



UNFPA Mozambique / 2025 / Mbuto Machili

ClimateEmpower: Community Empowerment and Innovation for Gender-Transformative Climate Action

Annual Progress Report

November 2024 to February 2026

Core Project Team: UNFPA ESARO, UNFPA Madagascar, UNFPA Mozambique and UNFPA South Sudan

Executive Summary

The ClimateEmpower project (2024–2026) addresses the critical intersection of climate resilience, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and gender-based violence (GBV). It operates in Madagascar, Mozambique, and South Sudan, countries where climate shocks—such as cyclones, floods, and droughts—act as risk multipliers that exacerbate gender inequalities and heighten the risk of harmful practices like child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM).

The project’s goal is to prevent climate-induced GBV and harmful practices through community-driven, gender-transformative interventions. Rather than viewing women and girls solely as victims, ClimateEmpower positions them as leaders and agents of change. The strategy is built on three pillars: preventing climate-induced GBV by challenging discriminatory social norms; empowering leadership by positioning women and girls at the center of climate dialogue; and driving innovation through “Hacklabs” that leverage youth-led solutions for protection and resilience.

The project significantly advanced community resilience by developing localized mentorship tools in Mozambique and gender-norm training manuals in South Sudan. Leadership was further strengthened through the Youth District Forum in Pemba, where young participants issued a formal position statement on climate risks and child marriage, while workshops in Bor (South Sudan) and Madagascar empowered local leaders to create specific action plans for addressing harmful social norms.

On the innovation front, Madagascar identified 15 pioneering youth and women-led ventures focused on sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and local resource utilization. In South Sudan, the Climate Innovation Hacklab further supported digital tools such as mReport, SheKnows, and “The Future of Family Planning”, to ensure reporting and health services remain accessible during floods. Meanwhile, Mozambique advanced in scaling the BAIKE project, which converts recycled ocean plastic into bicycles to help girls reach school safely, for prototyping and business model development.

The project has achieved a social media reach of over 100,000 individuals. Notable communication outputs include an advocacy video, a project inception report, and a joint UNFPA-Zonta op-ed advocating for the integration of SRHR and GBV prevention into global climate finance frameworks.

The final phase of the project will focus on scaling community workshops, supporting trained women to lead community dialogues, and establishing peer-led online and offline spaces for empowerment. The team will also prioritize gathering high-impact human-interest stories to demonstrate the project's long-term value for future replication.

Table of Content

Executive Summary	2
Table of Content	3
Context and Background: The Gendered Face of the Climate Crisis	4
ClimateEmpower: Community Empowerment and Innovation for Gender-Transformative Climate Action	5
Project Goal and Objectives	6
Mid-Project Deliverables	6
Component 1: Community Engagement, Capacity Building & Empowerment.....	7
Component 2: Community Engagement & Innovation as a Tool/Catalyst for Change.....	20
Project Outputs	26
Planned Actions for 2026:	28

Context and Background: The Gendered Face of the Climate Crisis

The climate crisis is not a gender-neutral phenomenon; it is an existential threat that acts as a powerful risk multiplier, exacerbating deep-seated inequalities across Africa. As temperatures rise, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) projects an increase in extreme events, cyclones, flash floods, and prolonged droughts, that destroy livelihoods and disrupt essential services.

Emerging evidence highlights a devastating correlation between climate shocks, biological and physical toll on women, and the erosion of gender equality. When households face climate-induced chronic stress and fragmentation, women and girls experience increased health and nutrition risks, educational loss and violence. Research indicates that for every 1°C rise in temperature in the week prior to childbirth, there is a 6% increase in the likelihood of stillbirth. Pregnant women and children also face heightened vulnerability to malnutrition and disease. The Malala Fund estimates that by 2025, climate change will contribute to 12.5 million girls annually dropping out of school, with 22 of the 30 most affected countries located in Africa. Climate stressors exacerbate the drivers of child, early, and forced marriage (CEFM) and intimate partner violence (IPV), as families resort to negative coping mechanisms. Looking ahead, in a "worst-case" scenario of a 4°C rise, instances of IPV in Sub-Saharan Africa are projected to triple, rising from 48 million in 2015 to 140 million by 2060. For women and girls, these disruptions are not merely environmental; they are a direct assault on their sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and personal safety.

Beyond biological risks, deeply-rooted discriminatory social norms that limit female autonomy and normalize GBV act as a ceiling on adaptation. In many communities, gender-based violence (GBV) is not just a byproduct of disaster; it is woven into survival strategies. In regions of Mozambique and South Sudan, child marriage is being "rebranded" as a climate coping mechanism. Families, facing the loss of livestock or crops, may marry off daughters to secure a "bride price" or reduce household strain. Similarly, when resources become scarce, there is increased risk of violence for women and girls. As water becomes scarce, women and girls must travel further, often five miles or more, increasing their exposure to sexual violence. Paradoxically, returning late from these chores often triggers IPV from partners, a direct link between environmental stress and domestic abuse. Norms around stigma affect access to life saving services including SRHR, worsened by climate impacts. In Madagascar's *Grand Sud*, where 95% of women travel over 30 minutes for water, drought makes menstrual hygiene nearly impossible. Taboos viewing menstruation as "impure" lead to isolation, further pushing girls out of school. In many contexts, violence is misperceived as a private matter, impeding reporting and justice.

ClimateEmpower: Community Empowerment and Innovation for Gender-Transformative Climate Action

The **ClimateEmpower project** targets the intersection of climate resilience, SRHR, and GBV across three of the world's most vulnerable nations **Madagascar, Mozambique, and South Sudan**:

- **Madagascar:** Recurrent cyclones and drought have triggered severe food insecurity, where women frequently sacrifice their nutritional needs for their children. CEFM remains high, with 38.8% of girls married before 18.
- **Mozambique:** Facing frequent high-intensity cyclones (notably Cyclone Freddy), the country sees rising reports of "gifts-for-sex" exploitation as girls travel further for water during droughts.
- **South Sudan:** With 95% of the population dependent on climate-sensitive livelihoods, flooding and erratic rains fuel inter-communal conflict. This increases the unpaid care burden on women and heightens their exposure to sexual GBV in displacement settings.

