Stories of Resilience

Lessons from Local Adaptation Practice

2024

GLOBAL CENTER ON ADAPTATION

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Preface

Dr. Patrick Verkooijen

Welcome to the 2024 edition of *Stories of Resilience: Lessons from Local Adaptation Practice*, where we are partnering once again with community leaders and LLA practitioners to showcase their work in building local adaptation solutions across challenging contexts.

Over the three years of *Stories of Resilience*, we have assembled a body of work which provides the crucial evidence of the power of local communities in the fight against climate change. What is fundamental to both the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation and this report is that people are at the heart of the story. For that reason, *Stories of Resilience* is an essential publication for recounting and amplifying the inspiring stories of the people at the center of local adaptation action.

Stories are a compelling way to connect people, and to find commonality, especially when our day-to-day realities differ. Without them, how else are we to comprehend the profound impact of climate change on the lives of people without the buffer of food and income security, protective housing, and reliable public services?

As the Global Center on Adaptation's (GCA) work on the ground sinks roots and flourishes, I have been privileged to hear many of these stories first-hand this year, and to draw inspiration from them to continue doing what I am most passionate about: empowering vulnerable communities to take the action they need to, not just to keep safe, but also to thrive despite our increasingly unstable and hazardous climate.

Among these encounters was a tour of Chattogram, a coastal city in Bangladesh, where GCA is supporting the climate-vulnerable residents of informal settlements to develop People's Adaptation Plans while linking them to investments by the World Bank under the model of our flagship Adaptation Acceleration Program, first pioneered with African leaders, the African Union and the African Development Bank in Africa.

The women of Chattogram welcomed me into their homes and told me how, despite being surrounded by water which regularly invades their homes, they must struggle each day to find enough clean water for their basic needs. Sea-level rise brought about by climate change has caused salinity to creep into the rivers and into the groundwater, forcing households in informal settlements to buy bottled water – at up to six times the price paid for clean water by neighbors who are formal residents of the city. Those who cannot afford to pay these elevated prices suffer from hypertension, pre-eclampsia, and skin disease caused by relying on saline water. The injustice is staggering. Poor communities are paying an extremely high price, shouldering most of the risks for a problem that is not of their creation.

GCA is supporting the residents of 125 informal settlements in Chattogram to profile climate risks, and 25 of the most vulnerable informal settlements to produce People's Adaptation Plans.

This year I also returned to Mukuru, an informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya. Residents previously told me how their hard-won gains in getting drains and sanitation systems built through a People's Planning Process were being squandered because of the lack of waste management services. Rubbish, thrown into drains and the Ngong river that flows through the settlement, was causing flooding, polluting a precious water source, and increasing the risk of water and vector-borne diseases. They had identified black soldier fly (BSF) farming as a way of dealing with organic waste, which makes up most of the waste in the settlement. But they needed the support to begin to solve the problem on their own, a call which GCA responded to with our Center's support for 10 BSF units. Exactly a year later, it was more than gratifying to be back in Mukuru to inaugurate the BSF units, and to meet the 100 young people from Mukuru who were graduating from nationally certified training in BSF farming and business management to run the units.

To me, it underlined once again the immense potential of adaptation jobs in contributing to climate resilience and sustainability, reviving local economies, and cashing in on the youth dividend. For this to happen, however, the global community must now move much faster. Slow, incremental progress in climate finance delivery to frontline communities risks lives and compounds pre-existing hardships. It's also a missed opportunity for safeguarding and boosting development progress.

I therefore urge global leaders to prioritize increasing both the quantity and quality of climate finance, and to make sure it reaches and targets the needs of the most vulnerable. GCA is supporting communities to enrich their understanding of how climate change affects their lives, and to lead in developing and prioritizing solutions in People's Adaptation Plans. I urge global leaders to get behind these Plans, and in doing so support what communities themselves are now identifying as their most pressing requirements.

