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ODA financing the climate–gender–disability interface: Key facts

factsheet

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Overview

This factsheet analyses recent official development assistance (ODA) to African countries as well as national budgets from select eastern African countries to assess the financing landscape of the intersections between:

- climate change adaptation and mitigation,
- inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, and
- gender equality.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in its Sixth Assessment (2022) reported, with high confidence, that the compounded vulnerability of the intersection of gender with disability to climate change impacts exacerbates inequity and injustice. Addressing these overlapping challenges is not only essential for achieving equitable outcomes, but it also demands urgent, targeted action that explicitly recognises the intersection of gender, disability and climate vulnerabilities. Recognising this intersectionality is crucial for developing finance mechanisms that meaningfully support those most at risk.

However, our analysis finds that, between 2018 and 2022, funding targeted at climate, gender *and* disability in Africa came from just seven donors, and is incredibly low – only US\$3.70 million out of US\$355 billion (approximately 0.001%); and of total principal climate, disability, and/or gender financing (US\$44.8 billion) only 0.01% targeted the interface of the three issues. Financing was also concentrated in few countries – more than half (55.3%) of this US\$3.7 million went to five countries.

Looking at the interfaces between just two of the three issues reveals that the gender–climate interface received relatively better financing volume and an increasing overall trend in funding compared to those addressing the disability–climate interface. This underscores the need for sustained advocacy to tackle the disproportionate impact of climate change on people with disabilities. Additionally, we find that disability, whether linked with gender or climate, continues to receive inconsistent funding, further emphasising the need for a concerted effort to secure better financial support.

Introduction

Africa experienced significant impacts from disasters due to natural hazards between 2018 and 2022, and many of the extreme weather events and epidemics during that period can be linked to climatic and environmental factors.¹ According to EM-DAT data,² in Africa, over those years, over 210 million people were affected, largely due to droughts (82%) and floods (13%); 640 thousand were injured (97% by epidemics); and 29 thousand people lost their life (63% due to epidemics, 19% due to floods).

Among the most affected are women, who are disproportionately impacted by climate change due to their generally higher dependence on less adaptable livelihoods and limited control over financial and personal decisions. Their vulnerability is further compounded by structural inequalities such as lower average educational attainment and concentration in the informal sector.³

Additionally, women and girls with disabilities face even greater challenges. Women experience higher rates of disability than men,⁴ and as recognised by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), they are subject to multiple forms of discrimination.⁵ This intersection of gender and disability magnifies their vulnerability to climate impacts, highlighting the urgent need for policies and financing mechanisms that address the specific needs of women and girls with disabilities in the face of climate-related disasters.⁶

The intersection of gender and disability is critical in understanding the unequal impacts of climate change. The IPCC's latest report, the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) (2022) establishes the unequal impacts of climate change.⁷ It highlights, that climate change disproportionately affects vulnerable groups, with gender and disability intersectionality exacerbating inequity and injustice. The report emphasises that gender, physical ability and other factors significantly influence how individuals experience climate-induced changes, reinforcing the need for appropriate adaptation strategies.

One of the manifestations of this inequality is climate-induced migration. Population displacement is one of the major impacts of extreme weather and climate events. In 2022 alone, drought in the Horn of Africa (the worst in four decades) displaced 2.4 million people,⁸ while a series of tropical cyclones and storms in southern Africa forced over a million to relocate.⁹

While migration can be an adaptation strategy to climate change, it is not accessible to everyone.¹⁰ Not everyone is equally able to move before and during crises due to existing marginalisation and discrimination: characteristics such as gender and disability can create barriers to mobility. Additional challenges, such as lack of resources, accessibility issues, cultural and social barriers and entrenched discrimination, leave many unable to seek refuge or adapt effectively during crises.

