Given the essentially local nature of climate change adaptation, groups discussed the importance of ensuring the local relevance of supported research and action. While one group looked specifically at the opportunities of working through NAPs, NDCs and other national-level plans and policies to advance GESI, it too pointed to the opportunities for action at the municipal and local level. But groups and their IDRC guides also recognized that there is no clear dichotomy between national and local-level action—issues such as the exclusion of women and other marginalized groups are often grounded in social norms and institutionalized systems of discrimination that must be tackled on a wider scale and through higher jurisdictions—even if they are experienced locally.

“If we start from the position that what needs to change is the system that holds inequality in place, we need to ask critical questions about our methodology, and possibly move toward methods that transform power relations at scales beyond the local.”

IDRC guide

While there was recognition that it has historically been challenging for locally grounded research to be effective in informing policy and practice at higher levels and wider scales, there is a desire to see ARA embrace this challenge.

4. Chair’s reflections on the consultation

The workshop process

Feedback on the online workshop revealed that participants greatly appreciated the opportunity for in-depth, small group discussion on the entry points, the opportunity for co-learning, the inclusive, positive atmosphere created, and the guidance offered by the breakout facilitators. One noted how much was

covered in such a short period of time. Nonetheless, some felt more time would have been beneficial to consolidate the group work and that more time could have been devoted to plenary discussion.

Overall, one third of the 15 participants who completed the feedback survey gave the workshop top marks (5/5), with nearly half (47%) rating it 4/5.

In a post-event debrief, IDRC staff who had guided the small group discussions similarly appreciated the depth and breadth of discussion made possible by the overall workshop design, but noted the challenge of how much “doing” was demanded in various sessions—brainstorming, ranking ideas, merging ideas, offering structured feedback, and collaboratively writing up a synthesis template. There were mixed views on having group participants able to write simultaneously on the synthesis document – this enabled co-creation, but made coherence a challenge. Given the time constraints, some of the outputs were inevitably fragmented and lacked concrete examples, but still achieved considerable depth of thinking that benefited from mixed-group collaboration.

Some guides also questioned the value of asking participants why collaboration was needed, noting the GESI entry points for discussion were more around stages of action research rather than distinct themes. While the question generated some useful observations on how interdisciplinary and more inclusive teams can strengthen action research, the question did not necessarily surface the added value of collaborating through the ARA. It may have been more usefully phrased in terms of how a coalition might bring in competencies that are lacking to address a given theme or entry point. Nonetheless, the discussions on this question underscored the great demand for co-learning and peer learning, both within and across supported research projects; the potential for the ARA to serve as a platform for bringing in groups not usually involved in climate action research; and the value of producing case studies demonstrating the effectiveness of more inclusive approaches—all of which could be supported through ARA’s convening and knowledge brokering functions.

The survey process

In asking respondents to identify priorities for advancing GESI through action research rather than specific research questions, the survey generated many responses that speak to the research process itself rather than thematic knowledge gaps. The priorities and recommendations were fundamentally about integrating gender equality and social inclusion considerations into research for more equitable and inclusive outcomes. Rather than pinpointing thematic questions, what emerged were priorities related to four entry points along the action research continuum:

- one that focuses on “how to do research” in more inclusive, participatory, and intersectional ways;
- another that focuses on advancing equality and inclusion integration through adaptation actions or interventions in various sectors;
- a third around advancing GESI by seizing policy opportunities; and
- a fourth focused on enhancing the agency and access to resources of marginalized groups through action-oriented research.

As a basis for group discussion on action priorities, these entry points cannot be seen as entirely distinct: there was considerable flow and points of convergence among them.

Gaps in survey representation

While Africa, Asia, and North America were well represented among survey respondents, there were only two responses from Latin America and three from Europe, with no responses from the Middle East and North Africa. In terms of sectoral representation, national funders of research and businesses were not represented.

Gaps in workshop participation

While Africa, Asia, North America and Latin America were well represented in the workshop discussions, participation from Europe and the Middle East was minimal, and no participants were from North Africa. In terms of sectoral representation, national funders of research were not represented.

Annex A: Consultation process

The consultation was undertaken by IDRC through two related activities:

- a) a **survey** conducted among researchers, funders and practitioners active in the climate change adaptation research space, and
- b) a **virtual workshop**

Survey process and representation

In September 2021, some 70 individuals—including ARA members, IDRC grantees, knowledge brokers, other researchers and technical experts, and fellow donors—received a survey questionnaire and invitation to participate in this consultation process. The survey was open for 61 days and generated 42 responses.

Respondents were asked to identify up to two priorities for action-oriented research that would advance gender equality and social inclusion in the context of climate change in the next 10 years. We also asked respondents to explain why these are priorities, list barriers to moving these priorities forward, and to share any suggestions for mitigating or resolving these barriers.

