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“Towards multi-functional agro-ecosystems
promoting climate resilient futures”

Building equitable resilience capacities under polycrisis: gendered pathways and solutions

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Abstract

This presentation is part of a proposed hybrid panel session entitled “Gender equality and inclusion in food, land, and water systems by 2050: Projections and solutions” by the CGIAR Gender Equality and Inclusion Accelerator, co-organised by CGIAR Science Program on Multifunctional Landscapes

Food, land, and water systems (FLWS) are increasingly shaped by intersecting crises including climate change, demographic transitions, and geopolitical instability that amplify existing inequalities and disproportionately undermine women’s resilience capacities. This paper examines how these overlapping polycrises dynamics interact with structural gender constraints and reshape resilience across livelihoods, time use, health, and agency in low- and middle-income countries.

The analysis draws on a synthesis of peer-reviewed literature, global reports, and development interventions over the past two decades, applying a gendered food systems framework to identify solutions that are evidence-based, scalable, and capable of addressing multiple, interacting stressors. Findings show that women’s resilience is constrained not only by unequal access to productive resources such as land, finance, climate information, and technologies, but also by entrenched social norms, rising unpaid care burdens, and limited representation in decision-making. These factors operate through reinforcing feedback loops, where reduced assets, time poverty, and institutional exclusion collectively limit women’s ability to anticipate, absorb, and adapt to shocks.

The paper identifies three interdependent pathways for advancing equitable resilience. First, strengthening women’s agency through collective action, leadership, and inclusive market engagement enables greater voice and decision-making power. Second, improving access to and control over bundled resources combining climate services, finance, and technologies enhances adaptive capacity when aligned with local contexts. Third, transforming gender norms, particularly around unpaid care and mobility, is critical to sustaining gains in both agency and resource use.

Evidence consistently highlights that integrated, multi-component interventions especially those delivered through women’s collectives and supported by enabling policies such as gender-responsive budgeting, inclusive recognition systems, and shock-responsive social protection are most effective in addressing structural barriers.

The paper concludes by outlining actionable pathways for research, policy, and practice to design and scale gender-transformative resilience strategies, emphasising alignment

between immediate adaptation needs and long-term systemic change toward equitable and sustainable FLWS by 2050.

Keywords: Agency, collective action, gender, norms, pathways, policy, polycrises, resilience capacities