For example, a study on the impacts of floods from Cyclone Freddy (2023), Tropical Storm Ana (2022) and Cyclone Idai (2019) on women and girls with disabilities in districts in Malawi found they experienced challenges accessing emergency services, inadequate needs support, physical challenges, lack of awareness of the approaching cyclone or disaster, overwhelmed services and resource constraints.¹¹

Financing the interface of climate–gender–disability is not only about addressing emergencies, it is also about empowering women and girls with disabilities as frontline leaders, as recognised by the Sendai Framework:¹²

“Empowering women and persons with disabilities to publicly lead and promote gender equitable and universally accessible response, recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction approaches is key”

Sendai Framework, paragraph 32

In this factsheet, we explore how much ODA financing is allocated to the interface of climate, gender and disability across regions. We examine the types of financial instruments used, the donors involved, and the recipients of this targeted funding in Africa.

Africa received total ODA of US\$355 billion between 2018 and 2022, but only US\$3.70 million targeted at the climate–disability–gender interface – approximately 0.001%. Based on budget data provided by three countries in eastern Africa, our national-level analysis reveals that no funding at all was targeted at this climate–gender–disability interface.

This factsheet aims to draw the attention of donors and African domestic policymakers to the need to provide improved level of funding that address the three risk factors all together, so that women and girls with disability, who are already disproportionately impacted by climate change, will receive the necessary support to build resilience and become empowered leaders in addressing climate risks. The paper concludes with [key messages for donors and domestic policymakers](#).

About the data in this factsheet

Notes on methodology

We use the most recently available dataset (data for calendar year 2022, published in late December 2023).

This analysis considers disbursements to climate change adaptation and mitigation, inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities, and gender equality. It does this using the policy markers donors use when reporting to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s Development

Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) – the Rio marker, disability marker or gender equality marker. The analysis considers only that ODA marked as principal (where climate, disability or gender is fundamental to the design of a project, and without which it would not have taken place).

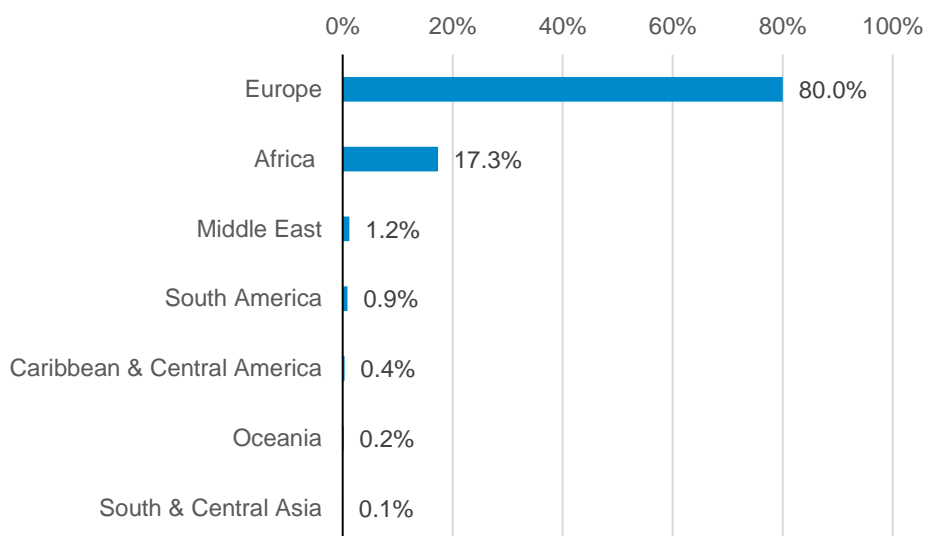
Where donors left one or more of the above markers as unscreened, each project title, short description and long description were evaluated by a joint natural language processing methodology that uses both keyword searches and machine learning in order to make a stand-in policy marker determination, which was then included in the analysis. You can read more about this process in the [methodology section](#). None of the projects identified in this analysis as belonging to the triple overlap of climate change, gender and disability were found by the machine learning methodology. All of the triple interface projects were labelled as such in the original CRS data source.

In terms of national budget, we obtained data from publicly available programme-based budgets of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. Kenya and Uganda budget data had to be extracted from PDF reports using an automated Python methodology, whereas Ethiopia provided its annual budget data in Excel format. For all three countries, the budget data was then cleaned by excluding aggregate values and converting national currency units to current US\$.