ClimateEmpower proposes a multi-pronged approach to strengthen resilience to climate change at the individual and community level through fostering gender-transformative community empowerment and capacity building for women and girls, enabling them to drive positive change in community social norms for the reduction of GBV and harmful practices in the context of climate shocks and crises and promote women and girls'-led innovative solutions to build resilience and protect against GBV. The project moves beyond viewing women solely as victims, instead positioning them as leaders in climate resilience, utilizing gender-transformative approaches (GTA) to address the root causes and challenge the social norms that fuel vulnerability across three pillars:

1. **Preventing climate-induced GBV and harmful practices:** Challenging the norms that justify violence and harmful practices including child marriage, as economic responses to disaster.
2. **Empowering leadership:** Positioning women and girls not as victims, but as agents of change and leaders in climate dialogue.
3. **Innovation through "Hacklabs":** Leveraging community youth-led innovative solutions to develop localized solutions for SRHR and GBV protection during climate shocks.

With only 1.5% of climate-related ODA currently targeting gender equality, the ClimateEmpower project fills a critical gap. By investing in a healthy, educated, and empowered population, the project ensures that as the climate changes, the rights of women and girls remain non-negotiable.

Project Goal and Objectives

The project is designed to prevent climate-induced GBV and other harmful practices through interwoven innovative approaches and community-driven interventions to foster societies where discriminatory gender norms can be challenged and reshaped to increase women and girls' access to SRHR and address GBV/Harmful Practices. By placing the onus of change on the entire community, rather than solely on its women and girls, the project promotes collective responsibility and paves the way for a safer, more inclusive future.

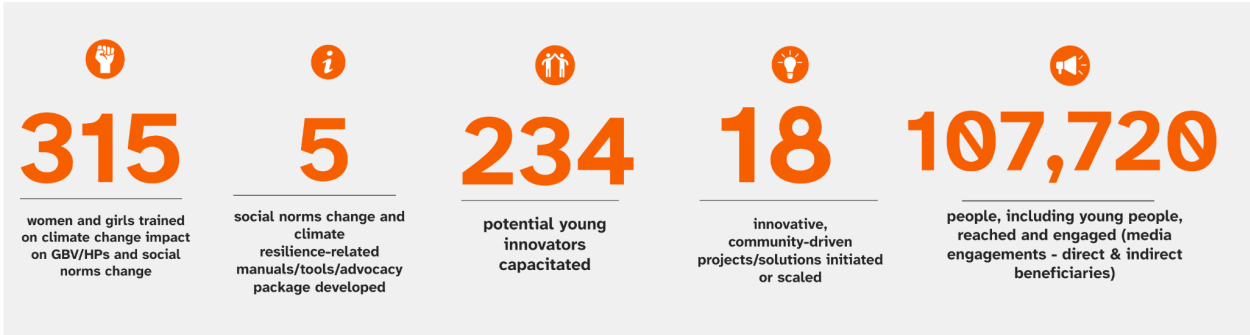
Its specific objectives are to:

- Foster gender-transformative community empowerment and capacity building for women and girls in the context of climate shocks and crises for the reduction of gender-based violence and harmful practices.
- Promote women and girls'-led innovative solutions to build resilience and protect against gender-based violence).

The following expected outcomes are targeted across the two project components:

1. Women and girls in the select provinces/communities of the focus countries equipped on: the impact of climate change and crises on GBV and Harmful Practices; and tools to advocate and mobilize for social norms change to address these.
2. Women and youth, including girls, are capacitated to identify and initiate community-led, including technology enabled innovation solutions, to build resilience against climate-induced gender-based violence and harmful practices.
3. Climate change and GBV mainstreamed in women and youth led entrepreneurial initiatives aimed at empowerment of vulnerable and left behind populations.
4. The role of innovation as a catalyst in preventing climate induced GBV and harmful practices is demonstrated through story telling.

Mid-Project Deliverables



Component 1: Community Engagement, Capacity Building & Empowerment

This component focuses on fostering gender-transformative community empowerment and building the capacity of women and girls, particularly in the context of climate shocks and crises. The goal is to strengthen their resilience to the climate crisis, prevent climate change-induced gender-based violence (GBV), and address harmful practices accelerated by climate vulnerabilities. Key activities under this component include strengthening women and girls-led community resilience-building systems, identifying and capacitating women and girls as social norms champions, and equipping them with knowledge and tools to advocate and mobilize for positive social norms change.

Activity 1.1 Develop a GBV/social norms change training manual for women and girls vulnerable to climate change, including adaptation of tools for social norms change at community level.

The core deliverable of this activity is the development and adaptation of training manuals to address climate-induced GBV and harmful social norms. The project's approach tailors the content to the unique crisis contexts of each participating country. Significant progress has been made in Mozambique and South Sudan, with work ongoing in Madagascar.

- Milestone 1: Mozambique's "Mentoring Programming Plug-Ins on Climate Change and Conflict-Affected Humanitarian Settings" developed, approved, and Training-of-Trainers (ToT) conducted.
- Milestone 2: South Sudan's "Transforming Gender and Social Norms for Climate Change Adaptation Training Manual" adapted and validated.
- Milestone 3: Consultations on "Madagascar Training Manual on Gender, Social Norms, and Climate Adaptation" conducted.

