Pacific Young Women Transforming Climate Crisis to Climate Justice

TALK LISTEN INVEST IN US!

Young Women and Climate Action **Handbook**

Introduction:

This guide has been developed by the Young Women's Steering Committee of the Shifting the Power Coalition thanks to support of DFAT's Australia – Pacific Climate Partnership Programme.

We have developed this guide to support the empowerment of young women and contribute to building their ability to lead, design and deliver programmes on climate action in their own communities. It is a tool that can prepare young women leaders to engage in dialogue and advocacy with key actors in decision-making and leadership spaces.

The guide draws from Coalition trainings with the Australian-Pacific Climate Partnership, ActionAid Australia and CBM Australia we hope it will be a resource for all our partners and their networks to develop climate action training for young women (16 to 35 years).

How to Use this Guide

Divided into three sections, this guide is intended to build the capacity of young women to respond to the challenges of climate change by introducing sessions on Climate Change and its Impact, Human Rights-based Approach to Climate Action, and Advocacy and Campaign Planning.

Each section is structured to provide background information on each thematic area and activities to boost local knowledge. Each section is meant to be cross-referenced to ensure young women are properly resourced to transform the climate crisis into climate justice.

Also included are facilitation notes, activities and exercises relevant to each section to steer the conversation.

Creating safe spaces for young women

In order to ensure young women are supported as leaders in their communities, all steps must be taken to engage them. But how do we make sure that young women feel empowered to speak up, reflect and lead? What defines a 'safe space' for young women?

To guide your training, here are 8 elements that define what a safe space looks like for young women, shared by the young women from the Pacific YWCA movement:

1. **Accessible and safe location** – think about accessibility to the location for women with disability. Can they get there? Is it safe to navigate? Is the venue/platform in an environment that empowers young women? Is privacy guaranteed?

2. **Leadership and participation** – Make sure your programmes are young-women led. This gives ownership to young women to take the lead and fosters solidarity between them. Ensure the space is inclusive and empowering.

3. **Accurate and reliable information** – Promote evidence-based information that supports young women's leadership

4. **Building trust** – Emphasize confidentiality process: what is said/happens in the room, stays in the room. Assure the young women they can be open with their experiences and have the appropriate support system and resources available.

5. **Holistic approach** – Each young woman coming to this space comes with a different life experience and different backgrounds. It is important that when designing your programmes, discussions must be framed to take into account the different needs and realities of young women at different stages of their lives.

6. **Inter-generational co-operation** – Create a space that allows for intergenerational learning and mentoring between women of all ages. However, these spaces must be based on mutual respect and equality with the focus on developing young women's leadership.

7. **Dignity and respect** – Your programmes must encourage collective ownership and shared leadership that encourages leadership and respect between young women. Your 'safe space' must emphasize the understanding that young women are coming together to form a support network and are inclusive of young women of all diversities.

8. **Partnership and accountability** – The young women are part of communities. As part of the network, there is a responsibility to ensure that the advocacy work builds on existing relationships between different stakeholders and the promotion of the rights of diverse women and girls. In order to build trust between allies and communities, there is an understanding that young women must also be supported to practice good governance and create meaningful partnerships.

(Source: Rise Up! Guide for Young Women's Transformative Leadership, World YWCA)

Flow of sessions

Welcome everyone – take the time to greet everyone and share logistical/housekeeping information (location of bathroom; break times; length of sessions). This is a good time to answer any questions from participants.

Set the ground rules – let participants decide what should make up the house rules based on respect for each other's time and experiences. Have each participant share a rule and before it is added to the list, the group must agree on it.

Ice breakers/ Energizers – these can be introduced after or before every session or when there's a lull in discussions. It creates a comforting environment and relaxes participants. Alternatively, you can start the session with a 'Power Walk'

Introduce the topics for discussion and then explore these topics in small groups. Give participants the time to reflect, listen and engage with each other on the topic of discussion. Whenever possible, invite experts to have conversations with participants about the technical information or networking.

Energizers

Ask participants to come up with a short activity that livens up the room in between breaks to keep everyone engaged and relaxed. Here are some examples:

Fruit salad song

Sung to the tune of Frere Jacques/Brother Peter:

Watermelon, watermelon (make shape of watermelon with hands)

Papaya, papaya (make shape of papaya with hands)

Guavas (ball hands into fists) and banana (make shape of banana with arm)

Fruit salad, fruit salad (put your hands on your hips and swing them around)

Body part to colour

In this activity, participants will be asked to match a body part to an object of a certain colour. Example: Left leg to green (find something that's green and put your left leg to it)

Rock, paper, scissors

In pairs (or small groups), you play rock, paper, scissors in one round. The winner advances to challenge the winner from another group and the game continues until there are two players left. Meanwhile, the loser must become a fan/cheerleader of whoever they lost to. The final two must play best of three and by then there should be two groups of cheerleaders/fans at the final match.

