

BRIEF ACTIONABLE RESEARCH AGENDA ON:

Gender

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■ ■ Addressing gender dimensions of the low carbon transition is core to ensuring a gendered transformative change that is more equitable. Gender equity is thus part of a larger initiative to identify the most promising research issues to support an actionable low-carbon transition in the Global South.

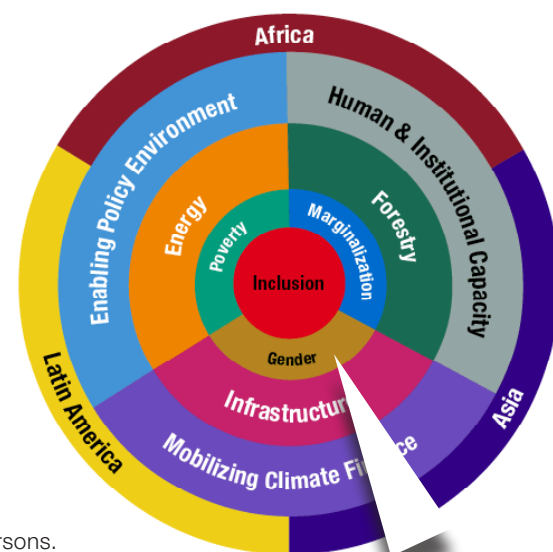
Aim: To ensure that research in support of an inclusive global low-carbon transition (LCT) takes into account gender dimensions in order to promote gender equity.

Background: Gender is a critical component of a LCT for three reasons.

First, climate change has different impacts on women, men and gender diverse persons. Within these categories, other intersecting factors such as race, geography, and class shape experiences. For example, when a drought or flood induces young men to migrate to urban areas in search of jobs, women are more likely to remain in rural areas. This is reflected in the “feminization of agriculture,” with women left to take over subsistence farming, despite having fewer resources in terms of land, capital, and training, resulting in limited capacity to adapt to changing climatic conditions.

Second, enacting low-carbon transition policies without considering their gender dimensions may reinforce existing inequalities. For example, men make up the majority of formal jobs in many carbon-intensive sectors, such as energy and transport, which anticipate future job growth and may require specialized education or skills. Without attention to these dynamics, there is a risk that women will miss out on opportunities in the new clean-energy economy. Meanwhile, women are critical parts of forest economies, agriculture, and textile and service industries. Rural women and girls already face a heavy burden in collecting fuel wood for cooking in the hundreds of millions in households – especially in sub-Saharan Africa – that lack access to clean cooking facilities. Forest protection policies – with goals that include storing carbon in trees – may help or hinder these women, depending on whether the policies increase access to wood by improving forest health, or place wood gathering off-limits as a conservation measure.

Third, in many cases, improving gender equality and implementing a low-carbon transition can support one another. For instance, there are gendered perspectives in decision-making, from a household’s decision on whether to purchase a cleaner cooking stove, to the weight that a government official places on environmental values and household welfare. A just transition will anticipate what training, education, and support will be needed to offer equal opportunities to all genders to participate in decisions and employment in the LCT.



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There is a risk that women will miss out on opportunities in the new clean-energy economy



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Opportunities for High-Impact Research

To ensure that the LCT is inclusive will require incorporating gender analysis into all policies and actions. At present, there is a need for greater research capacity and gender expertise in the Global South to untangle the relationship between carbon and gender. Stakeholders need both gender-relevant data and trained professionals to interpret the data. For example, ministries could benefit from increased capacity in gender budgeting and gender auditing. Gender and intersecting factors should be considered at all phases of planning low-carbon policies. Gender impacts should be modeled during policy design, monitored during implementation, and evaluated after the policy is rolled out.

One research gap involves women's roles in decision-making. If research were to support the intuition that female officials are more likely to enact environmentally-friendly policies, this could inform broader efforts to increase women's political representation. At the household level, there is a need to understand more about how power dynamics between spouses affect decisions related to household fuel use, which is a key source of carbon emissions.

Because gender roles and relations vary by country, research is needed across geographical contexts. Research also is needed to offer policy recommendations and evaluate their effects on equity across gender and intersecting identities. Few studies have looked at the effects of climate and a LCT at the intersections between gender and other marginalized identities: youth and elderly, rural and urban poor, ethnicity, indigeneity, caste, sexual orientation, and gender identity. Examining the role of gender also involves studying the roles of men, including the effects of a LCT on men's employment in industries that are currently carbon-intensive, and the implications of a LCT for young men facing high levels of youth unemployment. These groups are likely to experience different effects of a LCT and different opportunities to contribute to a LCT. Understanding these different impacts will reduce the likelihood that anyone is left behind.

A better understanding of the gendered nature of employment – and the future of employment – will support policies that aim to promote gender equality in key sectors such as agriculture, transport, and energy. It is possible that the LCT will imply a reallocation of jobs, where it is likely that men will be the first to move into clean energy sectors, leaving



Images: CIFOR/Arnauld Chyngwa

women behind. Research is needed to build capacity and resilience in communities that anticipate a loss of jobs. It will be important to identify effective models for training, re-training, and educating women and men to participate in LCT programs. Research is needed to pinpoint the different roles that government, communities, companies, and other stakeholders can take in these programs.

It is important to understand the impacts of credit and finance on women, including the impacts on their families and communities. On average, women have fewer resources, less collateral, smaller businesses, slower expected growth of businesses, and different networks than men. As a result, women who want to start businesses are perceived as worse credit risks, and often have to rely on family funds instead of on formal investors. Investors' perceptions in this regard may be incorrect, and research is needed to document the reality. More generally, research on how to improve women's access to finance could support investors in adjusting their financial offerings to be better suited to the realities and needs of women-led businesses. Research is needed to evaluate the impacts of projects and technologies in sectors with women-led small and mid-sized enterprises, such as agriculture and forestry.

Climate change is likely to increase unpaid care work, as people must make greater efforts to secure food, water and energy sources, cope with climate-related health impacts and disasters, and manage the breakdown of social networks due to climate-driven migration. Further work is needed to develop economic models of caregiving labor in relation to low-carbon programs, particularly as it impacts women and men of different education, age, income, and marital status. There is a need for effective models for LCT programs that combine care labor interventions with LCT activities. Issues include how the low-carbon transition can support the demands on women's labor, which are anticipated to increase as a result of climate change. Effective policies to support these transitions will be different in different contexts, and careful analysis is needed in each context.

**Access the High-Level
Research Agenda:
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