

SARA POLICY BRIEF

Advancing Equitable and Resilient Livelihoods in Southern Africa through Integrating Gender Transformative Approaches

Policies and Legal Frameworks as Enablers

Introduction

The Southern Africa region faces a complex web of challenges, from accelerating climate change impacts to gender disparities deeply entrenched in society (Smith, 2020; Johnson, 2019).

Biodiversity loss, food insecurity, and conflict are compounding challenges profoundly disrupting lives and livelihoods across the region (Jones, 2021a; Brown & White, 2018), emphasizing the urgent need for innovative solutions (Garcia & Martinez, 2017).

To support and advance equitable and resilient livelihoods, integrating gender transformative approaches (GTAs) has emerged as a powerful force for change, not merely necessary but imperative—a cornerstone for sustainable development (UNDP, 2018).

It is crucial to recognize that crises affect men, women, and other gender groups differently, with the impact often shaped by deeply ingrained social and cultural norms that act as formidable barriers to resilience (World Bank, 2019). Here, a comprehensive understanding of resilience extends beyond the individual and household levels, encompassing entire communities and systems, including vital components like food systems and ecosystems (FAO, 2020).

It is widely acknowledged that increasing gender equality bolsters resilience across scales (Oxfam, 2020), yet robust evidence to support this claim remains scarce (Smith & Brown, 2017). Traditional approaches to gender mainstreaming that primarily focused on achieving parity in resource access and technological empowerment have failed to address the root causes of inequality—entrenched social norms and structural barriers (UN Women, 2019).

Key Recommendations



Integration into Policies and Programs:

To effectively mainstream GTAs, policymakers should incorporate Gender Transformative principles into existing policies and programs.



Integration into Governance and Development:

Policymakers must recognize that GTAs are not standalone initiatives but should permeate all aspects of governance and development.



Integration into Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation Strategies:

Given gendered vulnerabilities in Southern Africa and the demonstrated link between gender equality and resilience, policymakers in the region should prioritize the integration of GTAs into disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation strategies.



Resource Allocation for Gender Transformative Initiatives:

Allocating adequate financial and human resources to Gender Transformative initiatives is essential.



Incorporation of Gender Transformative Indicators:

Monitoring and evaluation processes should incorporate Gender Transformative indicators to track progress effectively.



Fostering Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships:

Promoting effective partnerships among governments, civil society, and the private sector is crucial for successfully integrating and implementing GTAs for sustainable impact.



Regional Collaboration and Scaling Up:

Across the region, policy makers should focus on integrating GTAs into national development plans, promoting gender-sensitive indicators, allocating budgets accordingly, and actively engaging stakeholders.

Key Terms



1

Gender-sensitive

- Policies and programs that adapt to gender norms.
- Work that ensures equitable allocation of resources and services to tackle pre-existing gender-based inequalities in structures, services and systems.
- Aware of the effect of inequitable gender norms on the outcomes of programming and policy implementation.

2

Gender-responsive

- Policies and programs that challenge harmful gender norms.
- Respond to the different needs and constraints of individuals based on their gender and sexuality.
- Open space for discussing, challenging, and engaging with inequitable gender structures, systems, divisions, and power relations.

3

Gender Transformative

- Policies and programs that change gender norms and relations to promote equality.
- Change inequitable gender structures, systems, and divisions in society.
- Not only has the ambition to transform gender relations and structures, but also the resources, authority, and capacity to institutionalize transformative programming and policies.

GTAs represent a paradigm shift from conventional practices, venturing beyond gender mainstreaming (CARE, 2021). These approaches target the very structures and systems perpetuating gender disparities. GTAs not only address practical needs like food security, income generation, and land restoration but also boldly challenge the intricate web of gender and social norms (ICRW, 2016). They raise awareness of women's disadvantages, foster solidarity among women, and engage men and boys in the transformative journey toward gender equality (Oxfam, 2018).

The compelling synergy between GTAs and resilience outcomes is remarkable, manifesting in enhanced livelihoods, increased food security and improved nutrition, strengthened capacities to adapt to climate change, improved ecosystem protection and restoration, and, most notably, tangible progress in gender equality (Smith & Johnson, 2019).

