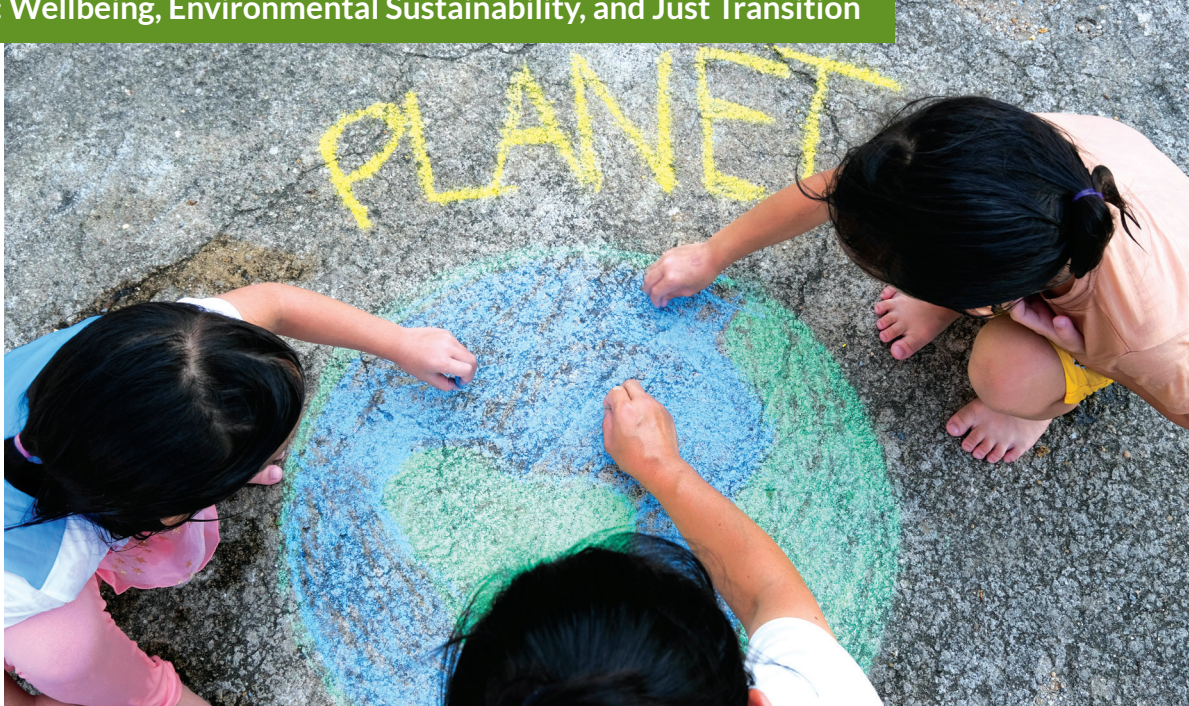


Task Force 2: Wellbeing, Environmental Sustainability, and Just Transition



Putting Societal Well-Being at the Core of G7 Climate Strategies: Entry Points and Enabling Reforms

Xin Zhou, Research Director, Integrated Sustainability Centre, Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), Japan

Eric Zusman, Research Director, Integrated Sustainability Centre, IGES, and Senior Researcher, National Institute for Environmental Studies, Japan

Mustafa Moinuddin, Research Manager and Deputy Director, Integrated Sustainability Centre, IGES, Japan

Jakob Dirksen, Research and Policy Officer, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, Department of International Development, University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Nabaghan Ojha, State Project Manager, United Nations Development Programme, India

Sumbal Javed, Global Health Security Specialist, National Institute of Health, Pakistan

Rolla Mourné, Programme Specialist, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, France

Gabriela Rigoni, Professor of International Taxation, National University of La Plata, Argentina

Satoko Yano, Programme Specialist, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, France

Katharina Lima de Miranda, Researcher, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Germany

Matthew Hengesbaugh, Policy Researcher, IGES, Japan

Miki Fukuda, Policy Researcher, IGES, Japan

Simon Højberg Olsen, Research Manager and Senior Policy Researcher, IGES, Japan

José A. Stracquadini, Professor of Marketing, University of Buenos Aires, Argentina

Aamer Ikram, Chief Executive Officer, National Institute of Health, Pakistan

Abstract

Integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into climate actions is essential for a healthy planet and people. Yet, national climate policies and international climate support programs often fail to explicitly recognize the interconnections between climate concerns and other priorities covered under the SDGs. This failure can leave key segments of society behind or marginalize stakeholders who are natural allies in the fight against climate change. This policy brief recommends that the G7 actively promote the adoption of national climate policies and international climate support programs with societal well-being at their core. Many interventions can bring well-being into the center of climate actions. However, this brief highlights three sets of often overlooked entry points that can leverage links between climate and well-being: (i) social protection and health (SDGs 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, and 16); (ii) quality education for all (SDGs 4, 10, and 16); and (iii) gender equality (SDGs 5, 8, and 16). The brief further recommends that the successful and widescale implementation of actions within those entry points needs to be supported by two sets of enabling reforms. The first is shifting to multidimensional well-being measures as policy yardstick indicators (SDG 17); and the second is institutional/fiscal reforms to enable the formulation and implementation of climate strategies featuring societal well-being (SDGs 16 and 17). An inclusive, bottom-up participatory approach that engages marginalized stakeholders in the G7 and other countries can help guide the selection of other similarly intended recommendations beyond those featured in this brief.

Introduction

There is no longer reasonable doubt: climate change poses an existential threat to the planet and its people. Yet, while few doubts remain about the severity of climate change, much of the discussion on the climate still focuses too narrowly on its aggregate impacts on the economy. The lack of attention to how climate interacts with societal well-being within and across generations—including interrelationships with health, education, jobs, incomes, environmental quality, human rights, justice, and gender equality—is a notable blind spot in many national climate strategies and international support programs. This is unfortunate since not only does a warmer climate contribute to food insecurity, water stress, and lost incomes, but these effects tend to hit the poor, women, people with disabilities, youth, and other disadvantaged and marginalized social segments the hardest (for instance, through displacement and forced migration) (IPCC 2022a). It is therefore critical that the Group of Seven (G7) and other countries put societal well-being at the core of their national climate strategies and international climate support programs.