Activity: Power Walk

(Adapted from the Fiji Women's Fund GESI Toolkit)

- Participants stand next to each other in a single file.

- Each participant will play a character and encouraged to mentally visualize themselves in the role which will be kept a secret till the end of the activity.

- The facilitator will then read a statement and for every statement that each participant can say yes to, they have to take a step forward. If they say no, they shouldn't move.

- This will continue until all statements are read or for as long as time permits.

- When the statements are complete, ask participants/volunteers to reveal their characters.

- Discuss key messages:

  o **Power dynamics: who has the power to make decisions?**

  o **Which identities seem to have the most power in this context?**

  o **Reflect on your identities and the steps you can take to change these power dynamics.**

- While statements and characters can be adapted to the context, here are some ideas and you can add more:

Statements	Characters
- The traditional leader in my village listens to what I have to say	- Youth group leader, male, age 29
- I have access to health services when I need it	- University student, female, age 22
- My community has proper access to information and communications services	- Girl, 15 years, living in the village
- I can influence decisions in my district	- Pregnant woman with 4 children, age 35
- I am not expected to manage or contribute to childcare duties	- Village Chief, male, age 49

Before you start…

Here are some terms that would be good to know:

Climate change

A change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

Building 'resilience':

The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards, and/or climate change, to resist, absorb, accommodate, recover and transfer the consequences of a hazard event or of climate change in a timely and efficient manner. This includes through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.

Climate Variability

Variations in the mean state and other statistics (such as standard deviations, the occurrence of extremes, etc.) of the climate on all spatial and temporal scales beyond that of individual weather events. Variability may be due to natural internal processes within the climate system (internal variability), or to variations in natural or anthropogenic external forcing (external variability).

Climate Change Adaptation

The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards, and/or climate change, to resist, absorb, accommodate, recover and transfer the consequences of a hazard event or of climate change in a timely and efficient manner. This includes through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions

Resilience

In human systems, the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects, in order to moderate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In natural systems, the process of adjustment to actual climate and its effects; human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate.

Disaster Risk Reduction

A systematic approach to identifying, assessing and reducing the risk of a disaster.

Mitigation

In the context of climate change, a human intervention to reduce the sources or enhance the sinks of greenhouse gases. Examples include using fossil fuels more efficiently for industrial processes or electricity generation, switching to solar energy or wind power, improving the insulation of buildings, and expanding forests and other "sinks" to remove greater amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

INTRODUCTION

What's happening in our environment?

The Pacific is facing the brunt of the climate crisis. The increasing intensity and impact of disasters has resulted in considerable cost to affected communities, as well as governments and business.

Young women are on the frontlines of the response to climate change. But without greater accountability for women's rights in preparedness and response plans, women and girls will continue to be disproportionately impacted.

Across the region, communities are adapting to the changes brought on by rising sea levels and changing weather patterns.

"WE'RE PLANTING FOOD BUT FLASH FOODS CAN QUICKLY DESTROY OUR VEGETABLE GARDENS"

"EVERY DAY, WE HAVE TO GO FURTHER OUT TO SEA TO CATCH FISH."

"BEING CLIMATE SMART TO ME MEANS MAKING SURE OUR LIVELIHOOD IS ADAPATABLE TO CLIMATE CHANGE."

Ensuring sustainable responses requires inclusive and locally led approaches in line with commitments from Pacific Leaders, such as the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration and the Revised Pacific Platform for Action for Gender Equality and Women's Rights.
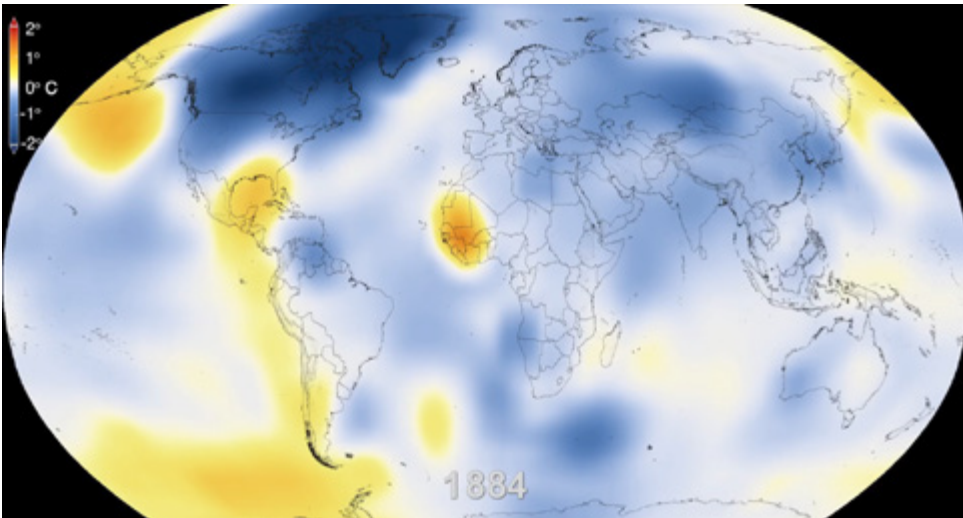
The Shifting the Power Coalition (STP Coalition) is uniquely positioned to drive such an approach and ensure that women's leadership is at the centre of building forward better.