In Mozambique, the team successfully developed and approved the "Girls and Young Women Curriculum: Mentoring Programming Plug-Ins on Climate Change and Conflict-Affected Humanitarian Settings" and the "Boys and Young Men Curriculum: Mentoring Programming Plug-Ins on Climate Change and Conflict-Affected Humanitarian Settings", for girls and boys mentorship, respectively. These are nine-session, modular, supplementary curricula designed to complement the existing "Rapariga Biz" peer-to-peer mentorship program, which has been in place since 2013. The plug-ins are a practical guide for self-reliance and resilience, aiming to position girls and boys as agents of change. The content specifically addresses the heightened vulnerabilities faced by girls in humanitarian and climate-affected settings, focusing on human rights; HIV & STIs; alcohol and drugs use, abuse and harm reduction; socialization, social norms and masculinities; life skills; economic resilience, and tackling issues like child marriage and GBV in crisis. Notably, the boys' and men's plug-in emphasizes their critical role in challenging harmful gender dynamics. Following the finalization of the manuals, a two-day Training-of-Trainers (ToT) was conducted in Maputo on November 25-26, 2025, for key staff, including 15 women, from nine implementing partner organizations. The new modules are scheduled for integration into the mentorship programme in 2026.



UNFPA Mozambique / 2025: Training-of-Trainers (ToT) for Implementing Partners on the “Curriculum for girls, young women, and boys” Mentorship Program in Maputo on November 25-26, 2025

South Sudan achieved its milestone with the adaptation and validation of the “Transforming Gender and Social Norms for Climate Change Adaptation Training Manual.” This comprehensive manual is structured around five modules covering Gender, Social Norms & Climate Change; Understanding Climate Change; Conflict & Climate Change; Community Resilience Building; and Evidence & Data Systems. The adaptation process involved extensive field data collection across four states (Central Equatoria, Upper Nile and Western Behr el Ghazal and Jonglei), utilizing Key Informant Interviews with 35 stakeholders (including 19 organisations) and 10 Focus Group Discussions with community leaders. In Upper Nile State, the consultations involved more than 39 actors, 34 community members (16 female, 18 male), two traditional Chiefs, the Director of Gender in the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, a woman leader, and civil society representative. In Western Bahr el Ghazal State, the consultations reached more than 98 members in Aweil Jedid, Wau, Jur river, Raga and Lokoloko communities, including 39 community members, 5 representatives from Traditional Chiefs, government and civil society. These consultations offered a ground-level view of social dynamics, including the alarming recent prevalence of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), brought to the forefront by a tragedy in Raga County, where the practice tragically led to the death of a child, as well as a similar case that originated in Aweil, Northern Bahr El Ghazal State.



UNFPA South Sudan / 2025: Consultations with Lokoloko community action group in South Sudan in November 2025

A Validation Workshop was held in Juba on November 27, 2025, bringing together 35 participants, including government representatives, parliamentarians and civil society organizations. The workshop confirmed the manual's utility and produced key recommendations, such as the crucial need to incorporate Early Warning Systems (EWS), address disability issues related to climate change into the final materials, develop Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials focused on climate change adaptation within the South Sudan context. It also resulted in a structured roll-out work plan: the first stage of Training of Trainers (ToT) for partner organization teams; followed by the second stage of State-level roll-out involving government stakeholders and CSO, and a third stage of training for community leaders led by the newly trained ToT participants.



UNFPA South Sudan / 2025: Validation Workshop for the Training Manual on Gender and Social Norms Change and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in Juba, South Sudan on November 27, 2025

In Madagascar, the process for developing the manual involved a comprehensive community consultation phase that was conducted from November 12 to 30, 2025, across five districts. About 270 participants were engaged to determine the extent to which, and the mechanisms by which, social gender norms shape strategies for adapting to climate change and economic insecurity. Participants included 52.2% women and 46.3% men, through a rigorous methodology that included 31 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), 53 interviews with community stakeholders, and 3 additional consultations. This comprehensive effort successfully gathered evidence that revealed significant community difficulties and detailed, gendered impacts of the climate crisis, serving as an opportunity for community members to receive information on gender and social norms. The findings further informed the development of the training modules, which have been compiled into a draft manual titled "Madagascar Training manual Gender, social norms, climate". The manual is currently undergoing testing with an ad hoc committee expected to validate the modules in April 2026. Following this validation, the training of beneficiaries at both the national level and across the five districts is scheduled to take place throughout April, May, and June 2026.



UNFPA Madagascar / 2025: Consultations in Betioky-OSC, Madagascar

Activity 1.2 Build capacity of women and girls in select provinces/communities of the focus countries on: the impact of climate change and crises on GBV and Harmful Practices; and tools to advocate and mobilize for social norms change to address these.

This activity focused on directly capacitating women, girls, and youth with knowledge and tools to address the intersection of climate change and gender-based vulnerabilities, with progress recorded in Mozambique and South Sudan.

- Milestone 1: Youth District Forum successfully convened 67 youth in Pemba, Cabo Delgado, Mozambique, resulting in a Youth Position Statement.
- Milestone 2: Two-day Social Norms Change Training for 29 participants successfully conducted in Bor, Jonglei State, South Sudan, resulting in the development of community action plans.
- Milestone 3: Social Norms and Climate Change workshop conducted for 30 women and girls in Atsimo Andrefana Region, Madagascar.

In Mozambique, a **Youth District Forum** was successfully convened in Pemba, Cabo Delgado, on November 25-26, 2025, in partnership with the National Youth Council. The event engaged 81 participants (35 female and 46 male), including 67 young people (encompassing 27 girls and 35 boys, and 2 people with disabilities). The Forum aimed to strengthen youth civic participation, focusing specifically on building climate resilience and preparedness among young people, and preventing harmful practices and GBV, including child marriage. The Forum benefited from the participation of senior government officials, including the Governor of Cabo Delgado, as well as representatives from the Office for Assistance to Families and Minors Victims of Violence (GAFMVV) and the National Institute for Disaster Management (INGD).