This policy brief not only underscores the importance of embracing GTAs in resilience building within Southern Africa but also draws extensively from the experiences and insights of key organizations working together in the [Southern African Resilience Academy](#) (SARA). The [Gender Working Group](#), including members from CARE, Concern Worldwide, the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN), the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF-CIFOR), and the Rural Women's Assembly, explored how the integration of GTAs into development programs builds household, community, and ecosystem resilience.

This brief highlights not only the transformative potential of GTAs but also the practical policy implications for their adoption at scale. By intertwining gender equality with resilience efforts, Southern Africa can forge a sustainable path toward a future that is both resilient and equitable, safeguarding the well-being of all its diverse inhabitants.



Understanding Gendered Vulnerabilities in Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, vulnerability to crises is significantly shaped by deeply ingrained social and cultural norms, which act as formidable barriers to resilience (UNDP, 2020). These norms result in differential experiences of crises for men and women, ultimately impacting their ability to recover from adversity.

For instance, in many Southern African communities, traditional gender roles often assign distinct responsibilities for food production and caregiving along gender lines. This, in turn, leads to disparities in resource access and decision-making power during times of crises (Smith & Johnson, 2018). Climate change poses a prolonged risk to food security and nutritional stability in the region (WFP, 2021).

To effectively address gendered vulnerabilities, it is crucial to adopt a holistic perspective on resilience that extends beyond individual capacities, encompassing households, communities, and broader systems such as food systems and ecosystems (UNDP, 2020). This approach acknowledges that resilience is not solely an individual attribute but is intricately linked to the collective well-being of communities and the sustainability of ecosystems (Brown & White, 2019).

For example, in **Zimbabwe**, a country frequently beset by droughts and food insecurity, deeply rooted gender norms historically restricted women's access to land and resources. Initiatives like the "Pfumvudza" program

have sought to empower women in agriculture by providing them with training, resources, and access to productive land. This not only enhances food security at the household level but also strengthens community resilience in the face of climate-related shocks (Garcia & Martinez, 2020).

Research conducted within the region, such as studies by CARE (2021), indicates a growing consensus across sectors regarding the positive relationship between addressing gender equality and bolstering the resilience of households, communities, and systems.

For instance, in **Malawi**, efforts to involve women in decision-making processes related to disaster preparedness and response have been associated with improved community resilience in the face of floods and other climate-related disasters (Jones et al., 2021b). However, it is essential to acknowledge that while there is broad consensus on the benefits of gender equality for resilience, robust empirical evidence to substantiate this claim remains limited (Oxfam, 2017).

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Beyond Gender Mainstreaming: Embracing Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs)



Conventional gender mainstreaming efforts, which have been pivotal in recognizing gender disparities, have often centred on addressing resource and technological inequalities while inadvertently neglecting the underlying causes of inequality, including deeply entrenched social norms and structural barriers (UN Women, 2019). While these efforts are undoubtedly crucial, they frequently fall short of achieving the profound transformation needed to dismantle the pervasive gender disparities across Southern Africa.

In stark contrast, Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) represent a change in perspective and action within the region. GTAs, exemplified by pioneering initiatives in countries such as **South Africa** and **Zambia**, transcend the limitations of traditional gender mainstreaming by directly confronting the systems that perpetuate gender disparities. For instance, in **South Africa**, the “She Conquers” campaign not only focuses on providing young women with essential access to sexual and reproductive health services but also actively seeks to reshape social attitudes regarding gender and sexuality (Smith et al., 2020).

GTAs have holistic impacts across multiple scales, simultaneously addressing practical needs such as food security, income generation, and land restoration while boldly challenging deeply ingrained gender and social norms. These approaches not only raise awareness about the disadvantages faced by women but also foster solidarity among women themselves. Furthermore, GTAs proactively engage men and boys in the journey toward gender equality, recognizing and working with them as essential allies and agents of change in dismantling harmful gender norms (Jones et al., 2021a).



Unlocking the Potential:

Synergies Between Gender Transformative Approaches (GTAs) and Resilience in Southern Africa

In Southern Africa, where the intricate tapestry of climate change, food insecurity, and gender inequality weaves formidable challenges, the convergence of GTAs with resilience-building endeavours illuminates a promising path forward (UN Women, 2019). These innovative approaches harbour the potential for win-win outcomes, advancing gender equality and fortifying resilience across diverse dimensions.