"THIS IS ABOUT STRENGTHENING YOUNG WOMEN'S COLLECTIVE VOICE AT THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL."

Understanding climate change and its impacts

(Source: APCP Slides)

Look at this picture from 1884 – what is it telling you?

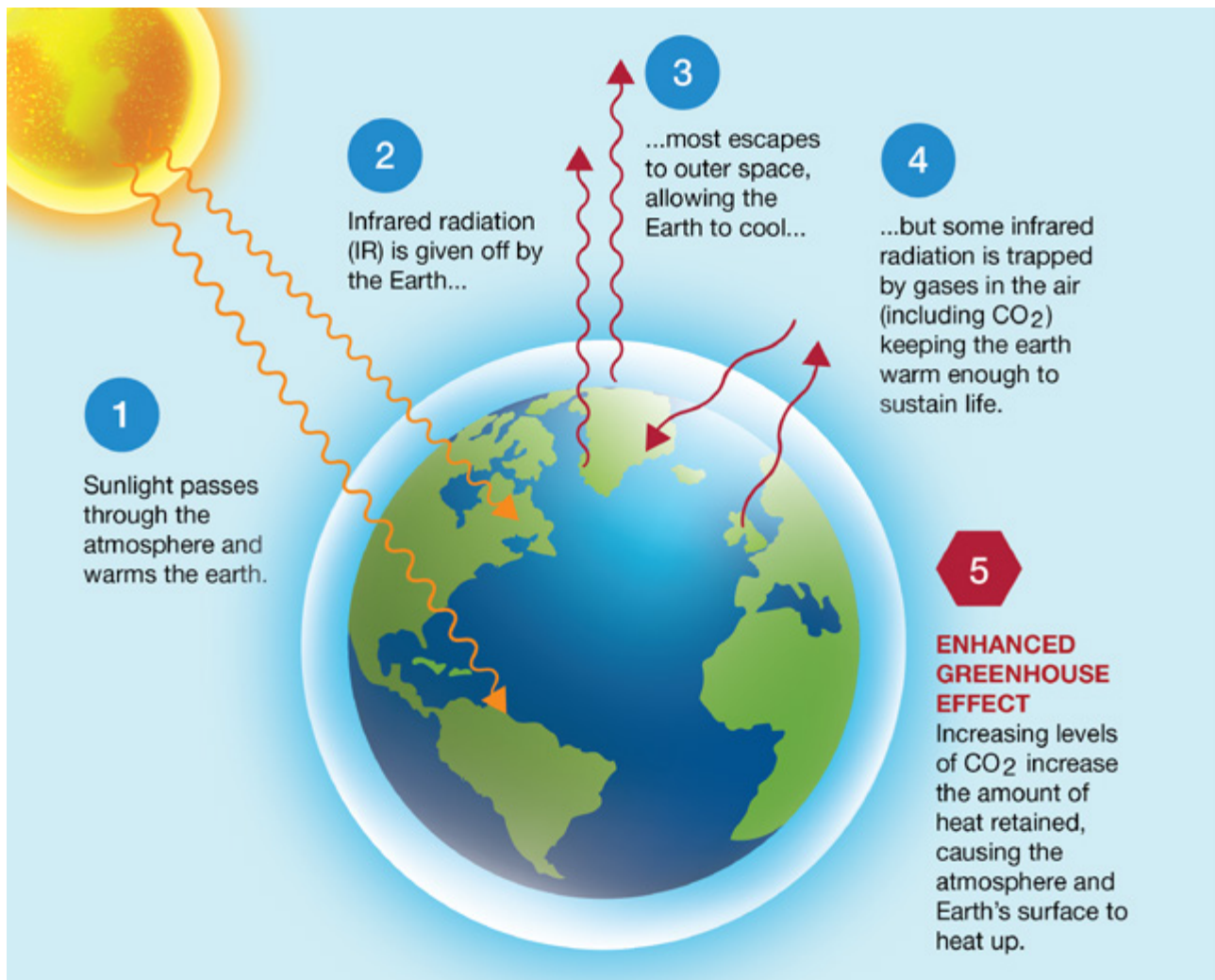
✏️ **Exercise:** Climate Projections

- What have you heard about how climate change will affect your country? These are climate projections. Identify 5 key climate projections for your country and write these down.