Sessions addressed the demographic dividend through education, mechanisms for reporting rights violations, and the impact of climate change on vulnerable populations. A key outcome was the approval of a **Youth Position Statement**, developed by the young participants, detailing recommendations for various stakeholders:

- **Government:** Create training programs for community leaders on climate resilience and premature unions, and construct resilient infrastructure.
- **Parents:** Increase dialogue with children, monitor their behavior, and cease using girls to end poverty.
- **Leaders:** Standardize “*ritos de iniciação*”, include youth in decision-making, and strengthen training on premature unions and disaster management.
- **Youth Commitment:** Replicate knowledge learned and actively fight against premature unions.



UNFPA Mozambique / 2025: Opening session of the Youth District Forum in Pemba, Cabo Delgado, Mozambique on 25 November 2025



UNFPA Mozambique / 2025 / Mbuto Machili. Focused group discussions during the Youth District Forum in Pemba, Cabo Delgado, Mozambique

In South Sudan, a Social Norms Change Training was successfully conducted in Bor, Jonglei State. The training, in November 2025, gathered 29 participants and was designed to equip community representatives and leaders with the understanding and skills necessary to address the harmful social norms driving GBV and child marriage in the country. It provided practical strategies for facilitating positive norm change through dialogue, communication, and collective action. The training was structured around foundational and practical elements: Day one focused on understanding social norms, gender dynamics, and their link to GBV and child marriage, while Day two centered on practical strategies for facilitating change, including community dialogue techniques, communication for social change, and action planning. The key outcome was the development of community action plans with specific goals, activities, and monitoring mechanisms, such as an example provided for reducing early and forced marriage. Recommendations from this process emphasized continuous engagement of gatekeepers, integration with existing community structures, and support for youth and women groups. Furthermore, a set of visibility materials, including flash cards and posters, were designed based on the training manual. Awareness messages on the gendered impact of climate change were also disseminated through social media.



UNFPA South Sudan / 2025: Two-day Social Norms Change Training in Bor, Jonglei State, South Sudan on 29 November 2025

In Madagascar, a workshop on innovation, climate change, social norms, and gender-based violence held from December 17-19, 2025, in Toilara, in collaboration with the Regional Directorate of Youth and Sports (DRJS), and the Regional Directorate of Population and Solidarity (DRPS). The activity mobilized 30 participants, including women, young women, social workers, and Young Peer Educators (JPE) from districts most exposed to climate risks, such as Toliara I, Toliara II (Anakao), Betioky, Ampanihy, Bekily, and Ambovombe. The main objective was to strengthen the capacity of these community leaders and actors to understand the links between climate change, social norms, and GBV, and to develop innovative, resilient local solutions. The training course was structured around four core modules, beginning with an analysis of discriminatory social norms and multisectoral support mechanisms for GBV. The subsequent modules covered the differentiated impacts of climate change on women and youth, promoting innovation, leadership, and advocacy for climate and gender justice, and equipping participants with skills for integrated community project design and mobilization. Post-workshop observation shows that participants' knowledge and leadership were significantly strengthened on innovative solutions for community resilience, GBV prevention, and the transformation of discriminatory social norms.



UNFPA Madagascar / 2025: Two-day Innovation, Climate change, Social norms, and GBV Training in Toilara, Madagascar



UNFPA Madagascar / 2025: Two-day Innovation, Climate change, Social norms, and GBV Training in Toilara, Madagascar

Activity 1.3 Support the trained women and girls in select provinces/communities of the focus countries on the conduction of community dialogues to address discriminatory social norms related to GBV and Harmful Practices.

- Milestone 1: Five community dialogues conducted across five districts in the Grand Sud region of Madagascar

Between February 8-25, 2026, five community dialogues across five most climate-affected districts in the Grand Sud region: Ambovombe (16 participants), Anakao (45 participants), Betioky (32 participants), Ampanihy (30 participants), and Bekily (33 participants) were conducted to empower women and girls to voice their struggles and share ingenious local solutions. Through these dialogues, the process directly engaged 156 participants (women and girls), demonstrating significant local buy-in. It identified and pre-selected women- and youth-led innovative projects addressing local climate impacts.



UNFPA Madagascar / 2025: Community dialogue session with women and girls in Anakao, Madagascar

In Anakao (Toilara II), 45 women described how salinization has ruined their drinking water and how receding marine life forces fishermen to head out at 2:00am to find a catch. In Ambovombe, supported by the Regional Direction of Youth and Sports, 16 candidates engaged in discussions where themes were translated into Malagasy to ensure every voice was understood. In Betioky and Ampanihy, dialogues were deeply rooted in local Mahafaly traditions. Participants analyzed their conditions and highlighted how resources like sisal and "raketa" (cactus) could be harnessed for resilience.

Following these dialogues, the team conducted rigorous individual interviews to select projects based on climate adaptation, gender/GBV integration, innovation, and viability. Success was ensured through the strong involvement of Local Authorities and Partners, including Mayors, District Chiefs, and delegates from Regional Directorates of Youth and Sports (DRJS). The immediate next step is to provide specialized coaching and micro-management training during the upcoming Boot Camp in Toliara (March 2026) for the 15 pre-selected initiatives, while also seeking additional funding for non-selected but viable projects.

Activity 1.4 Document the approach and collect human-interest stories from this component for potential future replication.

This activity focused on documenting the ClimateEmpower approach and generating high-impact communication products to advocate for gender-transformative climate action and pave the way for potential future replication.

- Milestone 1: ClimateEmpower Advocacy Video produced and disseminated.
- Milestone 2: Comprehensive Project Inception Report developed.
- Milestone 3: Joint UNFPA & Zonta op-ed on ClimateEmpower developed and published.
- Milestone 4: Article on social norms, climate action and partnerships developed and published.
- Milestone 5: Over 100,000 reach via social media engagements recorded.