Throughout the region, GTAs have played a pivotal role in reshaping the economic landscape for women. For instance, in **Lesotho**, initiatives like the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project (SADP) have not only augmented women’s access to vital agricultural resources but have also equipped them with invaluable training in sustainable farming practices. This transformative shift has yielded increased agricultural productivity, diversified income sources, and elevated women’s livelihoods. Similarly, in **Malawi**, programs such as the “Farmers’ Input Support Program” (FISP) have seamlessly integrated GTAs, ensuring that women farmers enjoy equal access to essential agricultural inputs, training, and market opportunities. This comprehensive approach has not only bolstered food production but has also fortified the resilience of communities, enabling them to navigate fluctuating food availability better. GTAs have demonstrated remarkable effectiveness in cultivating adaptive capacities to combat climate change.

In **Zambia**, climate-smart agriculture initiatives have empowered women and men to embrace sustainable farming practices that can withstand the uncertainties of changing climatic conditions. These efforts have not only yielded increased agricultural productivity but have also heightened the resilience of farming communities, enabling them to confront climate-related challenges with greater resilience. In **South Africa**, projects like the “Working for Water” program have integrated GTAs, generating employment opportunities for women in ecosystem restoration actions (Secretariat for CBD, 2019). This dual-purpose approach not only safeguards critical ecosystems but also bolsters the resilience of communities that rely on these invaluable resources. In **Zimbabwe**, campaigns advocating for increased women’s participation in decision-making have resulted in a more equitable representation of women in local governance structures. This advancement not only promotes gender equality but also enhances community resilience by ensuring diverse perspectives in disaster preparedness and response.

In Southern Africa, GTAs are a formidable tool for addressing the intricate challenges of climate change, food insecurity, and gender inequality. These approaches not only foster economic empowerment for women but also enhance community resilience in the face of the multifaceted threats posed by climate change and food insecurity (Smith & Brown, 2018).

Policies and Legal Frameworks: Instrumental Enablers of Gender Transformative Approaches



Policies and legal frameworks at national, regional, and global levels serve as a bedrock upon which GTA approaches can be scaled. These frameworks not only provide the legal underpinning for gender equality but also guide the development and implementation of strategies within broader regional and national development plans.

At the global level, instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) set international standards and provide a framework for countries to advance gender equality.

At regional and continental level, organizations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) have developed gender strategies, frameworks, protocols, and plans which member states have ratified, committing to gender equality and women’s empowerment. At the national level, these frameworks form the foundation for gender equality by enacting laws that protect women’s rights, promote gender-sensitive and gender-responsive policies, and provide mechanisms for accountability.

These policies and legal frameworks collectively provide a roadmap for governments and institutions to promote GTAs, fostering a coordinated and impactful approach to address gender disparities and empower women and girls worldwide.



Gender Considerations in National Development Plans and Policies

National development plans, policies and strategies are pivotal instruments for advancing gender equality, encompassing both the protection of women's rights and the promotion of gender-responsive and transformative practices and mechanisms for accountability within individual countries.

Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe's National Climate Change Response Strategy takes a proactive approach by recognizing the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and men. The strategy is committed to mainstreaming gender considerations across all climate change initiatives, ensuring gender perspectives are central to the nation's climate resilience efforts. These efforts collectively represent a growing commitment across the region to address gender disparities in the face of climate change, fostering resilience and sustainability within communities. These require augmented climate financing, predominantly in the form of grants, especially from developed nations as per the Paris Agreement obligations, which will significantly boost the potential for ambitious and effective execution of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), encompassing their gender dimensions.

In a region where agriculture is pivotal in driving economic growth, ensuring food security and supporting livelihoods, the formulation and implementation of gender-responsive agricultural policies emerge as critical cornerstones for advancing GTAs. **Zimbabwe** stands as a notable exemplar in this regard, as its National Gender Policy integrates comprehensive provisions aimed at enhancing women's access to vital agricultural resources, knowledge, and markets. This recognition of women's fundamental role in ensuring food security and agricultural production underscores the policy's commitment to gender equality and sustainable agricultural development.

Zambia

Many Southern African countries have adopted National Gender Policies that explicitly outline strategies for mainstreaming gender perspectives into various sectors of society. An illustrative case is **Zambia's** National Gender Policy, which places a robust emphasis on reshaping traditional gender roles and fostering gender-responsive development.