- What are the stories you are re hearing about the impact of climate change on your community?

- How has climate change affected you?

- What's a new word you've learnt today?

But why is this happening?

The **'greenhouse effect'** is a natural process that warms the Earth. This is critical to sustaining life on the planet. However, human activity has caused an enhanced greenhouse effect which has increased the amount of carbon dioxide trapped within the Earth's atmosphere, giving rise to the phenomena we know as global warming.

Here is a diagram explaining the 'Greenhouse Effect':

2 Infrared radiation (IR) is given off by the Earth...

3 ...most escapes to outer space, allowing the Earth to cool...

4 ...but some infrared radiation is trapped by gases in the air (including CO_2) keeping the earth warm enough to sustain life.

1 Sunlight passes through the atmosphere and warms the earth.

5 ENHANCED GREENHOUSE EFFECT Increasing levels of CO_2 increase the amount of heat retained, causing the atmosphere and Earth's surface to heat up.

Over time, increased warming has caused changes in the climate and weather patterns around the world. Multiple data and observances of the Earth's long-term climate system points to the fact that it is warming. The 2011-2020 decade was observed as being 1.09°C warmer than pre-industrial period (1850-1900). Because of the increasing warmth of the Earth's climate systems, ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica (areas with large surface land area covered in snow and ice) are melting thus creating global rise in sea level.
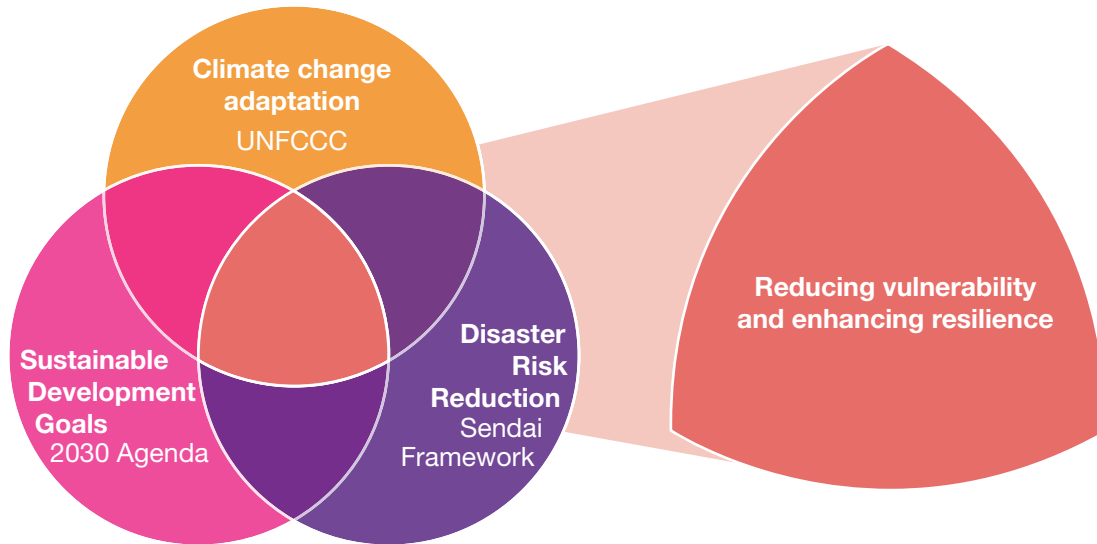
What does this mean for the Pacific?