There are several reasons why the G7 should place societal well-being at the center. These reasons begin with the fact that anchoring social concerns in climate actions will help build resilience to a range of impacts, limit inequities, and safeguard the livelihoods of future generations. A related reason is that socially oriented climate actions can bring co-benefits such as improved energy and water access, better air quality and health, greater mobility, and decent work. By the same token, explicitly bringing social dimensions into climate actions—for instance, with stronger links to education for sustainable development (ESD), gender action programs, or social protection and universal health coverage—can also harness diverse stakeholder interests

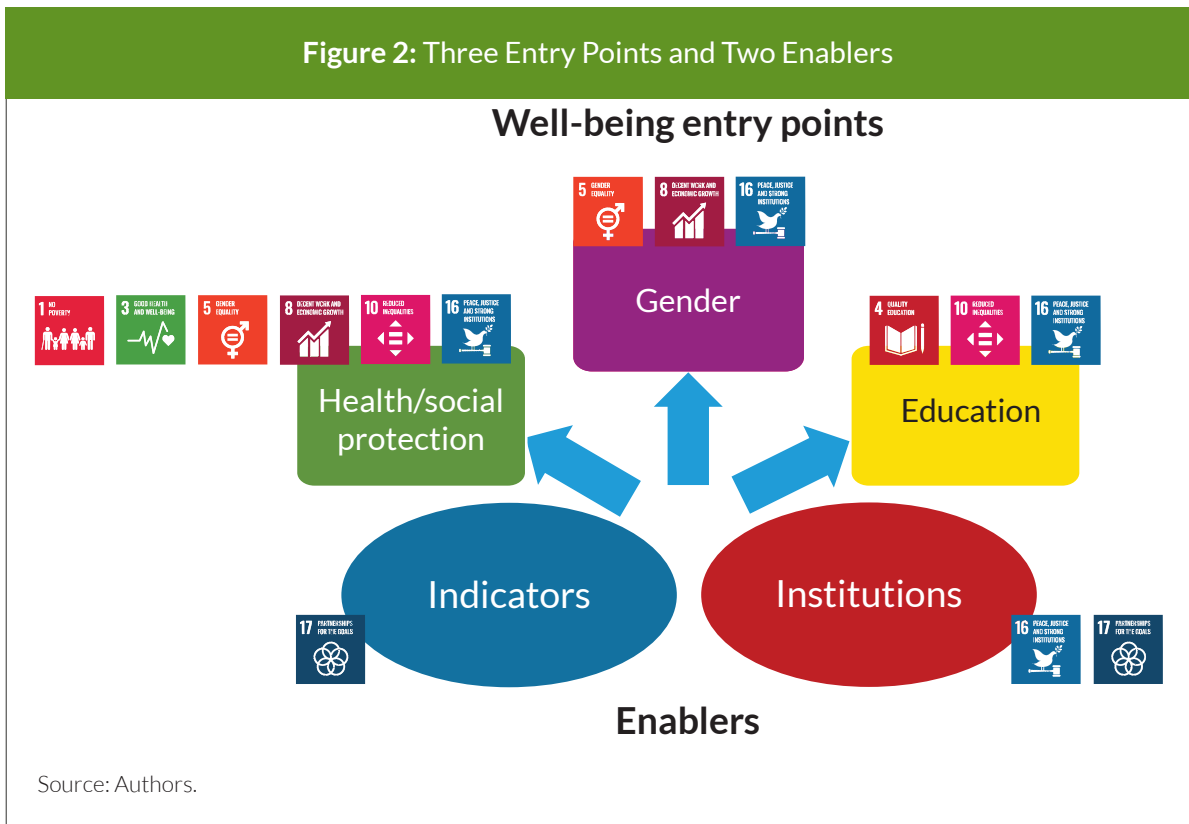
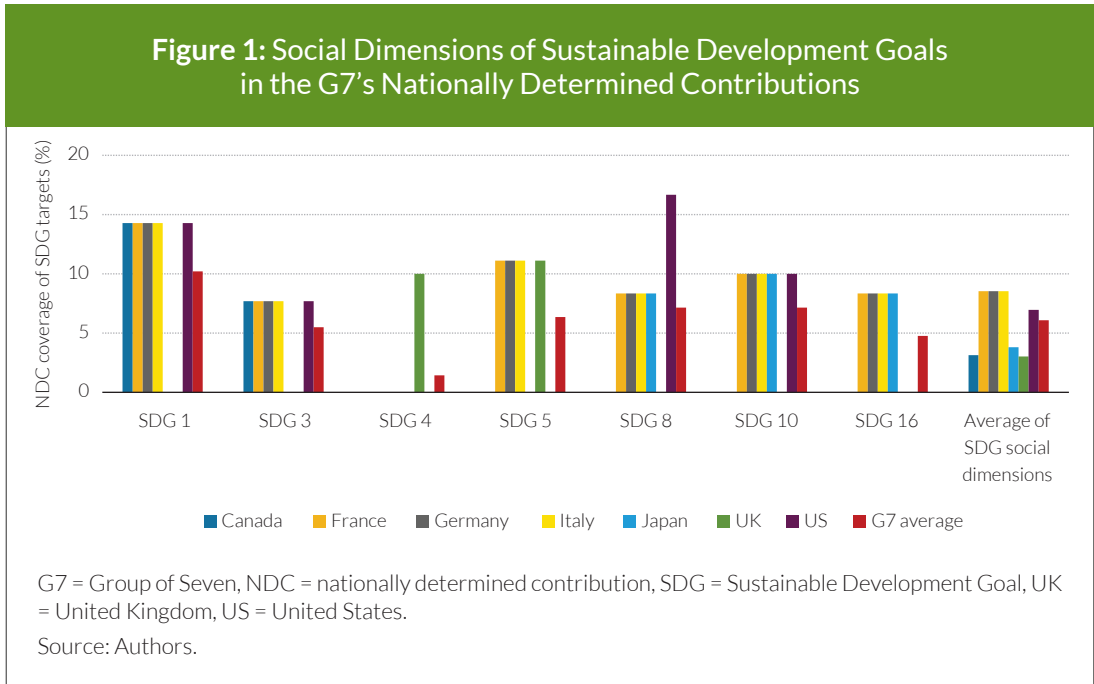
and ultimately strengthen the implementation of those actions. In addition, a fuller accounting of these benefits and stakeholder interests can bring down the costs of climate actions and broaden the range of mitigation and adaptation options available to decision makers. A truly sustainable climate strategy therefore needs to explicitly factor in social benefits and impacts.