A ClimateEmpower [Advocacy Video](#) was developed, which serves to outline the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis, showcase the innovative ClimateEmpower model, and advocate for the urgent need for gender-transformative climate action to secure sustainable, just, and resilient futures for all.

A comprehensive [project inception report](#) has been developed. This report is critical for project delivery, as it provides an in-depth analysis of the country contexts, including gender dynamics, social norms, and community climate vulnerabilities.

A joint op-ed "[When the River Rises, Clinics Must Stay Open: A gender test for COP30](#)" was co-authored by Lydia Zigomo, Regional Director UNFPA East and Southern Africa and Salla Tuominen, President of Zonta International. The op-ed argues that climate action must explicitly integrate SRHR and GBV prevention into policy and finance frameworks, citing the ClimateEmpower initiative as a model.

An article on "[Climate change, gender inequality – and the power of partnerships in fragile contexts](#)" details the five entrenched social challenges ClimateEmpower actively confronts. It highlights the specific work being implemented in Madagascar, Mozambique, and South Sudan, providing evidence to support advocacy efforts aimed at policy change and destigmatizing sexual and reproductive health services.

The documentation efforts also included recording the social media engagement and reach of the activities:

- In Mozambique, a total of **12,402** people were reached through engagement in UNFPA social media posts related to the Youth District Forum and other ClimateEmpower activities as of December 2025.
- In South Sudan, social media engagements recorded approximately **3,000** impressions/engagements from readers as of December 2025.
- In Madagascar, between December 2025 and February 2026, media engagement records, particularly social media, include 20,114 views/impressions and 2,806 engagements, totalling **22,920**.
- Since September 2024, UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office (ESARO) and UNFPA HQ, reached a combined **65,373** views/impressions and **4,025** engagements through over 10 social media ClimateEmpower-related posts.



Implementing partners took part in a training on new complementary modules to the peer-to-peer mentorship manual in humanitarian contexts, covering armed conflict & climate shocks.

Co-funded by the Global Programme to End Child Marriage, Rapariga Biz & ClimateEmpower. 🌐



UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme End Child Marriag...
11:34 am · 28/11/2025 · 108 Views



More than 80 young people from Pemba have gathered at the District Youth Forum, featuring the Governor of Cape Delgado, to strengthen civic participation and discuss essential topics: climate resilience, prevention of premature unions and gender-based violence.

Realizado pelo Conselho Nacional da Juventude, com o apoio do @unfpa e @zontaintl, o fórum promoveu diálogos sobre justiça climática e o papel da juventude na construção de comunidades mais seguras e inclusivas. 🌱👏

28 November 2025 · See Original



UNFPA South Sudan
@UNFPASouthSudan

X.com

Climate change does not affect everyone equally.

@UNFPA #SouthSudan with partners conducted validation of a training manual on gender social norms and climate change in South Sudan supported by Zonta International.



Zonta International and 7 others

5:09 pm · 01/12/2025 · 476 Views



UNFPA Madagascar
February 16

The South of Madagascar is not short of ideas, it is overflowing with ingenuity! 🌱
Community dialogues are bearing fruits in Amanihiy, Betsiky and Ambovombe. We were impressed by the quality of the projects carried out by bold women and young girls.

Imagine that :

- Turning raketa and sisal into opportunities.
- Producing biogas locally.
- Mastering the sun for smarter, sustainable irrigation

These initiatives are not just ideas, they are concrete solutions to adapt to climate change our social norms into norms with positive consequences.

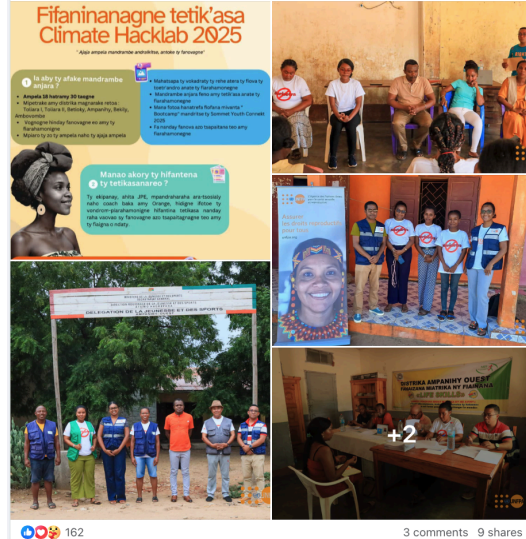
A huge THANK YOU to the local authorities and our partners for their unwavering support.

This movement is possible thanks to the vision of #ZontaInternational and the commitment of UNFPA East and Southern Africa Regional Office, UNFPA, @Orange Solidarité Madagascar for the empowerment of women and young girls.

Stay tuned, the best is yet to come! 🌟

#ZontaProject #Innovation #Madagascar #womenempowerment #youthleadership

See original · Rate this translation



When the River Rises, Clinics Must Stay Open: A gender test for COP30

29 October 2025



Co-authored by Lydia Zigoma, Regional Director UNFPA East and Southern Africa and Salla Tuominen, President of Zonta International

When floodwaters rose in Malakal, Upper Nile State, South Sudan, clinic doors shut and reports of gender-based violence surged, at COP30 in Belem, leaders can either hard-wire women's health into climate policy or leave it to drown.

Aloot, 36, remembers the night the river climbed her doorstep in Malakal. Food ran out, tempers rose, and the health post that provided contraception and antenatal and post-natal care was suddenly unreachable. "Floods don't just take houses," she says. "They bring violence, and more women suffer in silence." Her story is not a single incident but multiples across the region whenever droughts, cyclones, or floods strike. Services close, journeys for water and firewood grow longer and riskier, and protection systems fray just as needs intensify. In countries like Madagascar and Mozambique, early marriage for girls becomes a coping strategy when harvests fail and families face impossible choices.