Largest recipients of funding for the climate–gender–disability interface by region

Regionally, Africa received 17.3% of all ODA targeting climate, gender and disability – the second largest proportion, behind Europe

Figure 1: Share of ODA financing of climate–gender–disability interface by region, 2018–22



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC data.

Notes: Europe's triple-interface projects are from EU institutions to Albania, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Türkiye (reported for multi-sector projects).

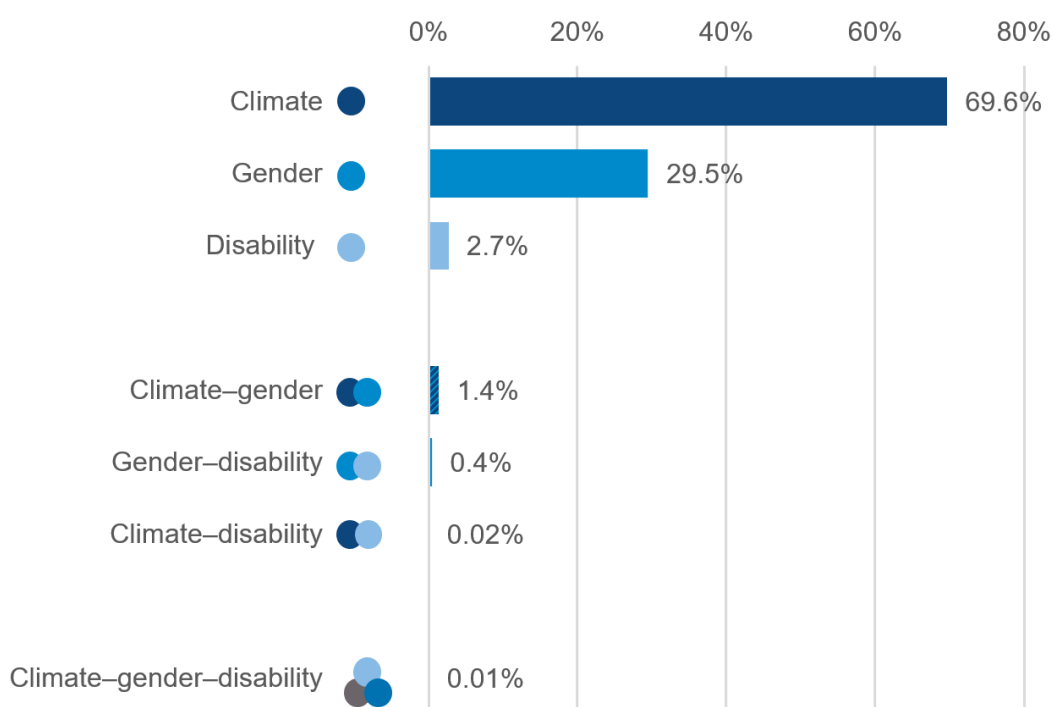
- The total of ODA that had a primary focus across the three objectives (climate change action, gender equality, and the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities) was incredibly small. For example, Africa received total ODA of US\$355 billion between 2018 and 2022, but only US\$3.70 million targeted at the climate–disability–gender interface – approximately 0.001%.

- Europe received the majority (80.0% – US\$17.1 million) of the small volume of funding committed globally with a primary focus across climate, disability and gender. Africa received 17.3%, US\$3.70 million, the second-largest total. This was followed by the Middle East (1.2%), South America (0.9%), Caribbean and Central America (0.4%), Oceania (0.2%) and South and Central Asia (0.1%).
- In that period, Africa received US\$44.84 billion for projects with one or more of the principal objectives (climate, disability and/or gender).¹³ This is twelve thousand times more than the US\$3.70 million total for the interface of all three policy objectives (climate–gender–disability).

Overlaps between gender, disability and climate ODA in Africa

Of ODA for Africa that had a principal focus on one or more of climate, gender and disability, the climate–gender interface got 1.4% – more than gender–disability (0.4%), disability–climate (0.02%), or gender–disability–climate (0.01%)

Figure 2: Share of principal financing to climate, gender and disability ODA – individually and by overlap – in Africa, 2018–22



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC data.