An encouraging sign is the growing recognition of these benefits and impacts. This is evident in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement. Both milestone agreements are founded on principles of integration and include language supporting leveraging synergies between climate and other sustainable development objectives. It is also apparent in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). The recently released IPCC sixth assessment report underlines the critical role of well-being in climate actions (IPCC 2022b). The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has also been a supporter of action in this area. Recent OECD publications call for shifting the focus of climate policy from economic and technical challenges to people and societal well-being (OECD 2019). Further, some countries are beginning to consider provisions for just transitions that can help limit lost jobs with shifts in energy structures and industries (e.g., the Green New Deal Resolution in the United States and the Green Deal in the European Union).

But while there is growing support from key organizations and some national-level examples, mainstreaming societal well-being into climate actions is still not widely practiced. This is evidenced by a review of the G7's nationally determined contributions (NDCs), which finds that the level of SDG integration is low in general and exceedingly limited for the social dimensions of SDGs in particular. G7 NDCs, on average, covered only 6% of the targets under SDG 1 (poverty), SDG 3 (health), SDG 4 (education), and SDG 5 (gender). Further, only one education-related target was included in the NDC of one country, while several G7 NDCs failed to include measures related to gender equality (see Figure 1).

The lack of integration between climate and social dimensions raises a key question: How can G7 countries bring societal well-being to the core of their climate strategies? This policy brief seeks to answer that question by recommending three entry points and two enabling reforms that can assist G7 countries with such integration. The first entry point aims at strengthening synergies between climate actions and social protection and health outcomes (Section 2.1). The second entry point concentrates on interactions between climate change and education (Section 2.2). The third entry point focuses on gender and empowering women to participate in the implementation of climate actions (Section 2.3). The three entry points provided in this policy brief are illustrative; they do not present an exhaustive list of interventions that can capitalize on links between climate and well-being. Other issues such as jobs and decent work are clearly important but are covered in studies on just transitions (e.g., OECD 2019). This brief intentionally focuses on entry points that have received less attention in previous studies.

The brief is also unique in that it argues that it is not enough to recommend interventions falling under the aforementioned entry points. The brief further suggests that the successful and widescale implementation of those actions needs to be supported by two sets of enabling reforms. The first of those reforms is shifting to a well-being-based measurement and policy system beyond gross domestic product (GDP) (Section 3.1). The second is a suite of institutional and fiscal reforms that can align the interests of government agencies and different social groups behind the brief's recommendations (Section 3.2). The brief's recommendations are illustrated in Figure 2, which follows suggestions to use the SDGs as an integrative framework to demonstrate linkages between climate and other development priorities (Elder 2022).



Entry Points for Mainstreaming Societal Well-Being into Climate Actions

Social Protection and Health (Sustainable Development Goals 1, 3, 5, 8, 10, and 16)

Climate change is a threat multiplier that can undermine several dimensions of well-being and make poverty eradication more difficult. One of the dimensions where this is most evident is human health. A warmer climate can lead to the spread of diseases, causing premature death and illness while impairing mental health (CDC n.d.). Unfortunately, the effects do not end with these immediate health impacts. Climate change can also aggravate food shortages and increase the prevalence of malnutrition with carryover effects on health. Perhaps most worrying is that the poor and vulnerable face the greatest risks to their health and well-being—an issue underlined during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. In the short-to-medium term, mitigating the vulnerability of populations and improving their adaptive capacity to climate change will reduce the health impacts of climate change. In the long term, only transformative action can reduce heat-trapping emissions, avoid breaching dangerous temperature thresholds, and, ultimately, protect health.

A related concern involves social protection, especially for the poor and vulnerable. To improve the adaptive capacity of the poor and vulnerable and help manage climate and disaster risks, investments in social expenditures and protections are imperative (IFRC 2020). For instance, social protection—when integrated with food security, basic services (water, sanitation), and health—can shift the emphasis from providing emergency assistance to investing in disaster preparedness and adaptation while also building resilience and generating additional benefits (Narayanan, Naraparaju, and Gerber 2019). Moreover, ensuring well-designed social protection features in climate change policies and programs can—much like many other interventions recommended in the brief—be beneficial for other SDGs.

To some degree, the G7 countries seem aware of the links between health, social protection, and climate. The 2022 G7 Communiqué stressed the importance of social protection for addressing climate change (G7 Secretariat 2022). Further, G7 members have experience with different measures that can enhance social protections (i.e., direct cash benefits, provision of goods and services, and socially oriented tax breaks), and their expenditures in these areas often account for above 20% of GDP (OECD n.d.). The remaining challenge is how to leverage these social protection investments so as to ensure that they can also help with climate mitigation and adaptation. There is also some progress in developing countries in this regard. To illustrate, India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) provides employment while increasing the adaptability of rural communities to climate risks through improving rural infrastructure (Subha 2019). Additional resources are needed to help scale up and spread successful examples like MGNREGA.

