Engendering climate change-induced migration

Martina Angela Caretta (1) and Michela Miletto (2)
(1) Department of Geology, West Virginia University, USA, (2) United Nations World Water Assessment Programme, UNESCO, Perugia, Italy

Climate change leads to increased climate variability, which is manifest in extreme weather events such as floods and droughts. These put at stake agricultural productivity, forestry, inland fisheries, aquaculture, water supply and sanitation which in turn hamper poorest households’ self-sufficiency and capability to cope with risks. Due to the risk of losing or the actual loss of livelihood, farmers in the Global South must look for alternative strategies to diversify risk. Migration is one of those strategies, which that can be seen either as an adaptive measure or an indicator of limits to adaptation to environmental stress. 60% of young migrants live in the Global South (UN, 2013). Many internally displaced people in the world are under the age of 18, some move with their families, other, mostly in South Asia and West Africa, migrate alone. Youth, as all migrants, are seeking better economic opportunities to support themselves and their families. Migration is a gendered process which plays out differently in diverse societies depending on local cultural norms that do not only affect and are affected by gender roles, but also by age, class and ethnicity. Threats to water availability, access and water hazards have diverse impacts on men and women. The link gender and climate-induced migration is still under investigation and few studies provide concrete country specific examples of this phenomenon.

Our paper will present a state of the art literature review around climate-induced migration in the Global South from a gender perspective showing how men’s and women’s migratory decisions, patterns and outcomes differ at the stage pre-during post migration.