

Closing the Loop, Closing the Gap

Gender Equality in
the Circular Economy and
Green Jobs for Resilience

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Is climate gender-neutral?



"In your country or sector—
who typically sorts
household waste, reuses goods,
collects water, or cares for
dependents during extreme heat?"

1. Gendered Dimensions of Resilience

- **Unequal Exposure to Shocks:** Women are overrepresented in frontline and informal sectors exposed to health, environmental, and livelihood risks
- **Limited Access to Resources:** Women face barriers to land, finance, technology, services, and decision-making that reduce their adaptive capacity
- **Unpaid Care Work:** Women provide unpaid labor that supports household and community resilience—e.g., water management, food preservation, caregiving
- **Economic Vulnerability:** Women-led enterprises and workers lack social protection and are more vulnerable to disruptions
- **Extreme Weather Events Amplify Risks:** Extreme weather events such as heatwaves, droughts and floods exacerbate existing gender inequalities



2. Women in Circular Economy and Green Jobs

Challenges

- Exclusion from leadership and formal roles due to systemic underrepresentation, especially in technical and decision-making positions
- Institutional and cultural barriers, including gender-blind policies, social norms, and limited access to mobility, training, and safety measures
- Devaluation of women's informal contributions, particularly in waste picking and recycling, which are often unrecognized during formalization

Opportunities

- Gender-responsive design boosts employment, efficiency, and resilience outcomes in circular economy systems
- Policy and program shifts (e.g., targeted training, inclusive infrastructure, safety measures) can mainstream women's participation and leadership
- Climate & digital innovations create safer, more equitable jobs and services
- **Example:** Heat-resilient working environment (e.g., shaded workstations, hydration support) improves safety and productivity for women waste workers



3.1 Solutions to Bridge Gaps and Unlock Potential

Address Existing Barriers to Women's Participation

- Acknowledge and **formalize informal and unpaid work** (e.g., recyclers, caregivers)
- Integrate **care** burdens and **time** poverty into service and infrastructure planning
- Recognize circular practices already taking place in **households and communities** driven by women



3.2 Solutions to Bridge Gaps and Unlock Potential (cont.)

Increase Women's Involvement in Green and Circular Jobs

- Deliver gender responsive **training, finance, and entrepreneurship support**
- Promote **women entrepreneurs in circular economy** through targeted funding, capacity-building, and visibility
- Enable **access** to green transition finance, procurement schemes, and policy incentives that prioritize women entrepreneurs





3.3 Solutions to Bridge Gaps and Unlock Potential (cont.)

Unlock New Opportunities Through Digital Transformation

- Equip women and girls with **digital, green, and entrepreneurial skills**
- Support **women-led tech platforms** applying circular principles—such as digital marketplaces, eco-innovation hubs, and inclusive design initiatives
- Engage women and girls as **agents of change in innovation, digitization, and climate-smart systems**, while addressing unpaid care roles and displacement risks

4. Sector Spotlight – Women Entrepreneurs in the Circular Economy

- Recycling, Repair, and Reuse: Women can lead businesses focused on reducing waste, recycling materials, and remanufacturing products.
- Garments and Textiles: Women-led businesses can drive the use of sustainable and recyclable materials, leading to more circular economy practices in the textile industry.
- Waste Management: Women entrepreneurs can engage in businesses that recycle, reduce, and manage waste effectively, contributing to environmental sustainability.



Building resilience
means
placing women
at the **center of solutions.**