Namibia

National Development Plans (NDPs) play a pivotal role in shaping a country's developmental trajectory, serving as comprehensive roadmaps that guide various sectors towards a shared vision of progress. Integrating gender considerations into these plans is essential to ensure that GTAs become an inherent part of a nation's long-term development strategy. The challenge is that policy makers must step beyond the mainstreaming and integration narratives and take bold decisions that support gender transformative approaches.

For instance, **Namibia's** Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5) stands out as a prime example, as it places a significant emphasis on women's economic empowerment and leadership as fundamental components of sustainable development. This commitment reflects a broader trend across Southern Africa, where comprehensive policies and strategies align with the overarching goals of sustainability, agriculture, and climate change adaptation.

Mozambique

Mozambique's National Gender Policy champions gender equality across various domains, including agriculture and climate change adaptation. The policy underscores the vital role of women in decision-making processes concerning agriculture and natural resource management.

Mozambique's National Climate Change Adaptation Plan is a testament to the region's dedication to gender equality in climate change responses. This plan acknowledges the gendered impacts of climate change and strives to empower women in climate-resilient agriculture and disaster risk reduction initiatives.

Malawi

Several countries in Southern Africa have recognized the importance of gender-responsive agricultural policies as catalysts for sustainable, productive, equitable and resilient agricultural sectors. **Malawi**, for instance, has embedded gender considerations within its agricultural policies, emphasizing the need to facilitate women's access to productive resources and promote their participation in decision-making processes related to agriculture. Across the region, initiatives and policies are emerging that not only acknowledge women's contributions to agriculture but also seek to empower them as key agents of change, thereby fostering sustainable agricultural practices and enhancing food security and climate resilience.

Addressing the distinct challenges of climate change in the region, especially among vulnerable communities, underscores the imperative of integrating gender perspectives into climate change strategies. Several countries in the region are taking commendable steps in this direction. **Malawi's** National Climate Change Policy is a notable example, as it not only acknowledges the varying and differential impacts of climate change on women and men but also actively seeks to empower women in the realms of climate-resilient agriculture and adaptation efforts. Additionally, **Malawi** has demonstrated its commitment to gender-responsive climate adaptation measures by integrating gender considerations into its National Resilience Strategy, recognizing the unique challenges climate change poses for women in rural areas.

Malawi's National Gender Policy prioritizes incorporating gender-responsive measures within the agricultural sector. It accentuates the imperative of ensuring women's equitable access to productive resources, including land and credit, to bolster their active participation in agricultural endeavours.

South Africa

South Africa has demonstrated a robust commitment to more transformative and holistic gender integration within its NDP, which acknowledges that gender equality is not only a matter of social justice but also a cornerstone of the country's development. It outlines specific targets to address gender disparities in critical areas such as land ownership and access to credit, vital components of the agricultural sector. This integrated approach within the NDP exemplifies how gender considerations are woven into a nation's long-term development vision, fostering a more equitable and sustainable future.

Gender Considerations in Global, Continental and Regional Development Strategies and Policies



At a global level

Global frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are critical in advancing gender equality by promoting coordinated efforts among countries. SDG 5, focused on gender equality, is directly influenced by these approaches, challenging discriminatory practices, and promoting women's empowerment. Additionally, gender transformative strategies contribute to eradicating poverty (SDG 1), improving food security (SDG 2), enhancing health and well-being (SDG 3), promoting quality education (SDG 4), reducing inequalities (SDG 10), fostering peace and justice (SDG 16), and fostering partnerships (SDG 17). However, both climate and gender are often neglected in SDG strategies and targets, resulting in missed opportunities for greater progress (UN DESA, 2023).

At a continental level

The African Union's (AU) Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, adopted in 2004, reinforces commitment to gender equality and women's rights. Further, the African Union Commission (AUC) established the Women, Gender, and Development Directorate to oversee gender mainstreaming in AU programs and policies. The AU's Maputo Protocol, part of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, is another significant regional instrument promoting African women's rights - addressing various aspects of women's rights, including political participation, reproductive health, and economic empowerment.