- Sea level rise
- Ocean acidification
- Tropical cyclones increase in intensity

- Increase in average annual sea and air temperature
- Changes in rainfall patterns
- Wind driven waves
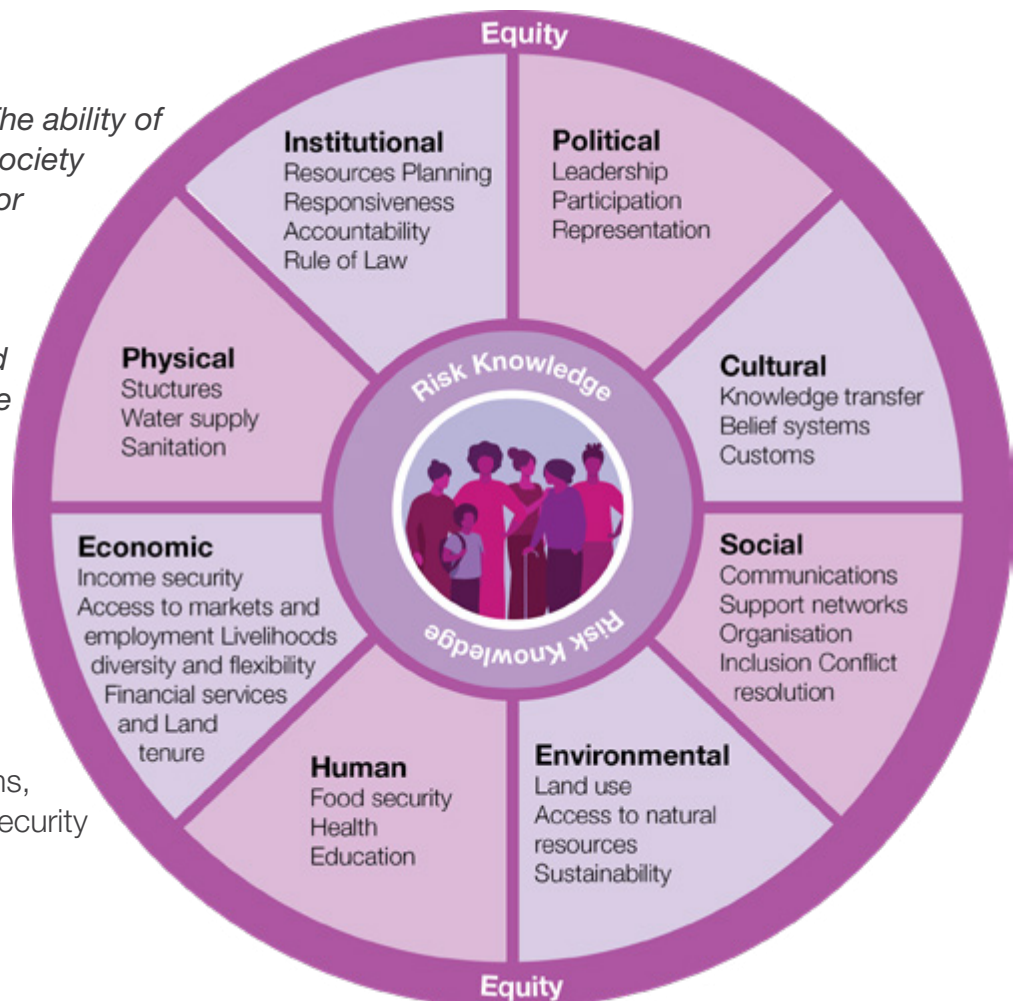
So, what can we do about it?

Several adaptation strategies are in place at the national level – in line with several commitments and best practices learned at the international level – to adjust to the impact of climate change.

These adaptation strategies are helping to design a way in which communities can build their own resilience when responding to climate change.

Climate change adaptation
UNFCCC

Sustainable Development Goals
2030 Agenda

Disaster Risk Reduction
Sendai Framework

Reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience

Building Resilience - *The ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards, and/or climate change, to resist, absorb, accommodate, recover and transfer the consequences of a hazard event or of climate change in a timely and efficient manner. This includes through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions.*

Climate change impacts all sectors. It threatens the environment, social systems, the economy, health and security of ALL communities.

Equity

Institutional
Resources Planning
Responsiveness
Accountability
Rule of Law

Political
Leadership
Participation
Representation

Physical
Stuctures
Water supply
Sanitation

Risk Knowledge

Cultural
Knowledge transfer
Belief systems
Customs

Economic
Income security
Access to markets and
employment Livelihoods
diversity and flexibility
Financial services
and Land
tenure

Social
Communications
Support networks
Organisation
Inclusion Conflict
resolution

Human
Food security
Health
Education

Environmental
Land use
Access to natural
resources
Sustainability

Risk Knowledge

Equity

Taking a Human Security Approach:

Human security refers to people and communities and is concerned with safeguarding and securing fundamental human rights.

It recognizes that there are several dimensions related to feeling safe, such as freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom from indignity.

A *people-centred approach* to security has implications for how we carry out and understand conflict assessment, programme planning, implementation, and evaluation of peacebuilding initiatives. It addresses sustainable peace by recognising the social, economic, and political grievances that are often the root causes of conflict and societal violence. It challenges us to consider participatory ways of doing and evaluating our work.

