

Social and Gender Dimensions of Climate Change

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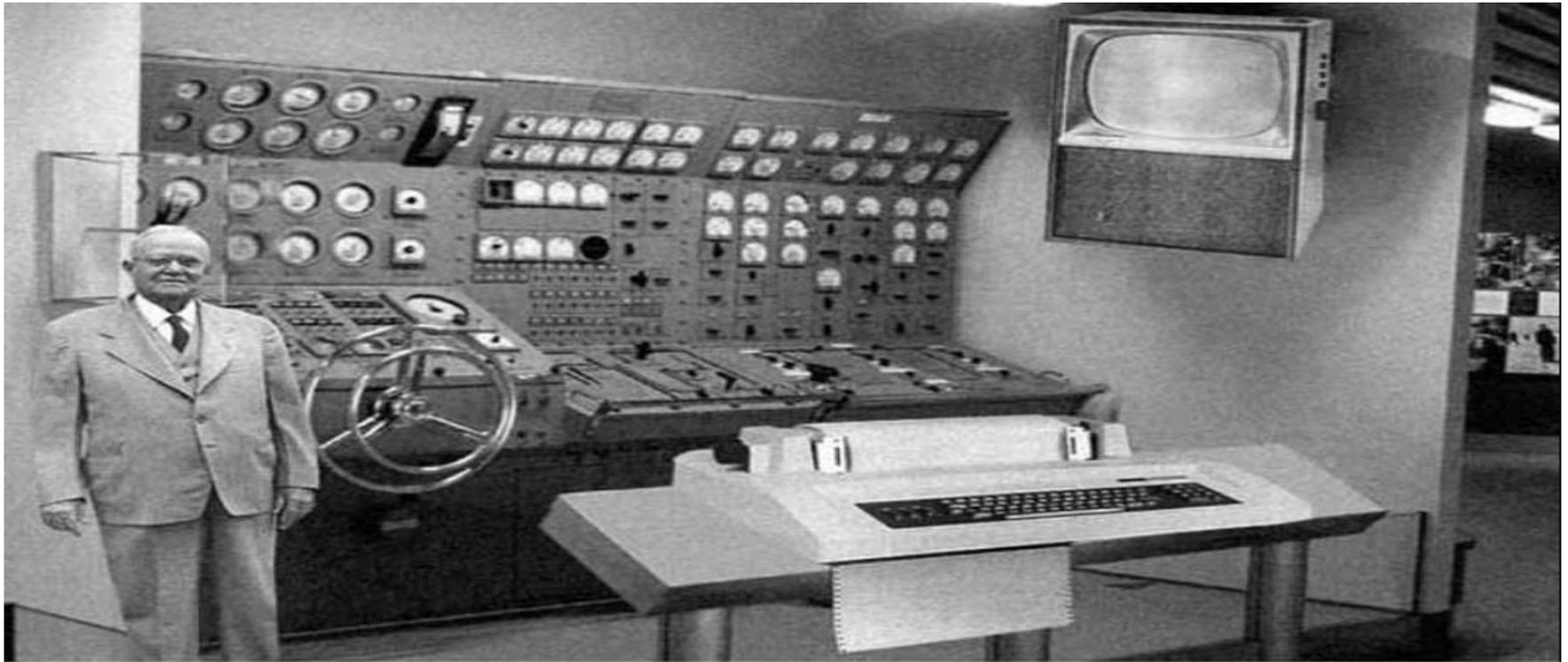
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Key Messages

- 1. *Making choices under uncertainty: holistic analysis, flexibility, participation***
- 2. *Vulnerability as a starting point (inclusion, equity and accountability)***
- 3. *Complementary investments in both hard and soft adaptation and mitigation options***
- 4. *Women's empowerment is a key ingredient to building resilience***

The highs and lows of fortune telling...



Scientists from the RAND Corporation have created this model to illustrate how a "home computer" could look like in the year 2004. However the needed technology will not be economically feasible for the average home. Also the scientists readily admit that the computer will require not yet invented technology to actually work, but 50 years from now scientific progress is expected to solve these problems. With teletype interface and the Fortran language, the computer will be easy to use.

Rethinking resilience

“the ability to withstand, recover from, and reorganize in response to crises so that all members of society may develop or maintain the ability to **thrive**”





Core properties of resilience

Applied to development

- Diversity & redundancy 
 - e.g. Livelihood diversification (including migration);
 - 5 capitals (natural, financial, human, physical, social)
- Modularity (networks) 
 - Social networks
- Responsive, regulatory feedbacks 
 - Social accountability



Fostering resilience

- Supporting **bottom-up approaches** that make use of existing social networks
- Supporting communities to increase **diversity** of livelihood and fall-back options
- Enhancing **social learning** and sound governance as a form of regulatory feedback
- Understanding the gender dimensions of climate change and **empowering women** as resilience champions

ACTIVITIES ALONG AN “ADAPTATION CONTINUUM”

(AFTER MCGRAY ET AL)



Source: adapted from WRI (2007)

Gender dimensions of climate change

- Gender equality matters in its own right, and is smart development
- Women are disproportionately at risk to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change
- Natural disasters provide a special “window of opportunity” to address gender equity
- Climate change provides the mother of all windows of opportunity: women need to be engaged as active agents of resilience building

Gender equality matters in its own right, and is smart development

- ***Removing the barriers*** that prevent women from having the same access as men to education, economic opportunities and productive inputs can generate broad productivity gains.
- ***Improving women's status*** also feeds many other development outcomes, including for their children; and
- ***Leveling the playing field*** – where women and men have equal chances to become socially and politically active, make decisions and shape policies – leads to more representative, and more inclusive, institutions and policy choices and a more inclusive and greener development path for all.

Women are disproportionately vulnerable to the impacts of natural hazards and climate change.

But this gap in vulnerability is not inevitable.





**Response and recovery
efforts can increase or
reinforce existing
inequalities.**

**But it does not have to be
this way.**



Shift from focus on women's vulnerability to emphasize their agency



Empowerment of women is a key ingredient in building resilience



What more can be done?

- Focus on post-disaster challenges and opportunities (Social Impact Assessment and Monitoring, community engagement in needs assessment)
- Earmark funds to support grassroots women's organizations as DRM/resilience champions
- Build in-country institutional capacity at central and local level to address gender dimensions and formalize role of women leaders
- Promote gender-based participation in stakeholder discussion at all levels on DRM policies, programs, climate change finance, etc.