It is time to flip top-down approaches and put communities in the lead, with national governments and the global community playing a crucial supportive role. Putting local communities first, in the driving seat, should be at the core of our adaptation mission. And I am confident that when you read these inspiring stories of resilience you will discover the good sense behind this vital work and connect with the amazing people who are making it happen for themselves.

Prof. Dr. Patrick Verkooijen
Chief Executive Officer
Global Center on Adaptation

Introduction

Last year, our annual stocktake of progress on locally led adaptation (LLA) through *Stories of Resilience 2023* surfaced a resounding message: local communities are racing to adapt to climate change because their survival depends on it. But their gains are patchy and precarious because global and national systems are not changing fast enough in response to their needs.

This year, we therefore turned the spotlight on these global and national systems.

We asked development partners, multilateral institutions, and national governments to describe their efforts to support LLA and channel flexible finance to climate vulnerable communities. The resulting chapters in this year's *Stories of Resilience* are neither an endorsement nor a critique – they are simply the responses we received. They are an effort to hold up a mirror and initiate discussion on a topic that does not perhaps receive as much attention as it deserves: *what are the enablers and barriers for global and national systems in devolving funds and agency to the local level?*

After all, we have decades of experience and learning in trying to promote locally led development, too often with the same challenges and results: fragmented examples of best practice, with little transformational change in entrenched ways of doing business in the development sector, despite multiple global commitments for reform.

Challenges In Developed Countries

We start with a chapter summarizing learning from a recently conducted peer review and analysis, by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), of efforts by development partners to promote locally led development. Along with **Chapter 2**, where development partners describe their own efforts and challenges to support LLA, it provides important insights into enablers and challenges in countries that provide development and climate finance.

We learn that gains in support for locally led approaches are equally precarious in developed countries, where hard-won changes can be reversed by shifts in politics; and that political and public support for transferring agency to the local level in these countries is often connected to their own history of economic and political transitions, and domestic governance models. Support for devolution is more forthcoming in countries that value subsidiarity and local agency in their own governance, and have, for instance, decentralized decision-making to their missions in recipient countries. Internal champions, efforts to raise public awareness, and global commitments to support locally led efforts can help countries that provide climate finance in sustaining public and political support.

We also learn that while development partners have made significant commitments towards LLA, programmatic work is yet to catch up. Capacity strengthening is not only needed for recipients, but providers of finance as well, to strengthen internal management structures, staffing, capacities, and skills to "*manage differently*" for business unusual locally led approaches.

The two chapters discuss challenges faced by development partners to provide predictable, flexible and multi-year funding to local partners, and their efforts to develop and track progress towards their commitments to fund locally led efforts. They show that while a move away from project-based funding has been challenging so far, there is much more recognition of the need to support local agents of change, including through core funding and greater risk appetite, because they are more able and skilled in navigating "*under the iceberg*" for more lasting change, whereas project-based approaches designed and delivered by external actors risk cycles of "*build, neglect, and repair*".