The ‘priorities’ for action research that survey respondents identified were then reviewed by a team of seven IDRC staff members. Three team members took an initial pass at grouping related responses and clustering all the priorities into categories. This process identified the four broad entry points that then underpinned the workshop discussions.

In terms of representation:

- Nearly two-thirds (62%) of our survey respondents were female.
- More than one-third (36%) were from sub-Saharan Africa, followed by 29% from North America, and 24% from Asia.
- Nearly half (45%) were international or regional research system actors (45.2%), followed by implementing partners (21%); national research system actors (14%); and international funders of research (12%).

Workshop process and representation

On December 1, 2021, in a highly interactive session guided by facilitation teams from IDRC and Inclusive Innovation, 28 participants worked in a series of breakout groups to build on four entry points identified in the pre-event survey, identifying additional opportunities for action and why collaboration would be essential to these actions.

In advance of the workshop, participants were asked to familiarize themselves with the survey results and choose their preferred entry point for deeper exploration. Following an initial brainstorming session

in which small groups generated, prioritized, and then merged additional ideas about action opportunities, participants then worked to deepen their thinking on their selected entry point, capturing their thinking in a co-created synthesis document. Each group then presented their initial synthesis to another group, which provided constructive feedback. Groups then worked to integrate this feedback into their synthesis.

Following the virtual consultation, the results of this group work were consolidated and reviewed by IDRC staff who had themselves participated in each of the deliberation groups. These results form the basis of Section 2 of this summary. As Chair of this process, IDRC provides further input in the cross-cutting observations of Section 3, and reflections on the consultation process in Section 4.

In terms of representation:

- Nearly two-thirds (61%) of consultation participants were female.
- Nearly one-third (32%) were from sub-Saharan Africa, followed by 29% from North America, 18% from Asia, and 11% from Latin America.
- Half self-identified as international or regional research system actors (50%), followed by implementing partners (22%); international funders of research (14%); and national research system actors (11%).

Annex B: Survey findings summary tables

Priority	Why is this a priority? Who benefits?	Barriers	Opportunities for action
<p>Table 1: Inclusion and intersectionality</p> <p>How best to support participatory, inclusive research that takes an intersectional approach?</p> <p>Mixed-methods research that makes visible under-represented voices, differential adaptive capacity and the systems and structures that underpin inequalities.</p>	<p>To avoid simplistic narratives that dichotomize ‘men’ versus ‘women’ and render differential adaptive capacities/ needs/ preferences invisible and risk (re)producing social inequalities.</p> <p>To ensure research can be more relevant, appropriate to the context and transformative.</p> <p>Benefits to people and communities most impacted by climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevailing and dominant systems of power and privilege discriminate against knowledge and research from the majority world, limit opportunities/funding. • Primary focus on biophysical sciences in climate change research and dominant deficit narrative of risk and vulnerability. • Insufficient investment in, and resources to support inclusive and/or intersectional approaches and meaningful collaboration. • Weak and ineffective integration of GESI in projects/programs. • Working in silos and failing to make links to other relevant actors, sectors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage diverse and creative research networks and research processes that interrogate assumptions and framing of adaptation research. • Develop more programs/projects that are Southern-led and composed of diverse and inclusive research teams. • Integrate local gender expertise throughout the project cycle. • Funding - for capacity strengthening of both climate change researchers and collaborators on GESI and intersectional approaches; to set up learning spaces on GESI; for longer-term research programs and projects, recognising that transformative change is a slow process. • Collect and synthesize best practices on GESI and CC research to educate local level and national actors including policy makers, planners and community representatives.

Priority	Why is this a priority? Who benefits?	Barriers	Opportunities for action
<p>Table 2: GESI-integration in climate resilient development interventions</p> <p>How to advance GESI-integration in interventions for climate resilient development? In particular, considering interventions in agriculture, climate finance, disaster preparedness, conflict-affected states and value chains.</p>	<p>Climate change impacts are not uniformly experienced, and neither are the benefits from interventions intended to build resilience. Marginalized groups often bear the largest impacts of climate change, and have important knowledge to contribute to interventions in order to ensure that benefits are equitably shared.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of financial mechanisms that invest in climate action for women, especially in agriculture. • Vulnerable groups are seldom at decision making tables or included to inform interventions. • Lack of systems thinking and focus on individual interventions and 'solutions'. • Donor funding is still orientated toward scientific achievements and less on befitting end users. • Lack of understanding of gender-transformative strategies and opportunities by researchers and implementation agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in long-term research partnerships among actors at different geographic scales with different entry points into communities, investment, policymaking, and advocacy to become allies in progressing knowledge and applied solutions at local, national, international scales. • Work directly with groups typically excluded from decision making on action research projects in climate change hotspots. • Create incentives for scientists to go beyond publications and to reach and benefit end users. • Enhancing capacity for, and implementation of, gender transformative interventions and working towards women's social and financial inclusion. • Broaden the scope of program goals, shift the focus away from actors and individuals and towards systems of oppression and global corporate actors that interfere with local politics. • Support women's collectives and cooperatives to drive empowerment, rights and systemic change.