On the other hand, it is important to recognize that some climate actions focusing on large-scale energy transitions, technological innovation, and land-use changes can have effects that may adversely affect vulnerable groups. Social protection programs—linked with livelihood diversification, employment guarantees, and skills development initiatives—can contribute to a

just, equitable, and inclusive transition that limits these effects. Nevertheless, although examples of links between social protection schemes and climate change are increasing, additional coordination will be needed to bring them to scale.

It is therefore clear that the G7 can do more to promote a scalable and coordinated approach to mainstreaming social protection into climate policies and strategies. The G7 should:

- Promote the alignment of financial flows (such as reserve funds, insurance and catastrophe bonds, regional risk-sharing funds, and emergency credits) with climate adaptation and social protection objectives, with a sharper focus on low-income segments of the population.
- Support multi-stakeholder partnerships to implement adaptive social protection at scale by employing well-being-based indicators for assessing the costs and benefits for climate, health, and poverty reduction (Sections 3.1 and 3.2).
- Support the integration between climate and social protection in developing countries, as well as the integration between health, climate, and social protection in official development assistance (ODA) flows or climate finance programs.
- Support a financial mechanism that addresses climate crises and global health while also strengthening existing policies and treaties to make global health governance climate responsive and resilient.

Quality Education for All (Sustainable Development Goals 4, 10, and 16)

The contributions education makes to societal well-being are well documented. Education can lift people out of poverty, help secure fair wages, and maintain physical and mental health. Education can also transmit the knowledge, culture, and values needed for a sustainable future. The ways that climate change disrupts education are also well-documented. Climate-related disasters can destroy schools, learning materials, and equipment; bring down attendance rates; and prevent the continuation of education (when schools are used for emergency shelters). More troubling is that climate-displaced persons often face administrative and linguistic barriers, xenophobia, and sometimes violence and trauma that heighten their climate risks. In consequence, not only does climate change undermine gains from education, but it also widens educational inequalities (UNESCO n.d.-b).

A long-term and fundamental strategy to address these impacts is to reduce emissions and associated climate changes. ESD can support those reductions. ESD helps people understand and respond to climate change impacts while providing the knowledge and raising the awareness needed to take climate actions. On the other hand, countries will need to take preventive measures to make education systems resilient to climate hazards and disasters. These preventive measures require careful planning and financing to anticipate risks and respond to the educational needs of children and adults—and give special consideration to the displaced and vulnerable. They also require strengthening synergies across disaster risk reduction policy, education policy, and climate change/environmental policy. Finally, they necessitate strengthening regional and international cooperation, as well as increasing funding.

Beyond making educational systems more resilient, countries will also need to implement specific interventions for displaced populations. In this effort, countries may pass legislation ensuring the

right to education for all and removing barriers to educational access. Countries could provide guarantees on access to education for climate displaced persons who belong to legally protected groups. Measures aimed at removing financial barriers—ranging from flexible school calendars and systems tracking progression to accelerated learning programs with considerations of gender, language, ethnicity, race, disabilities, health, socioeconomic status, and other characteristics—could also prove helpful.

While many of the above suggestions concentrate on limiting climate impacts, others aim to make educational systems climate transformative. Some options that can help countries move in that transformative direction include (i) making schools and education institutions environmentally sustainable (greening schools); (ii) integrating climate actions into curricula (greening learning); (iii) capacitating teachers and school leaders to integrate climate education into teaching (greening capacity and readiness); and (iv) mobilizing communities to provide learning opportunities outside formal education, with a view toward fostering community resilience and tackling climate change (greening communities). As leading global economies, the G7 can play a significant role in protecting future generations by ensuring equal access to quality education. Recommended interventions include:

- Send a clear and collective signal to the existing SDG 4 Global Education Cooperation Mechanism (UNESCO n.d.-a) to review the progress and identify strategic priority areas for global education targets to ensure that the education system is climate resilient and climate transformative.
- Advocate for the integration of “right to education” in climate change adaptation policies and disaster risk reduction policies, and concrete measures aimed at ensuring the integration of climate change victims into education and learning systems.
- Ensure the integration of climate actions in national education systems and ESD and support low- and lower-middle-income countries’ commitments to greening education (UNESCO 2023).
- Create a platform among the G7 and other countries to share data, evidence, experiences, and best practices that build required governance, and standardize legislation, policy, and financial frameworks for protecting education against climate change at multiple levels.

Gender Equality (Sustainable Development Goals 5, 8, and 16)

Putting gender equality at the heart of climate action is essential to a just low-carbon transition. Making gender central to these efforts is critical since climate change effects are not gender neutral. By amplifying existing inequalities, climate change threatens to leave women further behind. This is partially because women are among the groups most vulnerable to direct climate impacts such as warmer temperatures and extreme weather. It is also because climate change has second-order effects on employment, health, safety, livelihoods, and resource use. In fact, many of these first- and second-order effects are often related through complex sets of interactions that put women and marginalized groups at greater risk (UNFCCC 2022).

As with all of the areas covered in this brief, mitigating climate change is essential to reduce climate-induced gender inequality. But building the resilience of women to climate change is also important. While some steps to address gender inequality will be good for the climate generally, more targeted efforts are needed to leverage synergies specifically. Several specific examples

underline the benefits from working at the intersection of climate and gender. For instance, working with women to switch to renewable energy for cooking and lighting can deliver climate and health benefits. Women can also influence consumption decisions that can serve to reduce carbon footprints or build community resilience. In both cases, recognizing that women are not passive victims but active contributors to climate solutions is imperative. Bringing women into those solutions will often involve empowering and equipping women with the needed resources, knowledge, and skills to contribute to climate solutions.