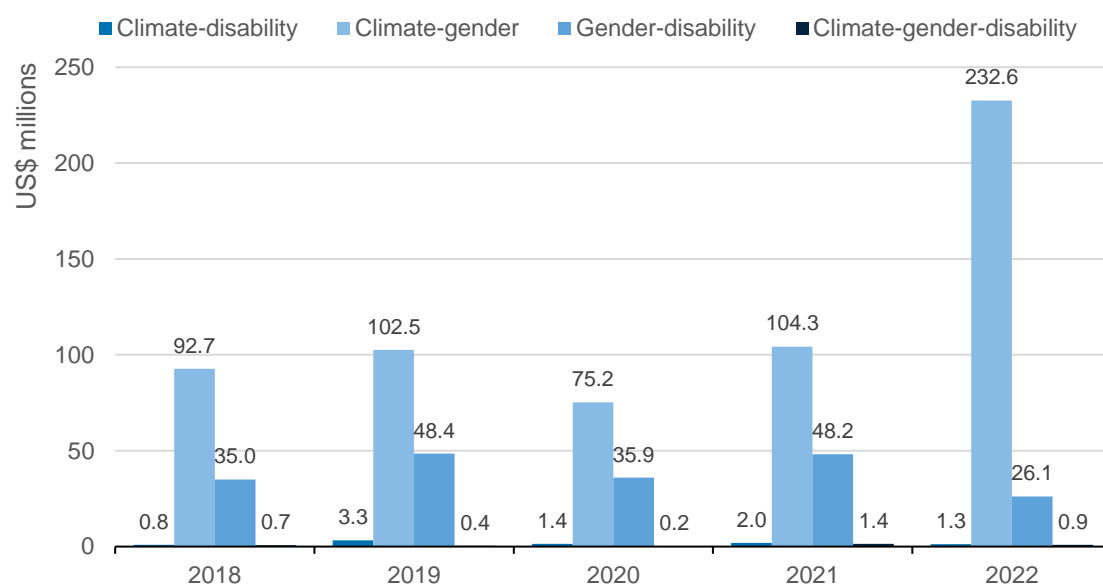
- Over the five years, Africa received US\$44.8 billion in ODA with a principal objective of climate, disability and/or gender. Of this, US\$31.2 billion (69.6%) was provided to projects that targeted climate; US\$13.2 billion (29.5%) was provided to projects that target gender; and US\$1.2 billion (2.7%) was provided to projects that target disability.

- Only small totals of funding went to projects that principally target two of these objectives. The highest total went to climate–gender projects (amounting to US\$607.3 million, which was 1.4%), followed by gender–disability projects (US\$193.6 million, which was 0.4%). Climate–disability projects received significantly less, with only US\$8.8 million (0.02%) allocated over the five-year period in Africa.
- 0.01% of ODA with principal climate, disability and/or gender objectives targeted all three.

Trends in financing gender, disability and climate interfaces in Africa

The climate–gender interface received an overall upward funding between 2018 and 2022, except for a dip in 2020

Figure 3: Trends in ODA financing the interface between climate, gender and disability objectives in Africa, 2018–22



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC data.

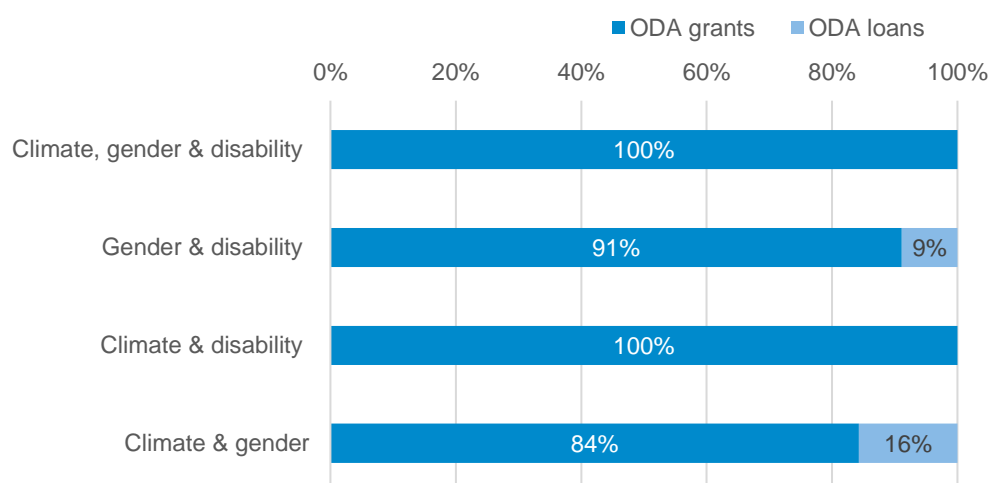
Notes: The huge jump in climate-gender funding in 2022 is largely from a US\$82 million disbursement from the EU to Egypt for Water Sector Policy and a US\$51 million disbursement from France to Mauritius for a green and inclusive growth through SMEs project.

