

1 Introduction

The world today is grappling with the adverse effects of climate change. The IPCC (2022) reports that climate hazards are present in all regions, posing risks to health, ecosystems, infrastructure, livelihoods, and food. These impacts are cascading across sectors and regions. World Bank research shows that 3.6 billion people already live in areas highly susceptible to climate change and it projects that between 2030 and 2050. WHO and UNFCCC (2008) estimate that climate-sensitive diseases and health conditions kill millions of people; they include malnutrition, which causes over 3.5 million deaths per year, diarrhoeal diseases, which kill over 1.8 million, and malaria, which kills almost 1 million.

Sub-Saharan African countries and some countries in Asia like the Philippines are considered a global hotspot of high human vulnerability (IPCC, 2022), with higher temperatures and heavy rainfall events projected to increase rates of water-borne and food-borne diseases. The increasing population, along with increasing consumption, tends to increase emissions of climate-changing greenhouse gases. Rapid population growth worsens the impacts of climate change by straining resources. Development interventions that fully tap into the synergies between population, health, and environment, with a focus on gender equity and youth participation, are crucial to addressing root causes of poverty, preserving the environment, combating climate change, and accelerating the achievement of multiple Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Regional policies are paramount for guiding a coherent and successful regional solution against the increasingly pressing global and transboundary difficulties brought on by climate change, in particular paying attention to the crucial connection between voluntary family planning (FP), sexual and reproductive health (SRH), population dynamics and climate change. However, there is limited integration of population, health, and environment in policies and programs, and critical environmental sector players rarely incorporate population interventions in their work. The BUILD project seeks to address these interrelated challenges by reinforcing actions that will enable policymakers and other development practitioners in LMICs to acknowledge the Population, Health, Environment, and Development (PHED) nexus as a valuable framework for strengthening local capacities and empowering governments and organizations to achieve holistic, sustainable development results through the efficient use of scarce resources.

We conducted national and regional climate change action plans, policies, strategies, and financing in East Africa to identify existing gaps, challenges and opportunities for the integration of SRH, FP, and related thematic areas. The study also examined the status of climate finance architecture in selected countries and the extent to which the intersectionality of FP/SRH and climate action is financed or otherwise addressed, the beneficiaries, and critical players; and draw recommendations on financing FP/SRH in climate action. The review was done for Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Cote Ivoire, the Philippines and Rwanda.

The research findings will provide valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners of climate change mitigation, and public health experts, enabling a more comprehensive and sustainable strategy for enhancing resilience in Africa and Asia.

2 Methodology

The study employed a rapid scan approach of selected climate change and health policies, strategies, action plans, and financing mechanisms. These frameworks were analysed and evaluated with a particular focus on identifying gaps and opportunities for the integration of population dynamics, FP and SRH.

The first phase of this study involved an extensive review of the official documents related to climate change action, including regional policies, action plans, and financial mechanisms. The parameters of analysis include population dynamics, family planning (FP), SRH, health, maternal and newborn health (MNH), gender equity, and the integration of these aspects into climate financing, budgets, and proposals. This comprehensive document analysis allows for the identification of explicit mentions and considerations of population dynamics, FP and SRH within the existing climate change frameworks.

Subsequently, a comparative analysis was done to assess the variations in the integration of population and health-related factors in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. This involved a cross-country examination of the existing policies and strategies to discern regional trends, disparities, and best practices. The study delved into the financing mechanisms associated with climate change action plans to understand the extent to which resources are allocated or could be redirected toward population dynamics, FP, and SRH initiatives. In the second phase, the study employed a thematic analysis approach to categorize and synthesize the information gathered.

This facilitated the identification of gaps and opportunities in the integration of population dynamics, FP and SRH within the regional climate change frameworks. Overall, the research methodology was designed to be rigorous, comprehensive, and inclusive to provide a nuanced understanding of the current state and future possibilities at the intersection of these issues.

Some of the central policies reviewed include Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), Climate Change Policies, National Climate Change Gender Action Plans (GAPs), National Climate Change Adaptation Plans (NCCAPS), PHE strategies, and Country and Regional Medium- and Long-Term Development Plans.

3 Results

3.1 Context of Climate Change Frameworks

The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted in 1992 plays a pivotal role in influencing the development of climate change policies at both national and regional levels. The UNFCCC is an international treaty to address climate change and its impacts on a global scale. Further, it catalyses international collaboration and provides a framework that influences the development of climate change policies at national and regional levels. It sets the stage for coordinated efforts to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and promote sustainable development worldwide.