The G7 and other countries can take actions to make climate policies more gender responsive. For instance, the G7 should take the lead in implementing the Gender Action Plan of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and promote gender-responsive policies in G7 countries and beyond. The Lima Work Program on Gender and the Gender Action Plan aimed to ensure gender balance in all UNFCCC decision-making processes and promote gender-responsive climate policies at the national level. However, mainstreaming of gender into national actions has not been achieved in many countries, including the G7. For example, only four countries (including three countries covered by the European Union's NDCs) included gender-related measures in their NDCs, while the other three members of the G7 did not reflect gender-specific actions.

To some extent, reducing vulnerability requires addressing the root causes of these inequities and targeting systemic gender equality. Recognizing that gender equality is a fundamental human right and is a necessary precondition for sustainable development will indeed often build resilience to a variety of climate impacts (Ferrant and Kolev 2016). There are also steps that can take place outside the context of climate policies—for instance, aligning actions on climate, gender, and fiscal and financing instruments (such as revenue collection and social protection). “For government revenue collection, gender balance is often neglected as a policy rationale” (Rigoni and Stracquadaini 2022). Tax provisions should not only prevent explicit disadvantages to women but also correct gender differences or help reduce women's vulnerability to shocks, including climate hazards. Further, these policies are not specifically focused on climate change but could have implications for climate change.

There are additional steps that the G7 can take at the international level to limit the potential adverse impacts of climate change in developing countries. For example, the G7 can place greater efforts on supporting aid programs, including adaptive social protection programs. Helping women gain access to opportunities for career development and full participation and leadership could also be useful. Expanding opportunities for leadership and participation is key because “increased participation of women in the formal economy resulting from shifts in gender norms is one way of reducing their vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change” (UNFCCC 2022: 9). A similarly motivated yet narrower set of measures involves explicit gender-differentiated measures, such as gender-based taxation. Changes to taxing policies can reduce the gender pay gap. Combined with other gender-sensitive measures to improve women's working conditions, these changes will make women stronger and more able to face climate change and its consequences.

Beyond the steps outlined above, other proposals the G7 could consider include the following:

- Increase women's education, jobs, and economic participation in low-carbon industries.
- Obtain sex-disaggregated data to better understand gender-differentiated impacts of climate change and support gender-responsive policies and implementation.

- Invest in the care sector and provide equal access to care leave for both women and men, promote flexible work entitlements for everyone, and increase women in leadership and management roles.
- Empower women as economic actors by improving their working conditions and well-being with measures such as gender-responsive taxation¹ to reduce the gender pay gap in ways that can safeguard against climate impacts.

Enabling Reforms to Mainstream Societal Well-Being into Climate Policies

Well-Being–Based Measurement (Sustainable Development Goal 17)

The previous section recommended interventions that could serve as entry points to leverage synergies and limit trade-offs between climate change and those different dimensions. Effectively implementing these interventions requires indicators that assess progress based on more than conventional measures of economic development (such as GDP). Rather, it necessitates indicators that move beyond GDP to truly capture societal well-being, indicators that are aligned with the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Some G7 and other countries have already taken steps to measure multiple dimensions of well-being.² However, the creation of a few national well-being frameworks does not guarantee their widespread or regular use in policy making. The SDGs also serve as a comprehensive set of indicators to measure progress. However, their sheer number and disjointed nature may make them impractical for integrated measurement and policy use. What is needed are multidimensional well-being measures, comprising a comprehensive yet concise set of indicators aligned with existing national frameworks, the SDGs, and the Paris Agreement.

Alongside such measures, a global forum for exchanges on new conceptions and measures of prosperity should be established. Such a forum could enable decision makers to share expertise and experiences about, for instance, how targeted policies and budgeting can contribute to, and be aligned with, well-being; evidence-based exchanges can also provide valuable insights into the interrelationships between climate change and different dimensions of well-being. By shedding light on those interrelationships, such a forum could help break sectoral silos and focus resources on high-leverage interventions with co-benefits for climate and societal well-being. The establishment of a visible, high-level global forum will also guarantee commitment to the regular measurement of well-being. The G7 should accomplish this by seeking partnerships among high-

¹ Other measures might include, inter alia, allowing women special leave, tax deductions, or particular payments to ease the access to the care and feeding of babies or special deductions and a reduced rate to compensate for the gender pay gap.

² Italy and France, for example, amended their budget laws to enable parliaments to incorporate national well-being reports into discussions of draft budgets. The United Kingdom introduced a well-being–based cost-benefit analysis tool for policy analyses. Canada launched the Quality of Life Framework to inform evidence-based budget allocation and policy making (Department of Finance Canada 2021; Brandt, Exton, and Fleischer 2022).

level policy makers, government officials at all levels, national statistical offices, international organizations, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector.³

The G7 should take a leading role in the establishment of the proposed forum. Furthermore, the G7 should demonstrate leadership by beginning to systematically measure progress through a concise set of multidimensional indicators that cover (i) societal well-being, (ii) economic well-being, and (iii) environmental sustainability.⁴ Such measures should be sensitive to distributional issues in order to allow policy makers to prioritize those who are being left behind and thus reduce inequalities. This measuring would also have the added benefit of creating the robust evidence base needed for a just transition. It would further help rebalance priorities for sustainable development pathways within planetary boundaries.⁵

Concretely, the brief recommends that the G7 create a global forum for exchanges on post-GDP prosperity measurement and policy making, inviting G7 countries and others to share and learn from experiences. Furthermore, this global forum should:⁶

- Advance the establishment of an internationally comparable, harmonized, small set of indicators that measure multidimensional well-being comprehensively and is closely integrated into climate policy making.
- Promote investment in data collection to measure the multiple dimensions of well-being and their distribution at a maximally granular level.
- Use the measures to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular its pledge to leave no one behind—both within and across generations.
- Apply this new data and evidence-base to unite the international community around concrete policies to achieve social, economic, and environmental well-being—toward but also beyond 2030.

