Case Study: Integrating approaches to reduce GBV into Climate Finance: Lessons from the Women Leading Climate Action project, implemented by GAGGA

Why it matters

Well-documented evidence shows that climate change exacerbates gender-based violence (GBV), while the prevalence of violence targeted at women and girls also limits their ability to respond and adapt to climate change. For policy-makers on climate finance, decisions on climate programmes and funding that ignore risks of GBV and its implications will be less effective and reduce long-term development impact for communities.

The shift to gender-just climate finance

Global Affairs Canada has been supporting the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action (GAGGA) since 2023, with a CAD 11 million investment from its 2021-2026 climate finance commitment for the Women Leading Climate Action project.

GAGGA is a partnership led by Fondo Centroamericano de Mujeres Foundation (FCAM), Mama Cash and Both Ends. GAGGA is an alliance and network of community-based organisations, women's and socio-environmental funds and NGOs with expertise in gender, climate and environmental justice. It has built a pioneering funding model, effectively transforming bilateral and philanthropic funding into multi-year core and flexible grants to support locally led and gender-just climate action, supporting in the last 10 years over 2'500 women-led community based organisations with over 50 million euros.

By supporting the Women Leading Climate Action project being implemented by GAGGA, Canada recognizes that gender equality and women's empowerment can be core priorities within climate policy and financing.

Evidence shows that women's organisations on the front lines of climate change are the ones best able to identify GBV risks and design contextualized responses. GAGGA's model of providing direct core funding to small and grassroots organisations ensures they have the stability and autonomy needed to protect women at risk of GBV and strengthen local feminist movements in their climate action. Because these organisations integrate gender equality and protection outcomes directly into climate adaptation and mitigation initiatives, they also help ensure that climate investments meet internationally recognized standards for gender-responsive development assistance.

By supporting the Women Leading Climate Action project, which supports locally-led feminist climate action that explicitly addresses gender inequality and women's rights, Global Affairs Canada demonstrated how climate finance can effectively deliver both environmental and gender equality outcomes, in line with OECD DAC reporting frameworks such as the gender equality policy makers and Rio markers on climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Through Canada's Can$5.3 billion climate finance commitment (2021-2026), Canada set a target for 80% of climate finance projects to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment – an objective that has been surpassed.

By funding initiatives that intentionally pursue both gender equality outcomes and climate results, GAC has demonstrated strong integration of gender equality and women's empowerment across its climate finance programming and can report 'double marker results' for global goals on climate, gender equality and sustainable development. This not only improves reporting credibility and coherence, but also reflects a more effective use of public finance by aligning impact across interconnected priorities for ODA. In GAGGA's view, this coordinated and holistic approach addresses the structural inequalities that serve as root causes for both GBV and climate vulnerability, and is more effective in advancing multiple outcomes than when these issues are treated as programmatic add-ons.

Through Canada's support for the Women Leading Climate Action project, Canada has channelled climate finance to grassroots, women-led organisations, ensuring that funding directly reaches those best positioned to drive locally-led solutions . GAGGA's work addresses the intersection of climate justice and gender equality, including:

- Delivering effective climate action
- Addressing GBV in context-specific and holistic ways
  Strengthening women's economic independence, thereby reducing vulnerability to GBV

Through the Women Leading Climate Action project of GAGGA, Global Affairs Canada has provided flexible support to local women-led organisations. This project ensures funding is designed to centre the needs and experiences of women and structurally excluded groups. Rather than just mitigating risk, these organisations focus on preventing harm through safe and inclusive participation in climate action.

Through the Women Leading Climate Action project, Women Environmental and Human Rights Defenders (WEHRDs) and women-led community based organisations are treated as strategic

partners with opportunities to shape the project's funding and policy priorities, design and implementation of climate action.

Learning from the Women Leading Climate Action project: practical guidance for climate finance teams

- **Align climate finance with gender equality goals**
  Move beyond "gender mainstreaming" toward explicitly tackling structural drivers of inequality and GBV.
- **Increase direct access to climate finance for women-led community based organisations**
  Prioritise partnerships and mechanisms that channel resources to women-led, community-based organisations leading climate action.
- **Where possible, provide core, long-term and flexible grants**
  Enable organisations to address the multiple and varied causes of inequality and oppression that drive both GBV and climate vulnerability.
- **Shift power in decision-making**
  Include grassroots women's organisations in the project's funding design, governance, and allocation decisions.

KEY TAKEAWAY: To effectively integrate GBV into climate resilience, climate finance actors need to support organizations who work with women-led community based organisations. Climate finance that fails to address gender inequality and GBV will fall short of its potential to transform structural inequalities. Climate finance that support women-led organisations on the frontlines of the climate crisis and tackling the root causes of injustice will deliver stronger, safer and more sustainable outcomes.

This case study was shared by the Global Alliance for Green and Gender Action. It accompanies the guidance note, "Addressing Gender-Based Violence for Better Climate and Environment Outcomes", which was produced in a collaboration between the Ending Violence Against Women and Children (VAWC) Helpdesk, as part of the UK-funded What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls: Impact at Scale initiative ('What Works'), and the UK-funded Climate, Environment and Nature (CLEAN) Helpdesk. This report was developed in partnership with the UK Government.