The Conference of Parties (COP) further provides a platform for countries and governments to set the global climate change agenda for the upcoming years. This platform has lifted the political profile of the climate-health nexus and set a good foundation for mainstreaming health in the global climate change agenda. During the COP28 (December 2023), climate and health

actors elevated a focus on people's health for the first time at a COP, including the COP28 Climate and Health Declaration (WHO, 2023), which received a sign-off from 142 countries (to date); the first ever official Health Day at COP; and an Inter-ministerial meeting on climate and health that brought nearly 50 Ministers of Health and 110 high-level health ministerial staff to COP. This is a good signal that ensures that climate decisions are made to put health at the center of climate action. However, the missing direct focus on FP/SRHR when discussing climate impacts on health, and more broadly, the lack of mention of gender disparities, remain a critical gap.

The 2023 African Leaders Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action is a good step towards joint African leadership and developing a common position for Africa on climate change. It stands as a solemn and binding commitment that underscores the continent's resolute stance in confronting the daunting challenge of climate change. In a continent where the disproportionate effects of climate change are acutely felt, this Declaration, the first of its kind, emerges as a beacon of hope, charting a clear and actionable pathway to address the crisis. This exposition aims to delve into the substance and significance of its contents. Additionally, the Declaration points to the need for comprehensive policy and legal frameworks to protect and empower climate migrants, particularly young migrants, ensuring their access to basic rights, healthcare, and social security while recognizing migration as an adaptation strategy and promoting human rights and gender-transformative approaches in policies.

The inclusion of multilateral development bank reforms in the Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change, particularly on issues of debt relief, and a robust proposition on fossil fuel taxation is welcome. However, it is a big concern that despite making a bold mention of "lives and livelihoods", the Declaration falls short of mentioning health including family planning and reproductive health. Climate change is shaping world dynamics and exposing many to more health and pandemic-related risks. By failing to mention health and FP/SRH in this declaration, the African leaders have not paid heed to the urgency of the climate crisis and its impacts. This is critical for Africa and is a missing link in combating the climate crisis.

The rapid scan of frameworks, policies, and strategies demonstrated increasing awareness to strengthen the enabling environment for addressing climate change and improving the resilience of vulnerable communities aligned to global frameworks under the UNFCCC, the SDGs, and continental frameworks.

Some of the climate change policies recognize the gendered impact of climate change on human health, and the need for adequate responses, including resource mobilization. However, they are all deficient concerning SRH, family planning, and maternal and newborn health. Similarly, health-related policy frameworks recognize the impacts of climate change on public health, but policy interventions are not integrated to include climate change aspects.

Significant deficiencies in integrating population dynamics, family planning, and reproductive health change frameworks lead to *silo* implementation, hindering the region's ability to address interconnected challenges effectively. Moreover, inadequate mechanisms for linkages and coordination between climate change and FP/SRH stakeholders have resulted in overlaps and inefficiency in implementing programs and projects. There remains limited progress in

integrating these policies and strategies in planning, budgeting, implementation, and monitoring processes.

The funding landscape for the implementation of climate action has glaring gaps: there was a noted underestimation of climate finance needs assessment. There is also limited access to climate finance which could be attributed to limited capacities e.g., knowledge and skills for the development of concept notes and proposals in this area. In some cases, there are dedicated institutions for coordination of the resource mobilization efforts for sector-based in-country and regional projects. Finally, there is limited documentation about ongoing climate action projects being implemented in the region, which may also affect resource flow.

The long-term and medium-term plans are generally comprehensive and recognize the need to address the interconnectedness of climate change, population dynamics, FP/SRH, MNH, and gender equality. This provides an opportunity to downscale these strategies and actions to various frameworks. There is a need for more deliberate and proactive integration and coherence of the policies and frameworks for climate change with the SRH, FP, and MNH to enable the creation of holistic policies that address diverse impacts on population dynamics and reproductive health at the regional level. This should be supported by supportive institutional arrangements and collaboration to collectively integrate climate change, FP/SRH into existing policies, frameworks, and strategies. COP28 gave an opening to link first climate and health, providing an opportunity to work with the gender and health constituencies to integrate SRH on their platforms first, and then connect them to climate. Efforts should be put toward building institutional collaboration for capacity development and financing mechanisms.

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