

DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE, LOCALLY TAILORED, GENDERED CLIMATE INFORMATION SERVICES

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Climate information services (CIS) have been shown to improve households' abilities to mitigate the negative impact of climate change through effective adaptation. Despite the fact that over 50% of the world's farmers are women and overwhelming research showing the value of CIS, women and other vulnerable populations often do not receive appropriate CIS. As part of a broader project to effectively integrate gender into programs that address the impact of climate change on food security around the world, Sarah McKune

has worked with Sandra Russo (UF) and Jim Hansen (Columbia University) since 2012 to lead an interdisciplinary team investigating how gender impacts the efficacy of CIS. With associated research in four countries (India, Nepal, Kenya, and Senegal), the UF team, including numerous graduate students, has worked in Senegal to investigate how consideration of gender within CIS may change what information is delivered, to whom, and by what mechanism, and consequently, what innovative gendered approaches

look like in that specific context.

In 2014–2015 the team's research in Kenya and Senegal reinforced the understanding that communities receiving CIS are changing their on-farm practices to incorporate the use of climate smart agricultural practices (CSA) and investigated the effect of these changes on food security. Research also sought to understand how empowerment, as locally constructed, may be affecting food security, via its impact on receipt of climate information services. The results indicate that programs to support CIS improved farmer uptake of CSA, and appeared to improve household food security. The findings also underscored the need for locally tailored gendered CIS, so in the summer of 2015, the team conducted a feasibility study in Senegal to investigate the use of health clinics and health care workers as effective sources and channels of climate information designed to target women. The results indicated that health care workers and health clinics were settings where women typically seek information and trust the source. The team is currently working with the National Meteorological Organization in Senegal (ANACIM) to investigate the effectiveness of rural radios in disseminating CIS and plans to explore how best to couple rural radio usage with the use of health care workers and clinics to improve women's uptake of CIS.

Sarah McKune is the director of public health programs in the College of Public Health and Health Professions. She has received funding through the CGIAR's research program on Climate Change, Agriculture, and Food Security to support this research since 2012.