Priority	Why is this a priority? Who benefits?	Barriers	Opportunities for action
<p>Table 3: Seize opportunities to inform policy</p> <p>How to seize opportunities to inform effective institutional and policy action that drives GESI outcomes? To ensure Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), for example, are informed by disaggregated data and analysis that is feminist and intersectional.</p>	<p>Evidence-based decision-making on gender equality and social inclusion in the context of climate change will benefit marginalized groups.</p> <p>Gender-responsive adaptation and mitigation measures delivered through national climate plans will lead to better policies, plans and allocation of resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When both the demand and supply of quality disaggregated data and analysis is low, it is challenging to design and implement effective policies to deliver GESI outcomes. • A lack of an intersectional lens in both research and action impedes progress towards GESI outcomes. • Resistance to systemic change due to unequal power structures. • Lack of a whole of society and government approach in the context of climate change (which cuts across sectors) limits pace of progress on GESI outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve quality of research and communication for policy audiences - funding feminist and intersectional analysis including through think tanks. • Build alliances across equity seeking groups (connecting rights groups with climate action advocates) both as a source of pluralising sources of knowledge and to generate demand for GESI research and effective accountability mechanisms. • Engage with policy actors at all levels of government to push for better GESI outcomes and GESI informed policies.

Priority	Why is this a priority? Who benefits?	Barriers	Opportunities for action
<p>Table 4: Enhance access and agency</p> <p>How to enhance access to resources and agency of marginalized groups to empower locally led and just climate resilient development?</p> <p>Research that is outcome-driven to enhance participation, capacity and access to information, technology, natural resources.</p>	<p>To reduce the gendered inequalities brought upon by climate change and support groups that are most impacted by the climate crisis.</p> <p>Marginalized groups, communities, and society as a whole would benefit from greater climate justice based on principles of fairness, equity, and inclusion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unequal power relations, lack of political will to devolve resources or support gender integration in policy. Affected groups unable to claim their rights. • Lack of expertise and capacity among actors involved, research efforts lack reach to communities facing issues, stakeholders reluctant to participate due to other priorities. • Cultural barriers, norms and social structures that do not recognize equality or inclusion in decision-making nor cultivate diverse leaders. • Lack of understanding and data on how climate effects different groups of people. • Inappropriate approaches to finance. Insufficient attention to longer-term, gender-responsive, and Southern-led responses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progressive legal instruments and protection for those who defend community rights to fair, gender equitable and socially inclusive responses to mitigate and adapt to climate change. • Participation in decision-making, training on climate-resilient technologies, disseminate knowledge and champion policy change. • Lead by example: demonstrate climate-resilient development at district level, implement development plans using climate information and adaptation approaches that advance gender equality and social inclusion. • Knowledge and evidence on who is excluded and who is included, the ways that relationships and entitlements change over time and across scales, paying attention to power relations and social norms. • Finance and actions that support women to own land and other assets.

Annex C: Registered workshop participants

Saqib Abbasi, Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC)

Bhim Adhikari, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Ojong Baa. E, Gender Consultant, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR)

Chiranjibi Bhattarai, Nepal Water Conservation Foundation (NWCF)

Hilary Clauson, Equality Fund

Logan Cochrane, Carleton University, Global and International Studies

Michelle du Toit, SouthSouthNorth (SSN)

Mairi Dupar, Overseas Development Institute (ODI) / Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN)

Ricardo Fort, Group for the Analysis of Development (GRADE)

Edidah Lubega Ampaire, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Amina Maharjan, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

Alice McClure, University of Cape Town

Lisa McNamara, Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) / SouthSouthNorth (SSN)

Shehnaaz Moosa, Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) / SouthSouthNorth (SSN)

Daniel Morchain, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Pulchérie Nomo Zibi, SOCODEVI

Marwan Owaygen, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Ana Portocarrero, KIT Royal Tropical Institute

Anjal Prakash, Bharti Institute of Public Policy, Indian School of Business

Nitya Rao, University of East Anglia

Robi Redda, Climate Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) / SouthSouthNorth (SSN)

Chandni Singh, Indian Institute for Human Settlements (IIHS)

Victoria Tiscornia, Fundación InterAmericana del Corazón (FIC Argentina)

Stefanie Tye, World Resources Institute (WRI)

Walter Ubal Giordano, International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Siera Vercillo, University of Waterloo, School of Environment, Enterprise and Development

Katharine Vincent, Kulima Integrated Development Solutions

Francis Wambalaba, United States International University Africa (Kenya)