Young people in East Africa are making sure climate change doesn't halt progress on gender equality

unfpa and 2 others

Climate change isn't just an environmental crisis—it's a gender equality crisis.

In Mozambique, Madagascar and South Sudan, young people and women are taking the lead. Through the ClimateEmpower programme — a partnership between @UNFPA and @zontaintl — they are turning climate challenges into innovative solutions for their communities.

With community-led solutions to prevent child marriage, address food insecurities, advocate against gender-based violence and ensure menstrual hygiene, these change-makers are proving that climate justice and gender justice go hand in hand.

Swipe to see how young people in

177 Q 2 28 January

Component 2: Community Engagement & Innovation as a Tool/Catalyst for Change

This component is centered on promoting women and girls'-led innovative solutions to build resilience and protect against gender-based violence and harmful practices. It involves identifying, mapping, and supporting climate-focused social innovation and entrepreneurial initiatives led by women and girls, with the aim of empowering vulnerable populations. The strategy includes supporting the adoption, adaptation, and scaling of climate and harmful practices initiatives, and creating a regional platform for storytelling and impact dissemination of these community-led innovations.

Activity 2.1 Strengthen community systems and capacity of vulnerable populations on innovative approaches to address the effects of climate change on women and girls and young people.

- Milestone 1: Training on Innovation, Climate Change, Social Norms, and GBV conducted for 30 women and girls in Toilara, Madagascar.

The training for women and community youth, held in Toilara, from December 17-19, 2025, successfully advanced the ClimateEmpower project's objective of strengthening local capacity to develop innovative approaches to address climate change, social norms, and GBV. A key specific objective of the activity was to introduce the principles of innovation and leadership to enable women and young people to design and implement resilient local solutions to climate and social challenges. The training curriculum dedicated a full module to "Innovation for Climate Justice and Gender Equality", which covered the concepts of social and environmental innovation. Furthermore, the subsequent module on Community Development and Mobilization focused on planning community dialogues specifically to facilitate the identification of innovative solutions at the village community level. The training achieved significant results, primarily through the development of a community-based and innovative approach:

- **Solution Co-construction:** Through participatory methods, participants analyzed their local challenges and co-constructed innovative, inclusive solutions that are adapted to the local context, integrating social, environmental, and community dimensions in a cross-cutting manner.
- **Capacity Strengthening:** Participants strengthened their capacity to adopt a gender-responsive climate resilience approach. Upon completion, they were able to develop innovative initiatives and projects aimed at strengthening climate resilience and promoting gender equality.
- **Leadership and Empowerment:** The initiative enhanced the participants' confidence, expression, and leadership in identifying these innovative solutions and mobilizing their communities.
- **Emergent Initiatives:** A qualitative impact observed was the emergence of concrete community ideas and initiatives that can now be developed or strengthened within the framework of future ClimateEmpower project actions.



UNFPA Madagascar / 2025: Two-day Innovation, Climate Change, Social Norms, and GBV Training in Toilara, Madagascar

In conclusion, the training was a decisive step that fostered the emergence and adoption of innovative and contextualized solutions, developed by the women and young people themselves. This outcome lays a solid foundation for the progressive transformation of discriminatory social norms and increases the involvement of women and young people in social innovation at the local level.

Activity 2.2 Support youth and women-led entrepreneurial initiatives to address social norms as well as other emerging effects of climate change and GBV

- Milestone 1: 15 innovative women- and youth-led innovative projects addressing local climate impacts identified from over 150 participants across 5 districts in Madagascar
- Milestone 2: 50 Innovation Champions (women, youth, and local leaders) identified and trained on problem mapping, solution design, and the specific ways climate change increases GBV risks, in South Sudan

Between February 8-25, 2026, 15 women- and youth-led innovative solutions were identified across five districts in the Grand Sud region: Ambovombe, Anakao, Betsioky, Ampanihy, and Bekily including through selection process that included participation of Local Authorities and Partners, including Mayors, District Chiefs, and delegates from Regional Directorates of Youth and Sports (DRJS) as judges. The activity successfully leveraged Community Dialogues

(DIALCOM) to empower local women and youth to propose their own solutions to daily climate impacts, such as water salinization and dwindling seafood resources. Fifteen distinct, promising local initiatives were pre-selected for future coaching.



UNFPA Madagascar / 2025: Community dialogue session at the University of Toliara, Madagascar

The innovative solutions cut across sustainable agriculture, renewable energy, and local resource utilization. In the **agrifood** sector, innovations include transforming prickly pear into syrup and organic food coloring, processing peanuts into edible oil, developing dairy products from goat's milk, processing smoked and salted fish, and utilizing raketa (a local plant) to produce a wide range of products like flour, jam, juice, and oil. **Livestock farming** is addressed through raising laying hens for egg sales. **Energy-related** innovations also featured projects in renewable energy (biogas from sisal and algae waste) and alternative energy (turning waste into eco-friendly charcoal). Another solution includes a **reforestation** effort, “Intelligent OASIS” Automatic Irrigation System, which highlights a smart approach to water management. Other solutions embrace **crafts and natural products** including natural food and cosmetics, producing wine from local plums (rotra and lamoty) and organic soaps from ingredients like moringa and carrot; handcrafted processing which transforms sisal into various goods, including bags, baskets, and soaps, and textile crafts focusing on Mohair Rug Production. From March 2026, specialized coaching and micro-management training will be provided through a Boot Camp in Toliara (March 2026) for the 15 pre-selected initiatives, where they will each receive support from coaches mobilized by Orange Solidarité, while also seeking additional funding for non-selected but viable projects.