Institutional and Fiscal Reforms (Sustainable Development Goals 16 and 17)

Making well-being more central to climate actions can help limit trade-offs and leverage synergies between climate change and gender equity, health, education, and social protection objectives. However, mainstreaming many of these social concerns into climate planning will not happen in a vacuum. Rather, it requires institutional and fiscal reforms that support sectoral integration and social inclusion. This section begins by suggesting institutional and fiscal reforms that the

³ Such a forum could build on existing, similarly minded international initiatives, including the Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN 2023).

⁴ To do so, the G7 can build on existing frameworks, such as the Recoupling Dashboard. The Recoupling Dashboard is a country-specific research tool to measure the well-being along four dimensions: agency, solidarity, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability (Global Solutions Initiative n.d.).

⁵ Planetary boundaries refer to a framework that describes limits to the impacts of human activities on the Earth system. Beyond these limits, the environment may no longer be able to self-regulate. This would mean the Earth system would leave the period of stability of the Holocene epoch, in which human society developed.

⁶ Based on the recommendations of the 2022 T7 Task Force on Social Cohesion, Economic Transformation and Open Societies Policy Brief (Dirksen, Lima de Miranda, and Wike 2022).

G7 should adopt domestically to enable sectoral integration and social inclusion. It also argues for more funding in technical assistance to similarly motivated institutional and fiscal reforms in international climate assistance programs.

The first set of institutional reforms focuses on horizontal integration. To narrow divides between climate and social policies, G7 countries should address the root cause of incoherence: lack of institutional coordination. This can be achieved by adopting or strengthening interagency climate coordination mechanisms between environmental agencies and agencies with gender, social welfare, education, and other administrative portfolios. Such efforts should aim to ensure relevant agencies have not only a seat at the table but a meaningful opportunity to influence decisions (Peters 1998, 2018). Resistance to this kind of cooperation can be eased with regular staffing exchanges across agencies with environmental and social remits.

A second, related set of recommendations consists of regulatory reviews that emphasize the social dimensions of climate policies. This might involve, for instance, greater use of measures based on the social impacts of carbon. A similarly motivated effort would involve looking at disaggregated impacts of climate policies on jobs created for women, men, and different age groups (Lander Svendsen et al. 2022). While governments often downplay the results of environmental impact assessments, a greater emphasis on affected stakeholders can make these analyses more politically salient and difficult to ignore.

A third set of reforms that can potentially strengthen integration involves fiscal and budgeting reforms. To help align the climate and social concerns, the G7 should adopt “green” multi-objective public budgeting (Bova 2021). This kind of budgeting can demonstrate the impacts of climate spending on education, or vice versa; it can in turn encourage policy makers to work together on shared objectives.

A fourth set of fiscal reforms that the G7 countries should support to strengthen this alignment is making resource transfers for green sectors that also support social concerns. For example, governments can invest in job training programs for women and youth in climate-sensitive sectors (Williams et al. 2021). A similar set of fiscal reforms centers on favorable tax policies for businesses that attract underrepresented social groups to work in green industries (Kouam and Asongu 2022). Beyond reforms focusing on jobs, G7 countries should also increase funding for sustainable lifelong learning and climate-related social experiments that target young people.

A fifth set of recommendations concentrates on bottom-up participation. For this recommendation, there are many options that G7 countries could consider. One such option could be adoption of gender quotas in climate decision-making bodies (Hannah et al. 2021). The establishment of what some have termed mini-public deliberative fora that engage different social groups in decisions on climate change may also have merit (Fishkin 2009). These fora could be implemented through the spread of local climate assemblies that make efforts to ensure equal representation of key social groups. A particular emphasis for these participatory reforms should be placed on including younger people in these processes; future generations are increasingly recognized as a positive force for change but may lack access to formal channels (Arnold, Cohen, and Warner 2009; Browne, Barry, and Bialeschki 2011; Han and Ahn 2020). Many of the recommended reforms could also prove useful at the local level since subnational governments are often more flexible and innovative in crafting climate solutions (Betsill and Bulkeley 2006).

While many of the recommendations are aimed at reforming national institutions in G7 countries, they also apply to international climate support programs. It will be increasingly important that these support programs increase technical assistance for many of the same institutional and fiscal reforms that mainstream gender, health, and education into climate actions. Similarly, it will be useful if G7 countries promote similar reforms in international and regional development institutions.

Relevance to the G7 and Concluding Thoughts

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement signal the world's collective commitment to address global crises and realize a sustainable future for all. Achieving the targets set out by the SDGs and the Paris Agreement represents an enormous undertaking. This will also become more challenging if efforts to work on climate change result in trade-offs for the SDGs. On the other hand, efforts that explicitly aim to capture synergies across the SDGs and climate agendas could generate win-win outcomes that reduce costs, increase effectiveness, and narrow inequities. It is, hence, critical for policy makers to leverage these synergies and limit trade-offs across the SDGs and climate agendas.

This policy brief takes the synergies and trade-off arguments one step further: it calls for G7 countries to increase efforts to place societal and sustainable well-being at the heart of their climate strategies. The brief further highlights three entry points and two enabling reforms that can support the development and implementation of climate strategies with societal well-being at their core. The three entry points focus on interventions that make connections between climate and social protection, health, gender, and education. The two enabling reforms involve adopting multidimensional well-being indicators as policy yardstick indicators of social progress and establishing institutions that help governments and other stakeholders forge linkages across climate and key social concerns.