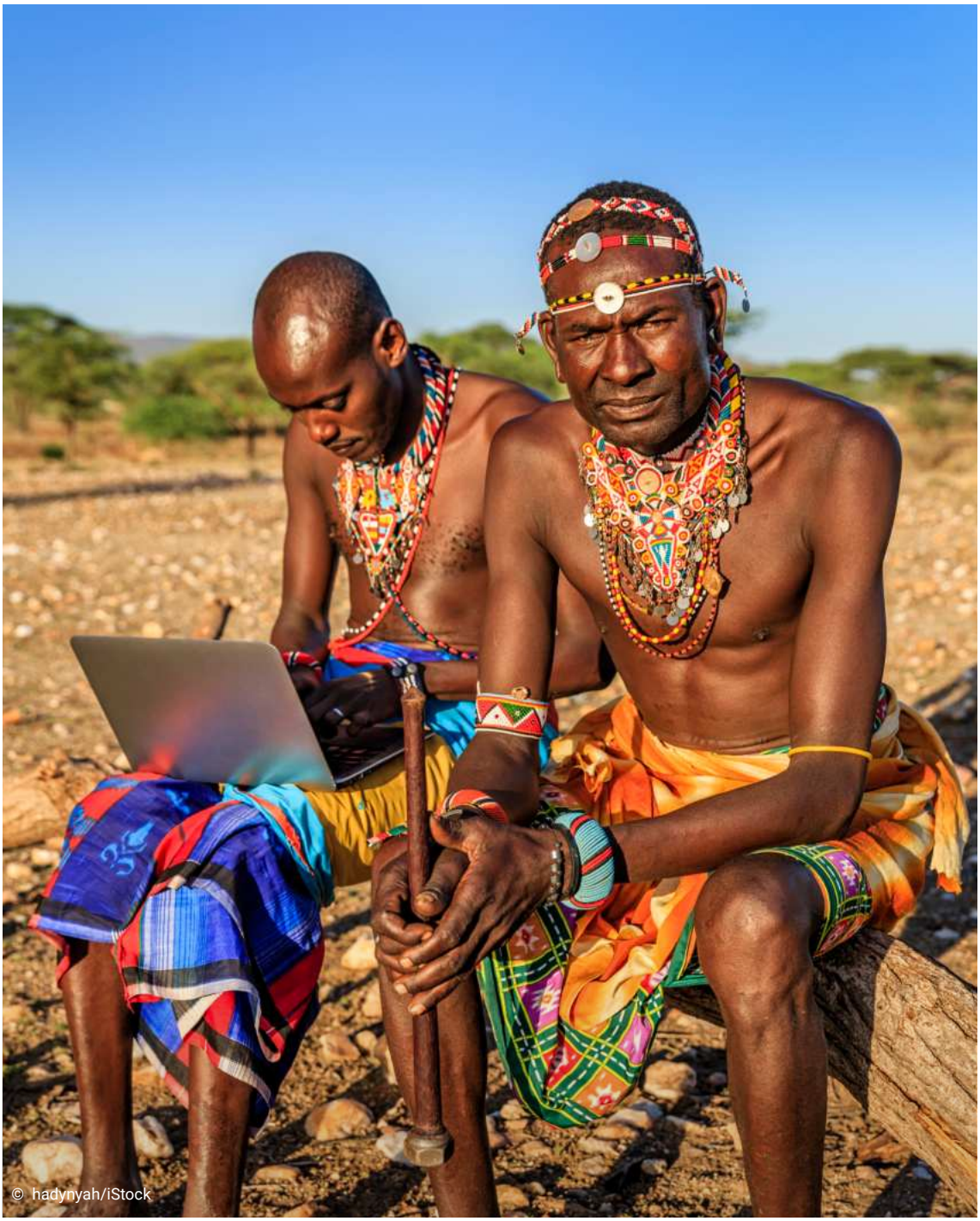
The UK supports climate vulnerable communities to understand climate threats and lead in developing People's Adaptation Plans through GCA.

Risk Sharing And Accountability

Calls for fairer risk-sharing between funders and local actors, and for monitoring and learning frameworks that support mutual accountability and prioritize learning by local communities, echo through the three editions of *Stories of Resilience* produced so far. **Chapter 1** of this edition calls for management processes of development partners to be adapted to be more conducive to promoting local leadership, including by taking more risks and through fairer risk-sharing with communities (involving local actors in the identification and management of risks), simplifying processes, promoting collective accountability and learning, and streamlining compliance and procurement processes.

Chapter 5 goes a step further, proposing a set of markers and indicators to track progress in implementing the LLA Principles by climate finance providers, and making a case for mutual accountability. The authors contend that current monitoring and evaluation systems do not reflect what success means to communities, measure asymmetries of power or justice, or ensure that the funding is spent in line with local priorities. They invite development partners to use these markers, not only for self-assessments, but also by inviting communities to score how they perform on enabling LLA to level the playing field.