- We find inconsistent year-on-year funding for the climate–gender–disability interface, which steadily declined between 2018 and 2020, before experiencing a jump in 2021 and then declined again in 2022.
- In contrast, except for a dip in 2020 (possibly due to Covid-19), projects with both climate and gender objectives have seen an overall positive trend in funding.
- However, the funding for projects considering both gender and disability has been inconsistent year on year, as has the funding for projects addressing both climate and disability. This suggests that disability, when targeted in projects alongside either gender and/or climate, is a neglected area that needs better financing.

ODA instruments funding the interface of gender, disability and climate in Africa

The majority of ODA to the interface of climate, gender and disability comes in the form of grants

Figure 4: Share of financing instruments for climate–gender–disability primary objectives in Africa, 2018–22



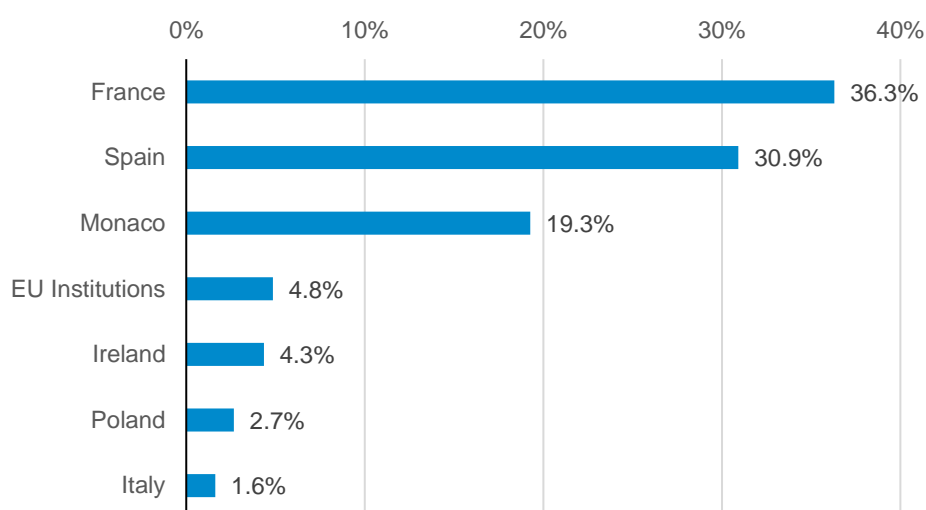
Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC data.

- Generally, Africa receives climate financing ODA largely in the form of concessional loans.¹⁴ However, our finding here shows that the interfaces of climate, gender and disability received either entirely or mostly grants.
- The climate–gender–disability interface and the climate–disability interface were fully funded using grants.
- The gender–disability interface and climate–gender interface attract concessional loans (albeit less than 10% and 20% of the total funding, respectively).
- No equity investment is used as an instrument in financing any of these interfaces.