The *human security* approach is not only centred on people as objects of interventions, but also as providers of security in their own right. When approaching the difficult issue of how best to respond to the climate crisis, *ecologically just approaches* to locally driven solutions must align and be accountable to the gender equality, just'peace and human security agendas (GPPAC Pacific).
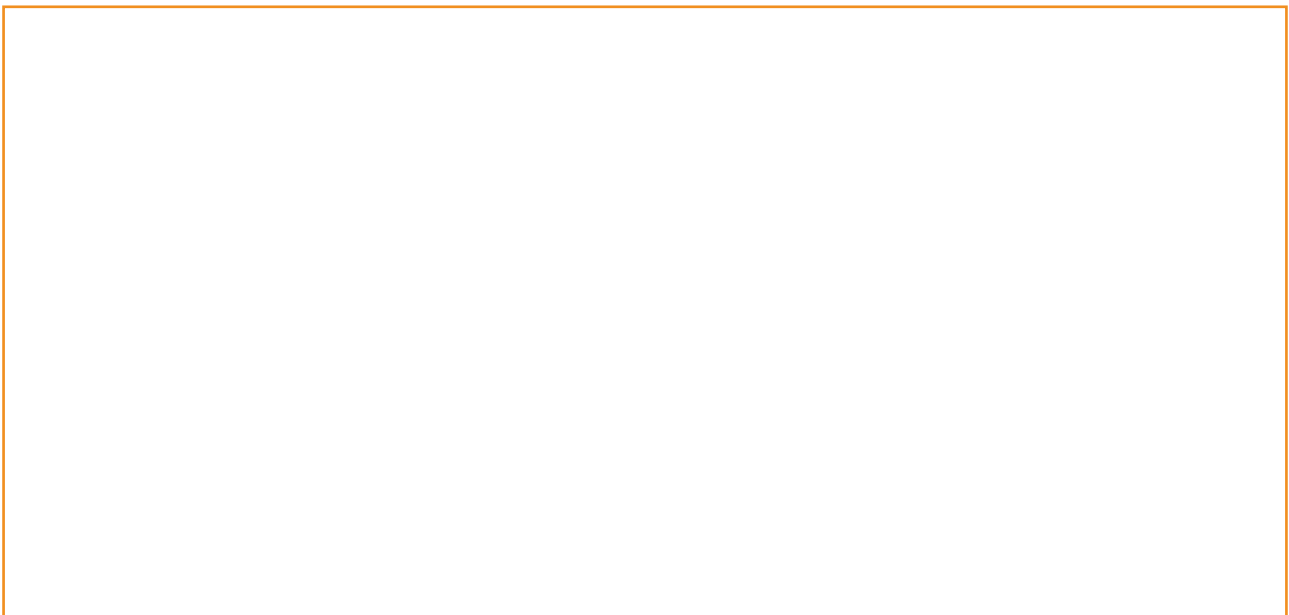
Draw a diagram with yourself in the middle.
Next draw the things or people that are influential and important to you. The most important things or people should go nearest to you with less important things or people on the outside.

✏️ **Exercise:** What have been the experiences of your communities in the past 5 years?

- How did the recent disasters impact....
- Public Infrastructure e.g., schools, hospitals and health centres?
- Social Infrastructure e.g., roads and ccommunication?
- Community Protection – the safety and protection of women and children?

Exercise: Now let's look at how climate change and recent disasters are affecting our human security.

Identify 3 impacts of climate change for each of the following sectors:

- Infrastructure
- Water security
- Biodiversity
- Food security
- Tourism

Also consider how these impacts differ at these levels

- Family
- Community
- Provincial
- National
- Regional

Climate justice - Rights-based approach to the climate crisis

Exercise: What is your country's specific policy commitments?

Write these down and then discuss:

- How do they integrate commitments to women's rights and disability rights?

- Brainstorm and write down recommendation i.e. possible solutions, responses and/or actions beginning with one impact you identified in the human security section

- How can women especially young women and women with disabilities be included in the actions?

Policy Frameworks We Need to Know

1. CEDAW

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1979 and is often described as a bill of rights for women. States that have ratified the Convention commit themselves to ending all forms of discrimination against women through national policy and set an agenda to incorporate principles of gender equality at all levels.

2. CEDAW General Recommendation 37:

This particular general recommendation guides States on the implementation of the Convention in relation to climate change and disaster risk reduction. The goal of this recommendation is to highlight the importance of mitigating the impacts of climate change and disasters on the rights of women and girls. The States' obligation is to ensure effective measures are in place to respect, protect and fulfill the rights of women and girls in relation to climate change and disasters.

3. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Adopted on 13 December, 2006, the CRPD is a landmark treaty designed to protect the rights and dignity of persons with disability. The treaty presents multiple opportunities to engage in advocacy with organisations for persons with disability to implement and put in place measures to protect and protect the rights of persons with disability. States are obligated to ensure that persons with disability are viewed as full and equal members of society rather than as objects of charity.

4. UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

The IPCC is an intergovernmental body at the United Nations mandated to provide regular scientific assessments on climate change and its implications on the natural, political and economic environments. The IPCC is also tasked with possible mitigation and adaptation responses

5. UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

The UNFCCC is a multilateral environmental treaty with the key objective to "stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations" to a level that would not interfere with the climate system. The treaty calls for regular meetings, policy negotiations agreements and scientific research that would allow ecosystems to adapt to climate change, ensure food production is not threatened and allow development to proceed in a sustainable manner. The convention is the 'parent treaty' of the Paris Agreement that was adopted in 2015.

6. Paris Agreement on Climate Change 2015

Acknowledging that climate change is a common concern of humankind, Parties should, when taking action to address climate change, respect, promote and consider their respective obligations on human rights, the right to health, the rights of indigenous peoples, local communities, migrants, children, persons with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations and the right to development, as well as gender equality, empowerment of women and intergenerational equity.

7. National Determined Contributions

Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, each country is requested to "outline and communicate their post-2020 climate actions". The NDCs are efforts by each country to reduce national emission and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Countries who have signed on to the Paris Agreement are required to "pursue domestic mitigation measures with the aim of achieving the objective of each contribution."

8. Sustainable Development Goal 13: Climate Action

SDG 13 urges action on climate change and its impacts. SDG 13 has a set of five goals to be achieved by 2030:

- Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related disasters.
- Integrate climate ecosystems change measures into policy and planning
- Build knowledge and capacity to meet climate change
- Implement the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
- Promote mechanisms to raise capacity for planning and management

SDG 13 and SDG 7 on 'Clean Energy' are closely related; the NDCs that need to be achieved under the Paris Agreement means switching from fuels to renewable energy. SDG 13 is also closely linked to SDGs 1 (No Poverty), 10 (Reducing Inequality).

9. Boe Declaration on Regional Security 2018

Adopted in 2018, it builds on the principles of previous security declarations (Biketawa Declaration 2000). This latest declaration expands on the notions of security to include a greater commitment towards responding to "human security, humanitarian assistance, prioritizing environmental security, and regional cooperation in building resilience to disasters and climate change" and links the declaration to the priorities under the Paris Agreement.

10. Kainaki II Declaration for Urgent Climate Change Action Now 2019

Through this Declaration, Pacific leaders called on all parties to the Paris Agreement to meet or exceed their NDCs to limit global warning to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. The declaration was a collective call from leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum to pursue not only strengthened commitments towards the Paris Agreement but also towards securing the future of "our blue Pacific". These includes taking action to support "clean, healthy, and productive oceans, the sustainable management, use and conservation of marine resources, growth in the blue economy and address the impacts of climate change on ocean health."

11.   Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific 2017-2030

The framework is designed to support coordination and action on a number of key issues related to climate change and disaster risk reduction. This is a voluntary regional framework that "provides high level strategic guidance to different stakeholder groups on how to enhance resilience to climate change and disasters, in ways that contribute to and are embedded in sustainable development."

12.   Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 – 2030
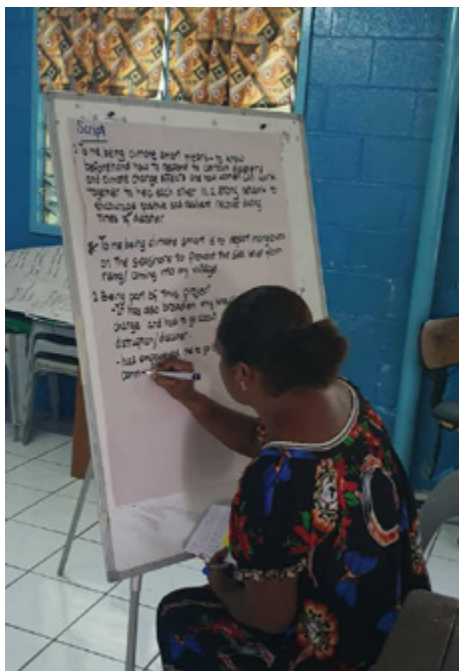
Focuses on the adoption of measures which address the three dimensions of **disaster risk** (exposure to hazards, vulnerability and capacity, and hazards characteristics) in order to prevent the creation of new **risk**, reduce existing **risk** and increase resilience

The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction outlines seven clear targets and four priorities for action to prevent new and reduce existing disaster risks:

(i) Understanding disaster risk;
(ii) Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk;
(iii) Investing in disaster reduction for resilience and;
(iv) Enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to "Build Back Better" in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

It aims to achieve the substantial reduction of disaster risk and losses in lives, livelihoods and health and in the economic, physical, social, cultural and environmental assets of persons, businesses, communities and countries. The Framework was adopted at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, on March 18, 2015.