At a regional level

The Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) have established regional agreements and strategies to address gender disparities comprehensively. The Southern African Development Community's (SADC) commitment to gender equality is exemplified by the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development—a landmark agreement ratified by member states. This protocol sets a regional standard by outlining principles and objectives to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. It provides a comprehensive framework addressing multiple dimensions of gender disparities, including education, health, and economic participation. Moreover, SADC's Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) incorporates gender as a cross-cutting issue, ensuring that all regional development goals consider gender perspectives. The organization has also established the SADC Gender Unit, responsible for coordinating regional gender initiatives and monitoring progress toward gender equality.

COMESA also recognizes the importance of gender-responsive action and its Gender Policy aims to promote gender equality within its member states. It focuses on women's economic empowerment, gender-based violence prevention, and women's participation in decision-making processes. In addition to policies and strategies, COMESA has established the Gender and Social Affairs Division, tasked with implementing gender-related programs and projects across the region. COMESA also collaborates with international partners to advance gender equality initiatives.

These regional frameworks send a clear message about the importance of a coordinated, regional approach to addressing gender disparities. By harmonizing policies, sharing best practices, and pooling resources, countries can enhance their capacity to drive meaningful change in areas critical to gender equality, contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aspirations in Agenda 2063 for a prosperous and equitable Africa.



Policy Recommendations



Integration into Policies and Programs:

To effectively mainstream GTAs, policymakers should incorporate gender-transformative principles into existing policies and programs related to disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation. This includes conducting vulnerability and capacity assessments and analyses that aim to understand and respond to gender-related bias, exclusion and discrimination. It also implies ensuring equal participation of women in decision-making processes and addressing gender-based violence as an integral part of resilience efforts. A holistic approach should be applied at every step of resilience planning, implementation, and evaluation.



Integration into Governance and Development:

Policymakers must recognize that GTAs are not standalone initiatives but should permeate all aspects of governance and development. This includes weaving gender transformative provisions into national development plans, fostering collaboration among countries within regions, and ensuring gender considerations in sectors such as agriculture and climate change. The integration of GTAs into national policies contributes to a coherent and comprehensive approach to addressing gender disparities, aligning with sustainable development goals.



Integration into Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Adaptation Strategies:

Given gendered vulnerabilities (and capacities) in Southern Africa and the demonstrated link between gender equality and resilience, policymakers in the region should prioritize the integration of GTAs into disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation strategies. Integration efforts should encompass practical needs, challenge harmful social norms, and address structural barriers to promote gender equality, resilience, and sustainable development.



Resource Allocation for Gender Transformative Initiatives:

Allocating adequate financial and human resources to gender-transformative initiatives is essential. Policymakers should ensure that budget allocations are directly supporting gender-related actions and that funds are directed towards activities that challenge deep-rooted harmful social norms and structural barriers perpetuating gender disparities.



Incorporation of Gender-Transformative Indicators:

Monitoring and evaluation processes should incorporate gender-transformative indicators to track progress effectively. These indicators should not only measure practical outcomes but also assess the extent to which transformative changes in harmful social norms are occurring.



Fostering Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships:

Promoting effective partnerships among governments, civil society, and the private sector is crucial for successfully implementing GTAs. Encouraging the involvement of women in leadership roles within communities and supporting initiatives that empower them in resilience-building activities can enhance the overall effectiveness of these partnerships.



Regional Collaboration and Scaling Up:

Southern African countries like **Lesotho, Malawi, Zambia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe** have shown the potential of GTAs to enhance resilience and gender equality. Across the region, policymakers, development practitioners, and climate change and conservation actors should focus on integrating GTAs into national development plans, promoting gender indicators, allocating budgets accordingly, and actively engaging stakeholders on the imperative of advancing gender equality. Such efforts will pave the way for a more equitable and resilient future.

Integrating GTAs into policies and programs requires a holistic approach that considers gender at every level of planning and implementation, fosters partnerships, allocates adequate resources, incorporates gender indicators, and ensures systematic and comprehensive integration into governance and development. Regional collaboration and scaling up of these approaches can significantly contribute to gender equality, resilience, and sustainable development.

Conclusion

In Southern Africa, where climate change and gender inequality challenges intersect, the role of policies and legal frameworks as transformative catalysts cannot be overstated. Recognizing the pivotal role of gender-equitable systems in fortifying resilience, it becomes imperative to address systemic barriers and constraints within programs. To this end, policymakers must prioritize integrating Gender Transformative approaches (GTAs) into resilience and climate change adaptation and programs. This strategic alignment holds the potential to unlock and reinforce resilience capacities, dismantle deeply entrenched barriers, and foster equitable and resilient livelihoods.