As the world's leading economies, the G7 should take the lead in promoting the brief's main recommendations. The recommendations are summarized in Table 1. In addition to providing an overview of the recommendations for the three entry points and two enabling reforms, the table further underlines that some of the recommendations are intended chiefly for national climate change policies, while others are meant more for international climate support programs. The recommendations underlined are likely to be applicable to both national climate policies and international support programs. In addition, the recommended reforms are likely to generate the most significant impacts if they are adopted together, as part of a larger package of reforms, which, in turn, can catalyze a wider range of efforts to bring societal well-being to the center of climate strategies.

This proposed broader push and larger package would also include interventions that focus on other dimensions of societal well-being that are not featured in this policy brief. These interventions could include highlighting the aforementioned linkages to job loss as part of just transitions; they could also entail making more direct connections to mental health as well as sustainable livelihoods under SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production). The packaging of these reforms might also draw more attention to the fact—highlighted to a modest extent in this policy brief (see discussion of gender-differentiated taxation, for instance)—that some of the most effective climate strategies are primarily health, social protection, education, and gender equity policies. For instance, policies aimed at making affordable health care available to the poorest

segments of society will help build resilience to many risks, including those related to climate change. In addition, policies that emphasize societal well-being as a starting point have the virtue of tackling some of the underlying sources of vulnerability, addressing these issues before they become larger problems. An inclusive, bottom-up participatory approach that engages potentially marginalized stakeholders in the G7 and other countries can help guide the selection of other recommendations with a similar intent.

The suggestion to think broadly about a package of reforms leads to a concluding point. This brief began with the contention that climate change poses an existential threat to the health of the planet and its people. This claim suggests an important interrelationship between planetary and societal well-being. It also underlines the need for a group of countries like the G7 to reflect those interconnections in their national policies and international support programs. The brief offers G7 countries a set of interventions on entry points and enabling reforms that can help convert those well-intentioned sentiments into concrete actions.

Table 1: Summary of Policy Recommendations

		National Climate Policies	International Climate Support Programs
Entry Points	Social protection/health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote the alignment of financial flows (such as reserve funds, insurance and catastrophe bonds, regional risk-sharing funds, and emergency credits) with climate adaptation and social protection objectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a financial mechanism that addresses climate crises and global health while also strengthening existing policies and treaties to make global health governance climate-responsive and resilient. Support the integration between climate, health, and social protection in developing countries, as well as in official development assistance flows or climate finance programs. Support multi-stakeholder partnerships to implement adaptive social protection at scale by employing well-being-based indicators for assessing the costs and benefits for climate, health, and poverty reduction.
	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Adopt measures to ensure that education becomes climate resilient and climate transformative.</u> <u>Adopt measures aimed at ensuring the integration of climate change victims into education and learning systems.</u> <u>Adopt measures to remove financial barriers, consider flexible school calendars, develop systems to track progression and accelerated learning programs, and invest in initial and ongoing teacher training in climate vulnerable areas.</u> Capacitate teachers and school leaders to integrate climate education into teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the integration of climate actions in national education systems and support low- and lower-middle-income countries' commitments to greening education. Advocate for the integration of "right to education" in climate change/ environmental and disaster risk reduction policies. Provide technical assistance and capacity development to ensure inclusion and right to education of climate affected populations in national education systems.

continued on next page

Table 1 *continued*

		National Climate Policies	International Climate Support Programs	
Entry Points	Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support programs that increase women’s participation in low-carbon industries. • Invest in the care sector and provide equal access to care leave for both women and men, promote flexible work entitlements for everyone, and increase women in leadership and management roles. • Empower women by improving their working conditions and well-being with measures such as gender-responsive taxation to reduce the gender pay gap in ways that can safeguard against climate impacts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support for gender-responsive climate policies and implementation. • Promote the gathering of sex-disaggregated data to understand gender-differentiated climate impacts in international support programs. 	
	Enabling Reforms	Well-being-based measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Advance the establishment of an internationally comparable, harmonized, small set of indicators that measure multidimensional well-being comprehensively and is closely integrated into climate policy making.</u> • <u>Apply this new data and evidence-base to unite the international community around concrete policies to achieve social, economic, and environmental well-being—towards but also beyond 2030.</u> • Promote investment in data collection to measure the multiple dimensions of well-being and their distribution at a maximally granular level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Create a global forum for exchanges on post-GDP prosperity measurement and policy making, inviting G7 countries and others to share and learn from experiences.</u> • Use the measures to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and in particular its pledge to leave no one behind—both within and across generations.
		Institutional and fiscal reforms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include ministries of social affairs, health, and education in climate coordination mechanisms. • Support resource transfers and tax incentives for socially oriented climate actions. • Create deliberative fora that allow women, youth, and other stakeholders to influence climate policies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase technical assistance for institutional and fiscal reforms that mainstream gender, health, and education into climate actions.

GDP = gross domestic product, G7 = Group of Seven.

Note: Underlined text indicates that the recommendation applies to both national policies and international support programs.

Source: Authors.