Largest donors to the climate–gender–disability’ interface in Africa

Between 2018 and 2022, over two-thirds (67.23%) of funding to the climate–gender–disability interface in Africa came from two donors – France and Spain

Figure 5: The five largest national donors to in Africa for the climate–gender–disability interface, 2018–22



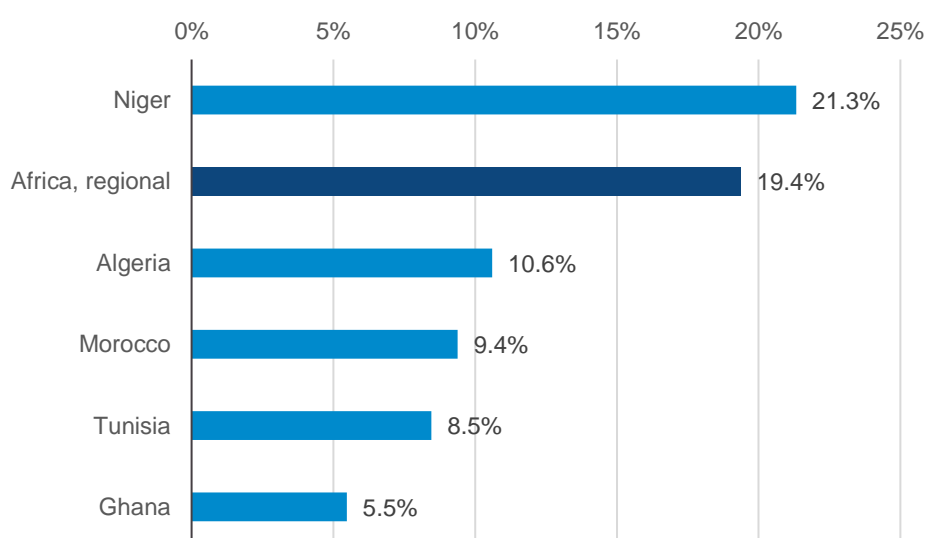
Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC data.

- Only seven donors gave funding that had a primary focus across the three objectives (climate change adaptation and mitigation, gender equality, and the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities).
- France and Spain are the two donors whose funds address the intersectionality of the three issues all together. France was the biggest funder of the climate–gender–disability interface (36.3% of the total). Spain was the second-largest funder of the interface (30.9%).
- France provided funding each year (except in 2022). Spain funded from 2020 to 2022. Monaco, the EU institutions, Ireland, Poland and Italy only provided funding in a single year between 2018 and 2022.

Largest recipients of climate–gender–disability interface ODA in Africa

More than half (55.3%) of ODA for the climate–gender–disability interface went to five individual countries in Africa

Figure 6: The top recipients of climate–gender–disability interface funding in Africa, 2018–2022



Source: Development Initiatives based on OECD DAC data.

Notes: The chart considers the top individual African countries and multi-country projects that feature as the second highest funded in Africa

- Niger received twice the proportion of funding as the second largest individual country recipient of funding for the climate–gender–disability interface during the five-year period – 21.3% of the total.
- Multi-country projects for the interface provided the next-highest amount (19.4%).

Domestic financing for gender, disability and climate interfaces in Eastern Africa

Although donors are providing assistance to the climate–gender–disability interface, the national budgets we analysed did not.

Governments in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda fund climate objectives, but ignore gender and disability objectives

Table 7: National budget allocation for climate, gender and disability in Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, 2018–2022

Country	Climate change	Disability	Gender
Ethiopia	6.8%	< 0.1%	< 0.1%
Kenya	4.6%	0.0%	0.1%
Uganda	0.8%	< 0.1%	< 0.1%

Source: Development initiatives based on national budgets of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, 2018–22.

Notes: Policy objectives identified through budget documents may not reflect stated government priorities.

- We evaluated the 2018 to 2022 domestic national budgets of Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. 9,966 individual budget activities, totalling US\$4.7 billion, were identified as corresponding to either principal climate, disability or gender objectives.
- In these three countries, the only objective with a significant amount of finance was climate. Unlike donor project descriptions, national budget activities did not show any overlap between climate, disability or gender objectives. This gap could be due to reporting (as programme-based budget documents do not include data by project/activity) or, given the incredibly small amount in external financing, it could also mean the interface is a neglected area of financing.