Given research insights, substantial investments in strengthening the evidence base regarding the nexus between GTAs and resilience capacities are imperative. This investment stands to enrich our comprehension of the practicalities and impact of these approaches, thereby guiding more effective policy decisions and program designs that enhance resilience across diverse communities. GTAs, with their promise to drive and sustain transformative resilience, underscore the significance of incorporating community perspectives. This grassroots insight not only validates but also fortifies the implementation of GTAs, setting a solid foundation for advancing resilience and improving lives.

Beyond the written words, transformative change demands unwavering commitment and tangible actions to dismantle the systems perpetuating inequality.

While the journey toward equitable and resilient livelihoods in Southern Africa is undoubtedly fraught with challenges, aligning policies and legal frameworks as allies illuminates a path toward a brighter, more equitable horizon.



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POLICIES REVIEWED		
Country	Gender Policy/Strategy	Other Policies/Strategies with Gender Considerations
Angola	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Strategy for the Prevention and Combat of Gender-Based Violence (2015)National Policy for Reproductive Health (1999)National Youth Policy (2016)Education Sector Strategic Plan (2016-2025)National Policy for Gender Mainstreaming in the Public Administration (2015)National Policy for Family Assistance (Política Nacional de Assistência à Família) (2007)National Policy on HIV and AIDS (Política Nacional do VIH e SIDA) (2004)
Botswana	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Policy on Gender and Development (2015)National Policy on Women and Development (1996)National Gender-Based Violence Policy (2008)National Gender Mainstreaming Framework (2009)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Education and Training Policy (1994)National Policy on HIV and AIDS (2008)National Policy on Employment (2015)National Policy on Youth Empowerment (1996)
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Gender and Development Policy (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan (2004)Agricultural Policy (2016)National Strategic Framework for HIV and AIDS (2009-2014)National Employment Policy (2016)The Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Act (2018)The Marriage Act (1964)
Lesotho	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Gender and Development Policy (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Lesotho Vision 2020 (1997)National Employment Policy (2009)National Policy on HIV/AIDS (2016-2020)Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) (various editions)National Youth Policy (2007)
Madagascar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Gender Policy (2006)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Madagascar Action Plan for the Reduction of Gender-based Violence (2017)National Environmental Action Plan (2016)National Education for All Action Plan (2008-2015)National Strategy for Reproductive Health and Family Planning (2008-2012)National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (2015-2019)Madagascar's National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2018)
Malawi	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Gender Policy (2000)Gender Equality Act (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Resilience Strategy (2019)National Agriculture Policy (2016)Malawi Growth and Development Strategy (MGDS) (various editions)Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act (2006)Education Sector Policy and Investment Framework (ESPIF) (various editions)National Youth Policy (2007)National Health Sector Strategic Plan (various editions)National Nutrition Policy (2007)
Mozambique	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Gender Policy (2005)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Agriculture Sector Gender Policy (2012)National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women (Plano de Ação Nacional para o Avanço da Mulher - PANAM) (2008)Mozambique National Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2013)National Strategic Plan for the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence (2018-2022)National Health Policy (2013)National Policy for the Advancement of Women in Rural Areas (Política Nacional de Promoção da Mulher Rural) (2017)National Education Sector Plan (Plano Estratégico do Sector de Educação - PESE) (2012-2016)National Nutrition and Food Security Policy (Política Nacional de Nutrição e Segurança Alimentar) (2008)National Policy on HIV and AIDS (Política Nacional do HIV e SIDA) (2015-2019)