In vulnerable urban and peri-urban localities in Juba—including Gumbo/Sherikat, Jebel Market, Gurei, and Mangateen IDP camps of South Sudan, 50 Innovation Champions were identified and trained in problem mapping, solution design, and understanding the climate-GBV nexus

between October to December 2025. Participants gained practical skills in identifying GBV vulnerabilities linked to climate shocks and designing community-driven solutions. Likewise, Community Selection Committees with members from each target locality were established and trained on transparent evaluation and fair selection processes to ensure transparent, community-led decision-making and project ownership. Their training not only built individual capacity but also created a cadre of local leaders capable of mobilizing their peers and driving community-led innovation.

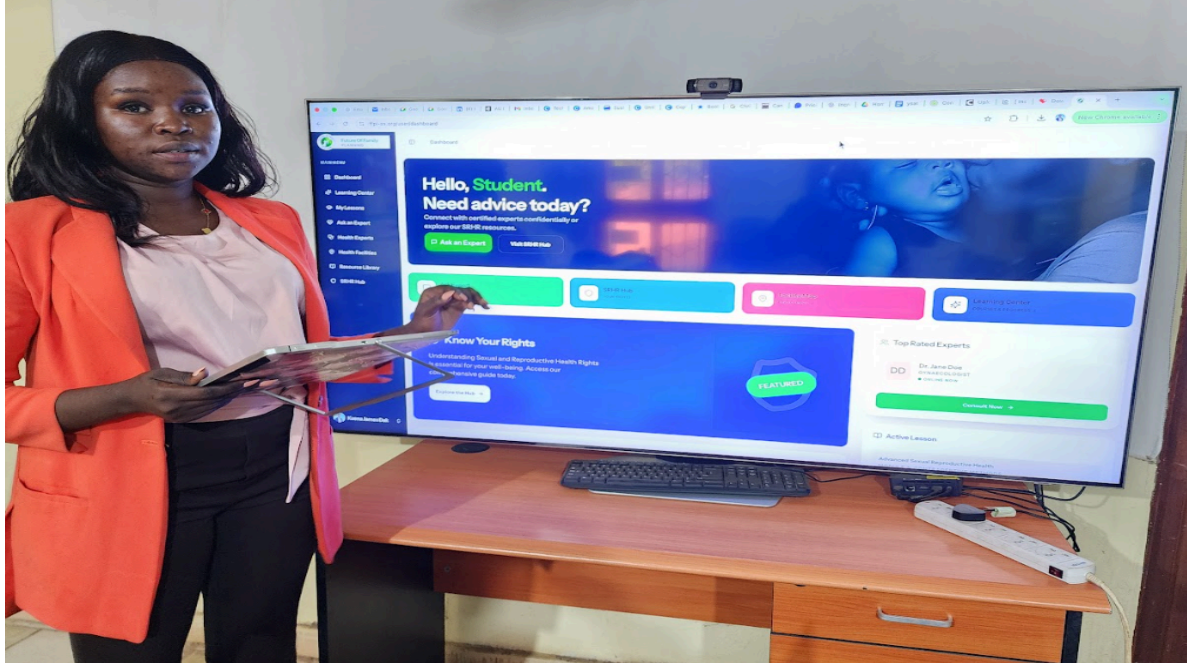


UNFPA South Sudan / 2025: Climate Innovation Hacklab Session Training Innovation Champions in Juba, South Sudan

Activity 2.3 Provide innovation idea development and social enterprise startup support through strategic enterprise and growth support to women and young people to address the intersections of social norms, climate change and GBV.

- Milestone 1: A five-day Design Thinking workshop for 11 innovators for community-led solutions conducted in South Sudan

In South Sudan, the Climate Innovation Hacklab, supported by ClimateEmpower, mobilized 11 youth-led solutions across Juba's flood-prone localities, including Gumbo, Sherikat, and IDP camps. These champions were equipped with design thinking and climate-GBV nexus skills to build a "Digital Shield" for women and girls. To date, four flagship solutions (She Knows, mReport, Orbit, and The Future of Family Planning) have received seed funding and transitioned into incubation, focusing on accessible, low-tech tools that ensure safety and SRHR information remain within reach even when floodwaters dismantle physical infrastructure.



UNFPA South Sudan / 2025: Future of Family Planning initiative, led by youth innovator, Anok Athor Deng

A prominent example is the Future of Family Planning initiative, led by youth innovator Anok Athor Deng, which provides a confidential digital space for adolescents to access stigma-free SRHR information; it has already reached 98 users and secured additional seed funding from GIZ. Similarly, mReport utilizes USSD technology to allow women in "last mile" communities to discreetly report GBV incidents and request support without needing internet access or airtime. These innovations affirm that by placing tools for agency directly in the hands of women and girls, UNFPA ensures that access to protection remains uninterrupted during climate shocks.

Activity 2.4 Map, align and facilitate adoption, adaptation and scale of existing innovation initiatives within the UNFPA innovation pipeline on climate change and GBV for deployment in communities left behind.

- Milestone 1: One innovation (BAAIKE) supported for prototyping and business model development in Mozambique

In Mozambique, ClimateEmpower is supporting the Climate Change Hacklab Winner, Marta Uetela, in the final prototyping and set-up of a robust business model for BAAIKE for the production of environment friendly bicycles made from recycled ocean waste. As part of efforts to scale existing innovation solutions contributing to climate resilience through women empowerment, BAAIKE, a women led social enterprise that produces bicycles from plastic waste and used fishing nets left in the ocean is receiving scale funding and enterprise support to increase their production capacity from 5 to 50 bicycles in a month. The Baaike project aims to transform recycled marine plastic waste into bicycles. This circular manufacturing model focuses on building technical capacity, engaging coastal communities in sustainable plastic processing, and creating social and environmental impact. This will increase the number of girls in schools accessing these bikes to cut travel times to their schools.



