

# Project Report:

## Localizing inclusive solutions for climate adaptation: A focus on women and immigrants

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Report for IIED and SSN

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## Introduction

The coastal areas of Madagascar, especially the Boeny region, are the location for the most important socioeconomic activities on the island. Its geographical position in the tropics enabled seven mangrove species to colonize the coast. Mangroves are known for their valuable ecosystem services, including provisioning (food, timber, etc.), supporting, and regulating. The mangrove ecosystem plays a crucial role in facing the adverse effects of climate change thanks to its supporting function. From regulating micronutrients to attenuating shockwaves, this complex ecosystem does not only support the daily socioeconomic activities of coastal communities; it also protects households and families from danger.

In the last few decades, the effects of climate change have become more intense and frequent. The shift in season has disrupted several agricultural practices as a period of droughts and floods is hardly predictable. This has created hardship for communities highly dependent on agriculture. While the soil has become less fertile, people are encroaching on more fertile areas, like forests. Consequently, the agricultural extensions added to timber exploitation are also threatening biodiversity. Several Malagasy communities, mainly rural in coastal areas, are finding themselves caught in a vicious cycle as daily activities are further exacerbating the negative impact of climate change.

Since climate change impacts are not felt equally by everyone, several studies (Schlosberg et al., 2014; Levy and Patz, 2015; Harlan et al., 2015) have suggested that poor communities living in critical areas are more vulnerable. From the first project supported by the Adaptation Research Alliance, a Risk and Vulnerability Assessment conducted by the Tanjona Association team allowed for insights on the risks encountered by poor and marginalized communities in their daily activities. This second project is implemented as a continuation of the first one and has allowed Tanjona Association to particularly shift its focus on those highly affected communities, namely women and migrants. It is supported by the International Institute of Environmental Development and the South South North and is aligned with the Gender and Social Inclusion program. The goal of this project is to foster adapted strategies and actions, considering women and migrants.

## The Project

In conducting a Gender and Social inclusion (GESI)-oriented project, our key outcomes are to:

- Give an increased understanding of the climate challenge that women and minorities are facing among local leaders that have worked with our organization since the precedent project phase and those who are new stakeholders in this project. Also, through this project, we are trying to increase the participation of local leaders in mainstreaming gender equality and inclusivity into planning and policy
- Foster the effectiveness of women and immigrants to develop and implement their own green solutions to climate change after they gain legal recognition, which aim to give them strong support in advocacy
- Increase awareness of the impact of climate change on women and migrants (minorities) through storytelling as well as their initiatives to build resilience.



As such, project activities include: 1) a workshop gathering local leaders to think about challenges and opportunities of improving women and migrants facing climate change; 2) a process of legalizing some women associations for them to gain further notoriety; 3) a promotion of green activity led by women and migrants; and 4) a production of short documentaries telling the stories of women and migrants in their daily lives facing climate change.

## The activities

### Workshop

Local leaders from the coastal cities of Mahajanga, Mariarano, Boanamaray, Ampahazony, and Mitsinjo participated in a two-day workshop along with a representative of women's associations. Women's associations were selected thanks to a collaboration with the local leaders, where the selection criteria were the existence of a migrant within the association and the association's involvement in social and environmental activities. We conducted the workshop using a participatory approach and the local dialect (Sakalava).



The participants were composed of five local leaders from the targeted areas and 10 women and migrants from diverse associations. The workshop allowed us to identify a key challenge for women and migrants regarding their daily activities. The main area of burning issues where women and migrants are mostly affected by climate change is their livelihood. Actually, all of the participants are involved in agricultural income-generating activities (IGA). They reported experiencing serious consequences of a shift in season, a lack of access to water for their culture, and a lack of support/initiatives from the local government. Consequently, women have to labor, furthermore, and walk an extra kilometer to fetch water. Poor communities, especially women and migrants, are constantly disputing the management and use of natural resources with the wealthy villagers (the case of Mitsinjo).

Besides, local leaders are affirming the existence of partnerships and projects that are addressing the current issues. In fact, the prioritization of intervention zones has not allowed some women's associations to get the support they need. We noted that some women and migrants living in a remote area

were mostly excluded from receiving any opportunities (funding, training, mobility, etc.), like those from the small village of Mandrosoa (Boanamary).

As an example cited during the workshop, the Governorate of Boeny region partnered with national Non-Governmental Organization such as CARE Madagascar to support climate migrants, mostly from the southern region, to fully integrate the local communities. However, many participants reported that some migrants are exhibiting harmful behavior and practices that threaten not only the natives' environment but also the local biodiversity (case of Boanamary and Mariarano). On the other hand, some migrants are facing discrimination due to land tenure issue and natural resources management (case of Soalala).

Besides sharing challenges related to women and migrants 'daily lives, the workshop was an occasion to offer valuable knowledge about the intersection of gender, race, and climate change. All participants reported this session as an opportunity to reinforce their climate change knowledge. Local leaders affirmed that they will consider more the case of women and migrants in their planning.

### Legalization of women's association

We collaborated with the local government in charge of the legalization of associations to regularize the document for the selected women's associations. Only one association out of the five we



worked with did not have a regularized document. Hence, we processed it with regularization.

We helped the remaining to update their documents. The women's associations involved in this project are:

- Liam-pandrosoana, Boanamary
- FMMA, Mahajanga
- Angaya Hasmine, Mitsinjo
- Association Vonona, Ampahazony
- FIBEMIA, Mariarano

## Green initiative

The association of Liam-pandrosoana is planning a monitoring of the nearby mangrove forest and just have started to build a mangrove nursery. The FIBEMIA association is committed to participating in the government's seasonal plantations. Angaya Asmine is now making a vegetable garden using drought-tolerant plants to face food insecurity. Together with the association based in Mariarano, the Tanjona team designed a green initiative plan that can be conducted by them to build resilience and help them manage water access to avoid conflict. It is important to note that in most of these areas, wealthy people are blocking some of the access to water sources. It would mean that women do not have strong notoriety to impose their needs.



## Short documentary

Five short documentaries have been done to tell stories of women (natives and migrants) in the above-cited areas. Each documentary reflects the typical daily life of a woman in a given community, including how she understands climate change and how she feels about it, how she is trying to tackle it and build resilience, and how important women's associations are.

The five videos have been sent to local leaders for them to have an overview of the lives of women in these five areas and provide feedback.

## What we learned

Climate change impacts the daily lives of women and migrants, especially their livelihoods. In general, access to drinking water and crop irrigation sources has become challenging. The shift in season makes the situation harder as the rainfall is insufficient and streams are drying off. This led to a conflict between communities. Another key point is that all women reported a decrease in yield for the last five years. Therefore, they had to double their labor time, find another source of income-generating revenue, and migrate to another clever place. When it comes to mainstreaming gender and social inclusion into decision-making and policy planning, all of the women reported that it is slowly gaining place.

As local government and NGOs are willing to undertake clear actions to help women and migrants facing the adverse effects of climate change, this can constitute an opportunity to drive an effective GESI-oriented project. Through their different needs, we identified that to build resilience, all of these women associations are seeking technical and financial support.