Tracking how much adaptation finance reaches the local level is as important to assess whether it reaches the most vulnerable. Beyond better tracking by organizations such as the OECD, national and local validation of both the quantity and quality of finance received can help reassure finance providers and national governments that adaptation finance is reaching those most in need and is addressing their priorities. Greater clarity and reporting on support provided to, and received by, developing countries is in line with Articles 7.7d (cooperation on enhancing action on adaptation), Article 9.6 (finance and the global stocktake), and 13.6 (transparency of action and support) of the Paris Agreement. National and local validation of support received can also resolve issues that have dogged attempts to calculate how much adaptation finance flows to the local level (see Box 1).



Tracking how much adaptation finance reaches the local level is important to assess whether it reaches the most vulnerable.

BOX 1: HOW MUCH ADAPTATION FINANCE REACHES THE LOCAL LEVEL?

Two main attempts have been made recently to answer this question. The first, by the International Institute for Environment and Development in 2017, found that about 10% of climate finance approved between 2003 and 2016 targeted the local level.[1] More recently, UNEP's *Adaptation Gap Report 2023* estimated that 17% of adaptation finance flows during 2017-2021 was allocated to the local level.[2]

Both estimates are based on keyword searches within project descriptions linked to local-level actors (see Table 1). The assumption was that by mentioning local actors in the project description, finance most likely would target them. However, there is no guarantee that such actors are executing or being actual beneficiaries of the funds.[3] In addition, keyword searches depend on the information disclosed in the database used.[4]

TABLE 1: Characteristics of local-level climate finance estimates

LOCAL LEVEL CLIMATE/ ADAPTATION FINANCE	10%	17%
Providers included in the analysis	Climate Funds Update database (12 climate funds and four development funds)	OECD DAC Climate-related development finance dataset (Annex II Parties to the UNFCCC, MDBs, multilateral climate funds, and other multilaterals)
Recipients	All developing countries	Non-Annex I Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
Policy objectives	Adaptation and mitigation	Adaptation only (excluding cross-cutting funding)
Period	2003-2016	2017-2021
Point of measurement	Commitments	Commitments
Unit under analysis	Total project budget	Project budget or transaction budget (varies depending on funder)
Definition of "local"	Based on a search string within the project description: civic, community, cooperative, decentralized, home, household, Indigenous, local, municipal, province, rural, slums, smallholders, SMEs, subnational, town, and village	Based on search string within project description: civic, Indigenous, smallholders, community, local, SMEs, cooperative, municipal, subnational, decentralized, province, town, home, rural, village, household, and slums

Input provided by Nella Canales, Stockholm Environment Institute

Processes, Not Only Outcomes

Chapter 5 also warns against the current focus on monitoring results based only on outcomes, and with insufficient attention to processes. Indeed, LLA is primarily about processes (global, national, and local), which are resistant to change through project- and outcome-based approaches.

The OECD, which is also working on developing a deeper understanding of how development partners can further the localization agenda for climate change adaptation, points to the risks of framing climate change problems as requiring primarily technical knowledge, solutions, and expertise that can be delivered through short-term projects. Like the case studies in this and previous editions of *Stories of Resilience* demonstrate, early results from the OECD show that "*extracting adaptation from the messiness and tumults of socio-political and economic change on the ground is impossible*", and short-term, projectized and linear approaches run the risk of depoliticizing adaptation and inhibiting contestation around the drivers of vulnerability and power dynamics. (For instance, when results on gender are measured through the number of female beneficiaries or participants, while ignoring the nuances of local unequal gender relations that need to change for more transformational adaptation outcomes.)[5]

Instead, the OECD proposes a greater focus and more funding for adaptation governance delivered in ways that ensure local actors are treated as project partners, not project beneficiaries, and are thus able to shape and influence adaptation processes and outcomes. A multi-year program of work on adaptation governance was launched by the OECD in 2021, to build bridges between adaptation and governance experts, document local adaptation governance patterns, and highlight good practices. As this work progresses, it will be essential to equally reflect on how processes and power dynamics on the global to national, and global to local, scales help or hinder transformational change for more effective adaptation.

