



WOMEN AND CLIMATE CHANGE

CARE is an international humanitarian aid organisation fighting global poverty, with a special focus on working with women and girls to bring lasting change to their communities. As a non-religious and non-political organisation, CARE works with communities to help overcome poverty by supporting development projects and providing emergency relief. We believe supporting women and girls is one of the most effective ways to create sustainable change in communities.

Why gender matters in climate change

Climate change creates global challenges, but its effects on people’s lives and livelihoods in Vanuatu are very local.

Climate change is a risk multiplier, worsening the hazards that already exist and creating new ones. In a nation that has ranked as the most vulnerable in the world to natural disaster five years in a row, the risks associated with climate change in Vanuatu are catastrophic. Because women in Vanuatu experience disadvantage in education, resources, power, opportunity and most other spheres of public life, the threats of climate change are even greater for women.

But women are also on the frontline when it comes to combating climate change. They play an important role in protecting the food and nutrition security of their families and communities and bring a vital perspective on the action needed to overcome the challenges of climate change.

That’s why CARE is working with women and men in Vanuatu to tackle gender inequality and build communities’ resilience to climate change—together.

GENDER + CLIMATE CHANGE



More severe natural disasters, more often: Droughts, floods and tropical cyclones are increasing. Disaster exacerbates women’s vulnerability.



Food insecurity: Extreme weather conditions are damaging food and income crops. Women grow the majority of food but are often the last to eat when food is scarce.



Water shortages: Drought reduces water availability while flooding and sea level rises are contaminating water sources. Women collect the majority of water and scarcity increases the workload and risks.



Community displacement: Rising sea levels and increased flooding is forcing communities to relocate. Women commonly have limited control over resources and decision making.



Health vulnerability: Food and water problems lead to nutrition deficiencies and increases in water- and vector-borne disease. Women are usually the primary carers of children and the sick.

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rank of Vanuatu on the World Risk Index for natural disasters.

0/52

MPs in Vanuatu who are female.

9.2 million

people in the Pacific affected by extreme events since 1950.

300%

increase in Tanna’s domestic violence reports after 2011 cyclones.

75%

Vanuatu population in rural areas and reliant on agriculture.

What CARE is doing about climate change

CARE has worked with communities in Vanuatu to build resilience to climate change since 2008. Women are at the centre of our resilience building activities, and this approach has proved an effective way of bringing real and lasting change to the whole of the community. CARE's work is based in Tafea province with advocacy work at the national level.

Our Resilience Program aims to provide communities with the knowledge and skills they need to meet the challenges of climate change, like food security and disaster preparedness. CARE focuses on equipping communities to plan their own preparations and response, making sure that people understand the value that women and other marginalised members of the community contribute and supporting women to get involved.

From introducing new crop varieties and building demonstration gardens to protect and diversify food sources to running emergency simulations to prepare for disasters, CARE works to ensure that women and men have equal learning opportunities, decision making power and leadership roles, both in program activities and the community committees who lead the ongoing local action. This gender-focused approach to climate change resilience is further reinforced through CARE's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and Gender Equality programs.

CARE also works in close partnership with others working on climate change in Vanuatu, including the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and the Vanuatu Climate Action Network.

CARE'S RESILIENCE PROGRAM



Community planning

Helping communities establish gender-balanced committees to get ready for and respond to disasters and climate shocks.



Climate smart agriculture

Giving communities information about nutrition, introducing drought-resistant crops and demonstrating new agricultural, pest-management and food preservation techniques.



Climate change awareness

Providing communities with information about the likely impacts of climate change and training on effective action and working with schools to include climate information in the curriculum.



Disaster preparedness

Teaching men and women in communities how to prepare for disasters, practicing their response through simulations and giving basic first aid training.



“ My community was very poor in information and we were scared when disaster would come. But after CARE gave us the information about disaster risk reduction we were very happy because now everyone—men, women, everyone—knows how to reduce our risk and prepare for disaster when it comes. ”

Martha, Chair of the Ikaokao Community Disaster and Climate Change Committee, Aniwa.

CARE International in Vanuatu

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