References

- Arnold, H. E., F. G. Cohen, and A. Warner. 2009. Youth and Environmental Action: Perspectives of Young Environmental Leaders on Their Formative Influences. *Journal of Environmental Education* 40(9): 27–36.
- Betsill, M., and H. Bulkeley. 2006. Cities and the Multilevel Governance of Global Climate Change. *Global Governance* 12(2): 141–159.
- Bova, E. 2021. Green Budgeting Practices in the EU: A First Review. Discussion Paper 140. Brussels: European Commission.
- Brandt, N., C. Exton, and L. Fleischer. 2022. *Well-Being at the Heart of Policy. Lessons from National Initiatives Around the OECD*. Basic Papers 1. Forum New Economy.
- Browne, L.P., A.G. Barry, and M.D. Bialeschki. 2011. Engaging Youth in Environmental Sustainability: Impact of the Camp 2 Grow Program. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration* 29(3): 70–85.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). n.d. Climate Effects on Health. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/default.htm> (accessed 1 March 2023).
- Department of Finance Canada. 2021. Toward a Quality of Life Strategy for Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/fin/publications/mwmtqlsc-mqivsqvc/mwmtqlsc-mqivsqvc-en.pdf>
- Dirksen, J., K. Lima de Miranda, and R. Wike. 2022. Towards Economic and Social Prosperity Measurement Beyond GDP. T7 Task Force Social Cohesion, Economic Transformation and Open Societies Policy Brief. 25 April 2022. https://www.think7.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Cohesion_Towards-Economic-and-Social-Prosperity-Measurement-Beyond-GDP_Jakob-Dirksen_Katharina-Lima-de-Miranda_Richard-Wike.pdf (accessed 15 March 2023).
- Elder, M. 2022. Using the SDGs to Realize the G7’s “Green Revolution that Creates Jobs.” T7 Task Force Climate and Environment Policy Brief. 26 April. <https://www.think7.org/publication/strengthening-the-g7s-green-revolution-that-creates-jobs-through-the-sdgs-and-expanded-monitoring/> (accessed 22 March 2023).
- Ferrant, G., and A. Kolev. 2016. Does Gender Discrimination in Social Institutions Matter for Long-Term Growth? Cross-Country Evidence. Working Paper No. 330. Paris: OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/does-gender-discrimination-in-social-institutions-matter-for-long-term-growth_5jm2hz8dgl6-en
- Fishkin, J. 2009. *When the People Speak: Deliberative Democracy and Public Consultation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- G7 Secretariat. 2022. G7 Leaders’ Communiqué 2022. Elmau.
- Global Solutions Initiative. n.d. Recoupling Dashboard. Berlin: Global Solutions Initiative. <https://www.global-solutions-initiative.org/recoupling-dashboard-homepage/> (accessed: 7 March 2023).
- Han, H., and S. W. Ahn. 2020. Youth Mobilization to Stop Global Climate Change: Narratives and Impact. *Sustainability* 34(4): 2–12.

- Hannah, C., S. Giroux, N. Krell, S. Lopus, L. E. McCann, A. Zimmer, K. K. Caylor, and T. P. Evans. 2021. Has the Vision of a Gender Quota Rule Been Realized for Community-Based Water Management Committees in Kenya? *World Development* 137: 105154. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2020.105154>
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). 2020. *World Disasters Report 2020 Tackling the Humanitarian Impacts of the Climate Crisis Together*. Geneva: IFRC. https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-05/20201116_WorldDisasters_Full.pdf
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). 2022a. *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Cambridge, United Kingdom, and New York, NY, United States: Cambridge University Press.
- _____. 2022b. *Mitigation of Climate Change Climate Change 2022 Working Group III contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change*. Geneva: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
- Kouam, J. C., and S. A. Asongu. 2022. Effects of Taxation on Social Innovation and Implications for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals in Developing Countries: A Literature Review. *International Journal of Innovation Studies* 6(4): 259–275. <https://doi.org/10.1016/J.IJIS.2022.08.002>
- Lander Svendsen, N., K. Weber, G. Factor, and L. Winther Engelsbak. 2022. *How Climate Policies Impact Gender and Vice Versa in the Nordic Countries*. Copenhagen: Nordisk Ministerråd.
- Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN). 2023. About Us. MPPN. <https://mppn.org/about-us/mppn-en/>
- Narayanan, S., K. Naraparaju, and N. Gerber. 2019. Synergies in Social Protection: Impacts of India's MGNREGA and Public Distribution System on the Health and Nutrition of Women and Children. *SSRN Electronic Journal* [Preprint]. <https://doi.org/10.2139/SSRN.3513358>
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). 2019. Accelerating Climate Action : Refocusing Policies through a Well-being Lens. In *Accelerating Climate Action*. Paris: OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/2F4C8C9A-EN>
- _____. n.d. *OECD Data: Social Spending*. OECD (Society at a Glance). <https://doi.org/10.1787/19991290>.
- Peters, B. G. 1998. Managing Horizontal Government: The Politics of Co-Ordination. *Public Administration* 76(2): 295–311. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9299.00102>
- _____. 2018. The Challenge of Policy Coordination. *Policy Design and Practice*. 1(1): 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1080/25741292.2018.1437946>
- Rigoni, G., and J. A. Stracquadaini. 2022. Fiscal Policies for Gender Equality. *Journal of Infrastructure Policy and Management* 5(1): 23–29. <https://doi.org/10.35166/jipm.501.0022>
- Subha, A. B. 2019. MGNREGA-Climate Change and Adaptation: Sikkim. *SSRN Electronic Journal*.
- UNESCO. 2023. Greening Education Partnership. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. <https://www.unesco.org/en/education-sustainable-development/greening-future>
- _____. n.d.-a. Global Education Cooperation Mechanism. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. <https://www.sdg4education2030.org/> (accessed 7 March 2023).

_____. n.d.-b. How Climate Change and Displacement Affect the Right to Education. Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. <https://www.unesco.org/en/right-education/climate-change-displacement> (accessed 7 March 2023).

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). 2022. Dimensions and Examples of the Gender-Differentiated Impacts of Climate Change, the Role of Women as Agents of Change and Opportunities for Women. Bonn: United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. <https://unfccc.int/documents/494455>

Williams, J., K. Alexander, T. Wilson, B. Newton, C. McNeil, and C. Jung. 2021. *A Better Future: Transforming Jobs and Skills for Young People Post-Pandemic*. Brighton, United Kingdom. Institute for Employment Studies. <https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/resource/better-future-transforming-jobs-and-skills-young-people-post-pandemic> (accessed 30 March 2023).

About Think7

Think7 (T7) is the official think tank engagement group of the Group of 7 (G7). It provides research-based policy recommendations for G7 countries and partners. The Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) is the lead chair of T7 under Japan's 2023 G7 presidency.