Fig. 1 Collection campaign



Fig. 2 Beach collection campaign in Cabo Delgado



Fig. 3 Residuals collected during collection campaign



Fig. 4 Practical activity of plastic segregation



Fig. 5 Content shared during campaign related to the different types of plastic

UNFPA Mozambique / 2025: Collection campaign to address plastic pollution in Pemba, Mozambique

Key implementation activities include:

- **Production and Supply Chain:** The project has successfully developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure operational consistency, safety, and compliance

in handling recycled plastics. Lean manufacturing practices have been introduced to optimize workflows and reduce the emission of plastic particles during production.

- **Marketing and Digital Infrastructure:** A Starlink internet system was acquired to facilitate online sales and digital marketing. The project's website is approximately 70% complete, serving as a central platform for customer leads and product visibility.
- **Organizational Management:** Draft operational policies for production management, machine use, and safety are 50% complete and currently undergoing technical review.
- **Community Engagement and Training:** In Pemba, 10 local community members were selected for specialized training in plastic identification, sorting, and safe collection. A broader collection campaign mobilized over 50 participants, leading to independent community-led initiatives to address plastic pollution.

On finalising this phase, the innovation will be piloted under the peer-to-peer mentorship programme for girls where female mentors will both use the bicycles to travel to and from the mentorship sessions, and will be part of the production process by collecting and recycling sea waste.

Activity 2.5 Support community-level convening to share the impact and tell the story of the impact of innovation in addressing climate change and discriminatory social norms.

Communication efforts under this activity focused on strengthening the visibility of innovation-driven approaches addressing climate change, GBV, and social norms through media engagement and documentation. Across Madagascar, Mozambique, and South Sudan, communication efforts enabled the dissemination of programme activities and emerging innovation processes to wider audiences. This increased awareness of community-led solutions and their role in addressing climate-related vulnerabilities and discriminatory social norms. These efforts contribute to showcasing innovation as a practical approach within the programme and support future storytelling and knowledge-sharing.

Project Outputs

1. ClimateEmpower Annual Progress Report [Main Folder](#).
2. **GBV, Social Norms and Climate Resilience Training Manuals/Package:**
 - a. Girls and Young Women Curriculum: Mentoring Programming Plug-Ins on Climate Change and Conflict-Affected Humanitarian Settings (Mozambique) [POR](#), [ENG](#)
 - b. Boys and Young Men Curriculum: Mentoring Programming Plug-Ins on Climate Change and Conflict-Affected Humanitarian Settings (Mozambique) [POR](#), [ENG](#)
 - c. Report on Training-of-Trainers (ToT) for Implementing Partners on the “Curriculum for girls, young women, and boys” Mentorship Program (Mozambique) [POR](#), [ENG](#)
 - d. [Transforming Gender and Social Norms for Climate Change Adaptation Training Manual](#) (South Sudan)

-
- e. [Flashcards on Gender Norms, Climate Change and Women and Girls](#) (South Sudan)
 - f. [Report on Validation Workshop for the Training Manual](#) on Gender and Social Norms Change and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) in South Sudan
- 3. Community Workshops**
- a. Report on Youth District Forum in Pemba (Mozambique) [POR](#), [ENG](#)
 - b. Report on [Social Norms Change Training](#) in Bor, Jonglei (South Sudan)
 - c. Report on Training for Women and Community Youth on Innovation, Climate Change, Social Norms and GBV in Toilara (Madagascar) [FRE](#), [ENG](#)
 - d. Report on Field Visit and Community Dialogues to Identify and Coach Innovative Projects led by Women and Youth (Madagascar) [FRE](#), [ENG](#)
 - e. Report on the Results of the Analysis of Regional Data Collection and Prioritization of Interventions for ClimateEmpower (Madagascar) [FRE](#), [ENG](#)
- 4. Innovation Activities**
- a. Report on Training for Women and Community Youth on Innovation, Climate Change, Social Norms and GBV in Toilara (Madagascar) [FRE](#), [ENG](#)
 - b. BAAIKE Innovation Fund [Progress Report](#)
- 5. Communication Products (Media and Social Media)**
- a. ClimateEmpower [Advocacy Video](#)
 - b. ClimateEmpower [Project Inception Report](#)
 - c. Joint UNFPA & Zonta Op-ed: [When the River Rises, Clinics Must Stay Open: A gender test for COP30](#) (ESARO)
 - d. Article: [Climate change, gender inequality – and the power of partnerships in fragile contexts](#) (ESARO)
 - e. Social media engagement - [Pemba Youth Forums](#) (Mozambique)
 - f. Social media engagement - [Mentorship Manual](#) (Mozambique)
 - g. Social media engagement - [South Sudan Activities](#)
 - h. Social media engagement - [Madagascar Activities](#)
 - i. Social media engagement - [UNFPA HQ & ESARO Comms](#).
- 6. Photo Gallery**
- a. [Photos from Training-of-Trainers \(ToT\)](#) for Implementing Partners on the “Curriculum for girls, young women, and boys” Mentorship Program (Mozambique)
 - b. [Photos from Youth District Forum](#) (Mozambique)
 - c. [Validation Workshop for the Training Manual](#) on Gender and Social Norms Change and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA) (South Sudan)
 - d. [Training Manual Community Consultations](#) (South Sudan)
 - e. District Community Dialogues: [Ambovombe](#), [Ampanihy](#), [Bekily](#), [Betioky](#), [Toliara I](#), [Toliara II](#) (Madagascar).
-

Planned Actions for 2026:

1. Community workshops for women and youth on interlinkages between climate impacts and GBV and harmful practices, climate and innovation mainstreaming, social norms tools, and communication for impact;
2. Trained women and youth-led (especially young women-led) will be supported to convene community dialogue on climate and GBV and social norms;
3. Peer-led online & offline spaces will be established/supported for experience sharing, support seeking and empowerment for girls and women;
4. More human-interest stories on the project will be gathered and published.