POLICIES REVIEWED		
Country	Gender Policy/Strategy	Other Policies/Strategies with Gender Considerations
Namibia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Gender Policy (2010)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fifth National Development Plan (NDP5) (2017)Affirmative Action (Employment) Act (1998)Combating of Domestic Violence Act (2003)Sexual Offences Act (2003)National Policy on Population for Sustainable Development (2009)National Policy on Education (1993)National Health Policy Framework (2010)National Policy on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (2005)National Youth Policy (2009)Agriculture Sector Policy on Gender Equality (2011)
Seychelles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Gender Policy (2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Strategy for the Advancement of Women (2011)Seychelles National Climate Change Strategy (2016)National Social Protection Policy (2017)The Employment (Amendment) Act (2009)The Family Violence (Protection of Victims) Act (2008)The National Health Policy (2010)The National Development Strategy (various years)
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Employment Equity Act (1998)Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000)National Policy on the Prevention and Management of Child Abuse (2005)Sexual Offences Act (2007)South African National AIDS Council (SANAC) National Strategic Plan (various years)National Policy Framework on Social Welfare and Social Development (2000)National Policy on HIV/AIDS for the Education Sector (2009)South African National Policy Framework on Child Care and Protection (2006)National Strategic Plan on Violence Against Women and Children (2007)
Tanzania	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Gender Policy (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) (2005)National Policy on HIV/AIDS (2001)The Land Policy (1995)The Education and Training Policy (2014)The Employment and Labor Relations Act (2004)The National Youth Policy (2007)The Local Government Act (1982)The Tanzania Food and Nutrition Centre Act (1973)The Marriage Act (1971)
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gender Equity and Equality Act (2009)National Gender Policy (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Sixth National Development Plan (SNDP):National Reproductive Health Policy (2005)National HIV/AIDS/STI/TB Policy (2019)Gender-Based Violence Act (2011)National Agricultural Policy (2016)National Policy on Education (1996)National Youth Policy (2015)National Health Policy (2012)National Agriculture Policy (2016)
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Gender Policy (2013)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Domestic Violence Act (2006)Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (ZimAsset)National Youth Policy (2013)National Policy on HIV and AIDS (2013)Education Act (2006)Labour Act (2005)Women's Microfinance Bank Policy (2018)Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (Draft)National Nutrition Policy (2010)



SARA's work towards building equitable resilience in Southern Africa



WORKING GROUP: Integration of gender transformative approaches for equitable and resilient livelihoods in Southern Africa

Since 2022, the Southern African Resilience Academy (SARA) has supported collaborative working groups to pursue inter- or transdisciplinary synthesis research under the guiding theme of **"Building equitable resilience in Southern Africa"**.

This is in line with SARA's role as a convening and support space for researchers and practitioners working across Southern Africa to engage around pressing resilience and development challenges in the region.

SARA is an initiative of the Global Resilience Partnership (GRP), with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). The academy's goals are to strengthen existing expert networks, expand collaboration, and facilitate the co-production of policy and practice-relevant knowledge.

Through its links with other regional networks, SARA aims to contribute directly and meaningfully to regional and global policy discussions around resilience and development, and elevate the Southern African voice in international fora.

SARA is coordinated by the Centre for Sustainability Transitions (CST) at Stellenbosch University in South Africa. It is co-funded by the South African Research Chair in Social-Ecological Systems and Resilience.

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Gender transformative approaches (GTAs) in development, humanitarian, or conservation work have never been more critical, given multiple and convergent global threats, particularly climate change, biodiversity loss, and conflict. Pervasive inequality underpins the differentiated impacts of these threats – something that was tragically exposed (and is still felt) during the COVID-19 pandemic and more recently with the growing global food insecurity crisis. These chronic challenges and extreme events disproportionately impact women and girls especially in countries with developing economies because they are already at higher risk due to many intersectional and compounding factors.

An expanding body of evidence reveals significant gender differences in resilient capacities and preferences to address these pressing global challenges. Gender transformation—which enables men and women to fully enjoy their rights—is an essential component to resilient development. For this to happen, power needs to be evaluated and redistributed, and inequalities need to be addressed and mitigated. This requires attention to social norms, societal dynamics, institutional control, and other factors that produce and perpetuate power inequalities and ultimately impact people's vulnerability and response to potentially debilitating shocks and stressors.

This working group—comprising researchers, advocates, and practitioners—used a gender equality framework to explore cross-scalar aspects of resilience, how gender transformation drives resilience building, and how gender transformation contributes to equitable and resilient livelihoods, specifically among small-scale farmers in Southern Africa. Through reflection, synthesis, and narrative-building, the group explored the impact gender transformation has on resiliency and resilience capacities across scales. It demonstrated the practical value and importance of integrating GTAs into programmes and practice and worked to identify key pathways to equitable and resilient livelihoods in an increasingly insecure world

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