Disability rights and inclusive action

(Source: CBM Australia)

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others - *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD)*

UN CRPD principles:

1. Full participation – "Nothing about us without us"
2. Personal dignity, autonomy and choice
3. Respect for difference: part of human diversity
4. Accessibility: physical and communication
5. Gender equality
6. Non-discrimination
7. Equality of opportunity: some people have extra needs
8. Rights to assistive devices and rehabilitation

There are 3 key elements to the UNCRPD definition - *meaningful participation, impairments, barriers.*

Participation is important because:

- People have a right to be involved in decisions that affect them
- It addresses stigma and promotes awareness
- People with disabilities know their own situation best – talk to them!

An **impairment** is a problem with a body function or structure due to genetic factors but also disease, illness, or injury.

Impairment may be present from birth (congenital) or acquired later in life.

Did you know?

Women and girls with a disability who live in poverty face triple discrimination: being female, having a disability and being among the poorest of the poor

People with disabilities are at greater risk of violence: up to 4-10 times the rate of violence against people without disabilities.

Types of impairment:

Physical

Difficulty in the performance of body functions e.g., walking and moving arms e.g., spinal cord injury, cerebral palsy, amputation

Sensory

Vision, hearing, communication e.g., people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind or have low vision

Intellectual

Difficulty with language, reasoning, memory, empathy, personal care, etc. e.g., Down's syndrome, cognitive impairments

Psychosocial

Chronic severe mental disorders or psychosocial disorders e.g., schizophrenia, depression, bipolar

Barriers that hinder participation of persons with disabilities are described in three categories – attitudinal, physical (including structural and communication) and institutional.

Types of barriers:

- **Attitudinal:** stigma, discrimination, negative assumptions, exclusion, teasing

- **Physical:** steps, uneven paths, narrow doorways, open drains, inaccessible buildings/ equipment/ vehicles, etc.

- **Communication:** Information only in written or audio format. Lack of interpreters/translation

- **Institutional/Policy:** Discriminatory laws, policies, practices and procedures

Inclusion means making sure that everyone can benefit from development and access community services and programs.

In the Sustainable Development Goals, this is referred to as ensuring 'no one is left behind'.

Advocacy and campaign planning

(Source: ActionAid Australia)

Advocacy is about drawing attention to an issue to influence and mobilise action for resolution. As a Coalition, our advocacy is grounded in community mobilisation and some key themes are:

Protection in Disasters: Prevention, Enhancing Protection Measures, Risk and Harm Reduction

Psychosocial Impacts

Staying in Evacuation Centres

Health & Environmental Priorities

Protection of Older People/People who are Sick or Injured/People with Disabilities

Child Protection

Protection against violence and abuse

Children & Youth

Your advocacy must be targeted:

- What is the issue?
- Who exactly are you trying to influence?
- How can you influence them?
- What are the opportunities to influence?

As you start to build and create partnerships, you need to set realistic and clear targets:

- What does win look like?
- What is your long-term vision?
- What are your campaign goals?
- What are your objectives?

Now that you know what the priority issue is, you can start to design a campaign!

As you plan a campaign, you need to focus your strategy and look at a few things:

- What needs to change?
- Why change is necessary?
- Why the issue is important?
- What areas of policy or laws are relevant to the issue?
- What's our alternative?

VISION
What does the world look like when you've won on this issue?

GOAL(S)
What needs to happen to make your vision a reality?

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OBJECTIVE(S)
What are the steps that put you on your way to ahieving your goal(s)?

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STRATEGY
How can you influence your target & achieve your objectives?

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TACTICS
Actions/steps that execute the strategy

TACTICS
Actions/steps that execute the strategy

TACTICS
Actions/steps that execute the strategy

TACTICS
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TACTICS
Actions/steps that execute the strategy

Be SMART!

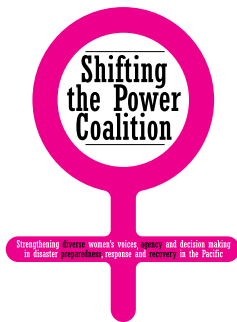**Specific** – x meetings, x petition signatures

Measurable – we can measure it and say whether we achieved it or not

Achievable – needs to be something we can actually achieve

Realistic – again, needs to be possible in the context

Timebound – say when you will achieve it

TALK

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**Shifting
the Power
Coalition**

Strengthening diverse women's voices, agency and decision making
in disaster preparedness, response and recovery in the Pacific

**Australian
Aid**

act:onaid

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to Climate Justice