



Girls' education and women's empowerment: At the core of effective action on climate change



Girls' education is the starting point for securing the rights of women and girls globally, while improving community health and resilience to climate shocks, with a drastic decrease in emissions as an important consequence.



130m
girls

worldwide are excluded from primary and secondary education, trapped in a cycle of poverty and inequality.¹



190m
women

worldwide want to have control over whether or when to have children, but aren't using contraception. In addition, 80m are using unreliable traditional methods of contraception.²



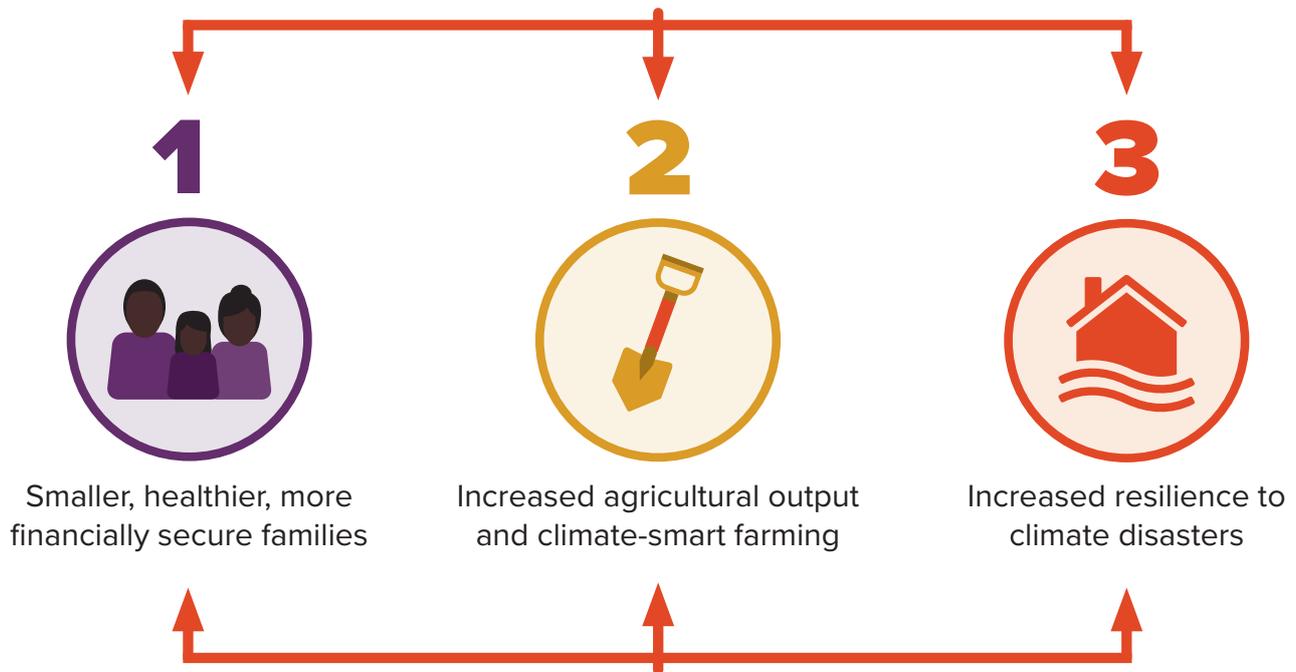
15%

of available agricultural land in sub-Saharan Africa is owned by women. The land they control is often of poorer quality and their tenure is insecure.³

“Climate impacts hit women and girls hardest...There is greater risk of displacement, higher odds of being injured or killed during a natural disaster. Prolonged drought can precipitate early marriage as families contend with scarcity. Floods can force last-resort prostitution as women struggle to make ends meet... [But] If we gain ground on gender equity, we also gain ground on addressing global warming.”