- Ethiopia allocated the greatest percentage of its federal budget to principal climate objectives at 6.8% or US\$1.0 billion during 2018–22. Kenya allocated 4.6% (US\$3.4 billion) to climate change. Uganda allocated just 0.76% (US\$269 million).
- All three countries reported domestic budget allocation on principal gender objectives, and Ethiopia and Uganda reported allocation to principal disability objectives, but the amounts were all small enough to round to less than 0.1% of their respective five-year budgets. Ethiopia spent US\$162,393 (0.001% of its five-year budget) on gender budget activities and US\$1,024,584 (0.007%) on disability objectives. Kenya spent US\$76 million (0.1%) on gender objectives and none on disability objectives. Uganda spent US\$10,800 (0.00003%) on gender objectives and US\$6,406 (0.00002%) on disability objectives. Although the total values from Kenya are higher, they are small when compared to the total size of the Kenyan Federal budget.

Key messages

Although intersectionality is increasingly recognised at the policy level as critical (given how climate change exacerbates vulnerabilities and deepens inequities) our analysis indicates that this recognition is not reflected in project investments. Shockingly, we found very little evidence of funding targeting the interface of climate, gender and disability. At the domestic level, programme-based budget allocation data revealed no budget allocations specifically addressing this critical interface (although the unavailability of disaggregated budget data at project level might mask some funds).

Our key messages to **donors** are:

- **Be deliberate in allocating funding that addresses the interface of climate change action, gender equity and disability inclusion:** Targeted investments are crucial to ensuring that the most vulnerable groups are not left behind by climate action and resilience-building efforts.
- **Be consistent in funding the interface:** Sustained and reliable financial support is essential for long-term, effective interventions to support intersectional vulnerabilities.
- **Continue with providing grants as the main modality of funding:** Grants do not compromise the fiscal space of recipient governments. They allow countries to prioritise marginalised groups and afford more flexibility when designing projects so that they respond to the needs of girls and women with disabilities that are impacted by climate change.

Our key messages to **domestic policy-makers allocating budgets**:

- **Be deliberate in addressing the interface of climate change, gender equity and disability inclusion:** National and local budgets should specifically include resources for programmes that target these interconnected challenges, fostering inclusive adaptation and resilience.
- **Publish project-based budget data in accessible formats:** Transparency in budget allocations, especially at the project level, enables better tracking of how funds are being allocated to address intersectional vulnerabilities and promotes accountability.

Annex

Methodology for determining climate relevance using machine learning

Approach

Before data for this analysis was downloaded from the OECD website, a model to determine a project's relevance to climate adaptation climate mitigation, gender equality, and/or disability was developed. A natural-language processing approach was taken to classify project title and description text into relevant categories. First, the '[bert-base-multilingual-uncased](#)' model was selected based on the model's performance on the languages commonly contained within the OECD DAC's Creditor Reporting System (CRS). An additional 1% of unique vocabulary from the CRS was added to the model before fine-tuning. This gave the model a better understanding of the technical language contained within development and humanitarian projects and made training classifier networks built on top of the model embeddings more efficient. Lastly, the model was fine-tuned for three full passes of all titles and descriptions contained within the CRS.

Training

Once the fine-tuned base model was fully trained, training data was collected by taking project titles, descriptions, and metadata on each project's climate relevance from the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) data standard. IATI was chosen as the source for the training data both to avoid overfitting the exact text found within the CRS and because the IATI data contained a greater quantity of text. For projects where analogues could be found between the CRS and IATI, the combined CRS title, short description and long description fields had an average length of 470 characters, while the average length of IATI text was 1,068 characters. This data was used to train three multi-class classification models – one for each policy objective. The gender equality model achieved an accuracy rate of 93%, the disability model achieved an accuracy rate of 91%, and the climate model achieved an accuracy rate of 85%.