Multilateral Institutions

Chapters 3 and **4** describe efforts by multilateral institutions to support locally led approaches. The World Bank and Asian Development Bank cite examples and lessons from implementing community-driven approaches in the development sector, and the role of the banks in investing in strengthening country systems to support localization; for instance, through performance-based fiscal transfer systems and investments in improving the capacity of local governments. Multilateral development banks can play a critical role in scaling up LLA approaches through country systems, as demonstrated by the Financing Locally Led Climate Action Program implemented by the Government of Kenya and the World Bank.

The UN Development Program, meanwhile, is channeling funds directly to communities through the Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator. While opportunities to directly influence systemic change for scaling up LLA are perhaps limited through small grants directed at communities, the Accelerator plays an important role in giving communities access to finance from the Adaptation Fund.

Responsive Research

Prevalent ways of determining research priorities, and of conducting research on topics of direct relevance to local communities, are questioned in **Chapter 6**. Such research practices are often extractive, seeking community participation and knowledge without providing benefits in return. The chapter calls for a greater focus on research that is driven by the needs of vulnerable communities, solutions-oriented, and results in positive impact on the lives of those at risk from climate change.

As the case studies in the chapter illustrate, co-production of data and knowledge between local communities and technical experts can target local needs better, build greater ownership of results, and ensure that results are more context-specific and actionable. The value of co-production extends beyond just technical knowledge – it empowers communities to be decision-makers and active leaders in shaping their futures. This is borne out, for instance, by the examples from Mukuru in Kenya in **Chapter 6**, and Mongla in Bangladesh in **Chapter 2**, where data collection and planning processes led by communities with support from universities empowered them to negotiate with their local governments.

The chapter calls for more equitable partnerships between communities and universities, to not only empower communities with information, but also shift the priorities of universities to address pressing, real-world issues faced by vulnerable communities. It points to the multiple benefits of citizen science and calls for greater respect for local knowledge and cultural values, with investments in a new breed of research institutions that bake in participatory action-research models of working with communities from the start.

A cricket farmer displaying his produce in Cambodia.

Community workers in Dar es Salaam provide weather updates to help villagers prepare for upcoming weather changes that could impact their livelihoods, school attendance, and other daily activities.

National Responses

Chapters 7 and **8** look at national responses to LLA through the National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and through national programs such as Indonesia's Community Program for Climate (ProKlim). A growing number of NAPs – 40% – mention LLA, 60% of the NAPs mention sub-national adaptation plans, and more than 75% define a role for sub-national governments – but fewer mention national mechanisms to channel finance to the local level. This points to the increasingly urgent need for national systems to channel adaptation finance to the local level, in ways that are responsive to local needs and flexible enough to counter the uncertainties of climate change. The lack of stable and reliable financing at sub-national levels is one of the biggest barriers to effective adaptation efforts implemented at scale, as evident from the description of Indonesia's ProKlim.[6]

ProKlim demonstrates the ingenuity, innovation, and commitment of communities in planning and implementing adaptation efforts, despite the absence of reliable sources of funding. It is also an example of the potential of citizen science, as participating communities feed into a National Registry System for Climate Change Control that has become a valuable data source on the causes of vulnerability, climate impacts, and progress in addressing climate resilience. Such approaches are possible in countries like Indonesia, where the institutions, processes, and policies exist for decentralization. Efforts are essential to ensure, however, that fiscal decentralization also takes place, to trigger and sustain social capital and innovation by communities; and that issues such as property and resource rights are addressed. While the regularization of such rights is not an adaptation solution in itself, the lack of access and property rights can be significant barriers to successful adaptation.[7]

Existing Pathways Of Reaching The Most Vulnerable

Chapter 9 describes the multiple benefits of embedding adaptation responses into existing national social protection schemes. Such schemes are often targeted at communities that are the most vulnerable to climate change, and already have existing systems to deliver support that have been tried and honed over time. Moreover, social protection can absorb the immediate risks of climate shocks by maintaining household consumption and incomes; and facilitate long-term adaptation by allowing communities to invest in livelihood diversification, asset accumulation, and infrastructure improvements that mitigate future risks. The schemes will, however, need to be primed to serve the dual purpose – including by increasing budgets, so their original purpose is not swamped by climate disasters; and by introducing anticipatory response mechanisms, such as cash transfers triggered by early warning systems.