Dr. Katharine Wilkinson of Project Drawdown, speaking at TEDWomen 2018⁴

Educate a Girl



Tackle Climate Change

Research from the Global Economy and Development program at the Brookings Institution suggests that “girls’ education may be one of the most overlooked yet formidable mechanisms for mitigating against weather-related catastrophes and adapting to the long-term effects of climate change.”⁵

Educated girls become empowered women who can make choices about family planning and who can build climate-smart enterprises



1 Educated girls marry later and have smaller, healthier families.



“Having access to education gives girls and women more control over their lives. They tend to choose to have fewer children, reducing the pressure on the little resources available, and therefore reducing the effects of climate change.”

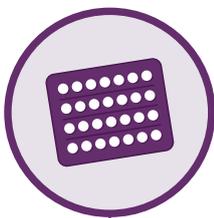
Esnath Divasoni, CAMFED Association member and climate-smart Agriculture Guide, Zimbabwe

Number of children born to women with no formal education in sub-Saharan Africa⁶

6.7

Number of children born to women with a secondary education⁶

3.9



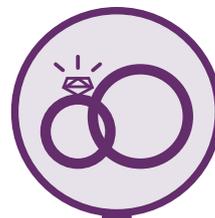
5%

Increase in propensity to use modern contraceptives with each additional year of schooling.⁷



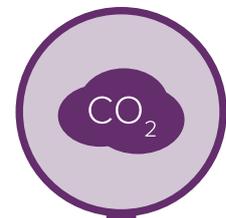
2m

Fewer young mothers in sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia if women had primary and secondary education.⁸



5x

Girls with secondary schooling are less likely to marry as children compared to girls who have little or no education.⁹



85GT

Gigaton reduction in CO₂ by 2050 through investing in girls' education and providing women with access to family planning (1 billion fewer people).¹⁰

2 An educated girl is a more sustainable and productive farmer.¹¹



“I am planning an afforestation exercise where young rural women will receive training from District Forest Officers on tree planting. My plan is also to encourage more young women to run climate-smart businesses. I challenge them to think about all the opportunities in agriculture, and to grow crops that do not need a lot of fertilizers, or combine crops so as to protect the land.”

Luwiza Phiri, CAMFED Association leader and agriculture entrepreneur, Malawi



Global Climate Action
United Nations Climate Change

The United Nations (UN) Climate Change Secretariat recognized young women's leadership in climate smart agriculture by presenting a 2019 UN Global Climate Action Award to a CAMFED Agriculture Guide Program led by the Association of young women educated with CAMFED's support.



25%

Average increase in farming yields by closing the gender disparity in resources and rights, resulting in 100–150 million fewer people living in hunger.¹¹



An increase to a woman's income of

\$10

achieves the same improvements in children's nutrition and health as an increase to a man's income of

\$110¹¹



Women's education is nearly

2x

as effective at reducing child malnutrition compared with improving food availability alone.¹²

3 An educated girl is more equipped to tackle the problems that arise from droughts and floods.¹³



Education can empower girls to better protect themselves and their families, and reduce the negative impacts from natural disasters related to climate change.⁵



465m

People could have been saved from injury, requiring temporary assistance or losing their homes from floods.*



667m

People could have been saved from drought if countries had invested more in educating women.*



3.2

For every additional year of schooling a girl receives on average, her country's resilience to climate disasters can be expected to improve by 3.2 points.⁵

*A study of developing countries from 1960 to 2003 found that countries with higher levels of female schooling were less likely to suffer high rates of death, injury, and displacement due to weather disasters.¹³

For more information: camfed.org/climate-smart



Please click on each footnote to access the reference online:

¹ UNESCO

² UN

³ FAO

⁴ Dr. Katharine Wilkinson

⁵ Brookings

⁶ UNESCO/UNDP/ Brookings

⁷ The Lancet

⁸ UNESCO

⁹ GPE

¹⁰ Project Drawdown

¹¹ FAO

¹² CFS

¹³ World Bank