The OECD CRS dataset

OECD CRS data was first filtered by projects that were classified as ODA and occurred between 2018 and 2022. Projects that were already screened by their donors for climate change, gender equality, or disability markers were kept as is. The multi-class classifiers were applied to unscreened projects to determine the significant/principal status of each project for each of the three policy objectives. A keyword search was also performed on the unscreened CRS data but given the wide diversity of donors a manually curated list of keywords was insufficient. Instead, the keywords were derived from the data itself

according to term-frequency inverse-document-frequency for the projects that already had markers. A total of 486 keywords were identified through this process – 351 words for climate adaptation/mitigation, 83 keywords for gender equality, and 52 keywords for disability. A project was considered a positive match if the model predicted a principal policy objective and one or more of the keywords for the objective was a match. A project was considered as climate change focused if either climate adaptation or climate mitigation were identified as principal objectives.

None of the CRS projects identified through this process as belonging to the triple interface of climate change, gender, and disability were discovered by the machine learning and keyword methodology. Instead, they were all labelled as such in the original CRS by their donors. If the ML and keyword methodology were applied to these projects, none of them would have had the necessary keywords or context to have received principal policy objective classifications for all three objectives. Future analyses may be warranted to examine how the data landscape changes when NLP is used to check the accuracy of donor publishing on policy objectives instead of just filling in data gaps.

Glossary

Principal objective (OECD policy markers)

An objective that is fundamental to the design of a project, and without which it would not have taken place. This analysis in this factsheet focuses on principal objectives only.

Significant objective (OECD Policy markers)

An objective that is important to the design of a project, indicating that the project has been substantially altered to address the objective, but still would have taken place without it in some form. The analysis in this factsheet does not consider significant objectives.

Acknowledgements

Martha Bekele led on the writing of this factsheet; Alex Miller led on machine-learning and the domestic budget analysis. Thanks are due to Duncan Knox, who supported as the data advisor.

Notes

- ¹ Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2007. 'Human health' from Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. Available at: <https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/ar4-wg2-chapter8-1.pdf>
- ² EM-DAT, CRED/UCLouvain. Accessed on 24 August 2024. Available at: <https://public.emdat.be/data>
- ³ UNDP (2023) Gender-responsive climate change actions in Africa. https://climatepromise.undp.org/sites/default/files/research_report_document/57405%20-%20Technical%20paper%20-%20EN%20Final%20-%20web.pdf
- ⁴ World Bank, Challenges Facing Persons with Disabilities in Sub-Saharan Africa – in 5 charts. Accessed on 25 August 2024. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/brief/challenges-facing-people-with-disabilities-in-sub-saharan-africa-in-5-charts>
- ⁵ This could be range from access to social services to violence, trafficking and exploitation of women and girls with disabilities. See evidence published in 2020 by UN Women East and Southern Africa in the report Mapping of Discrimination against Women and Girls with Disabilities in East and Southern Africa. Available at: <https://africa.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/mapping-of-discrimination-on-disabilities-in-esar>
- ⁶ UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2006. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-rights-persons-disabilities#:~:text=the%20present%20Convention,-.Article%206%20%2D%20Women%20with%20disabilities,human%20rights%20and%20fundamental%20freedoms>.
- ⁷ IPCC (2022). Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability. <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/>
- ⁸ <https://dtm.iom.int/reports/horn-africa-drought-2022-human-mobility-snapshot-january-december-2022>
- ⁹ <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/legacy-pdf/633562594.pdf>
- ¹⁰ Note that climate migration is not necessarily an available or suitable option. As Vinke et al. (2020) note, migration is an effective adaptation for specific groups and under specific circumstances but “can lead to increased vulnerabilities and reduced adaptive capacities”. Kira Vinke et al. Migration as Adaptation?, Migration Studies, Volume 8, Issue 4, December 2020, Pages 626–634, <https://doi.org/10.1093/migration/mnaa029>
- ¹¹ Disabled women in Africa (2023). A study on the assessment of Cyclone Freddy impact on women and girls with disabilities in Malawi.
- ¹² UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2015. Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030. Available at: <https://www.undrr.org/publication/sendai-framework-disaster-risk-reduction-2015-2030>
- ¹³ Between 2018 and 2022, Africa received US\$355.46 billion from DAC donors.
- ¹⁴ Development Initiatives (2024). Concessional loans for Africa's climate crisis: Whose fiscal effort? <https://devinit.org/resources/concessional-loans-africas-climate-crisis-whose-fiscal-effort/>

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