Community member tending his hydroponic community vegetable garden in Jakarta.

A key challenge for adaptation at the national level continues to be that it is guided by procedural rules (for instance, requirements to put in place adaptation strategies or plans), rather than specific goals and targets for reducing vulnerability.[8] While grounding adaptation in the needs of affected communities can support the process of developing substantive goals and roadmaps for adaptation, this will need to be accompanied by downward accountability to affected communities. Currently, only upward accountability to national governments or external finance providers is catered for, and as **Chapter 11** illustrates, problems arise when government officials see their role as enforcers rather than problem solvers accountable to the people they serve.

Programs such as cash transfers or public works schemes can help communities cope with climate shocks, protecting assets and livelihoods.

Loss And Damage And LLA

As COP29 in Baku readies to operationalize the new Fund for responding to Loss and Damage (FRLD) this year, **Chapter 10** describes the importance of a locally led approach for loss and damage finance, to ensure that communities, and not just countries, can access funding.

The issues related to the quantity and quality of funding described in this and previous editions of *Stories of Resilience* are as relevant to loss and damage, as they are to adaptation. Loss and damage and adaptation are inextricably linked – little or ineffective adaptation exacerbates climate-related loss and damage; and loss and damage, for many poor communities, triggers displacement to other climate vulnerable areas, where there is an increased need for adaptation as a result. It is also becoming increasingly clear, in GCA's work with communities, that in the aftermath of now more frequent climate-related disasters, families are more concerned with dealing with the loss and damage suffered here and now, not with planning for adaptation against future climate threats. Without compensation for current loss and damage, their ability to adapt to future threats is therefore compromised. The diversion of adaptation finance and efforts to deal with loss and damage, meanwhile, runs the risks of ever-expanding spirals of loss and damage in the future.

Both the physical and mental strain of this spiral on poor communities must be addressed by the FRLD, which must also find ways of compensating non-economic loss and damage.

Man sitting atop his destroyed home after a typhoon in the Philippines.

Redefining The Role And Nature Of Partnerships

Chapter 11 describes platforms that strive to give equal voice to partners in local resilience building efforts: local and national governments, communities, and the private sector. In particular, it describes partnerships for the protection of natural resources. As competition for a shrinking natural resource base becomes fiercer, it is critical to establish formal platforms and spaces where marginalized communities have equal voice, and are part of decision-making, so their needs are not sacrificed to protect other, more powerful, interests. Partnerships facilitated by an "honest broker" who can foster trust and balance power dynamics by ensuring participation and equal access to information can support this goal, but such arrangements must be mandated by national legislation to be effective at scale.

The three editions of *Stories of Resilience* published so far have described countless examples of community efforts to build climate resilience by establishing small and medium sized enterprises that rely on natural resources but ensure their protection. Such "private sector" initiatives can have multiple benefits – including generating livelihoods, building climate resilience, and sustaining ecosystems – and must be nurtured and supported, including through supportive legislation on issues related to rights and ownership, and use and access.

Conclusion

The key message from this year's *Stories of Resilience* is the need for urgent and rapid reform in how global and national climate finance is delivered, in the power dynamics between providers and recipients, and in how success is measured.

The focus must shift to supporting or building global and national systems that can deliver flexible, predictable, and accessible finance to climate vulnerable communities, to replace the current global and national reliance on project-based approaches. In some cases, these systems already exist but need to be augmented (like the social protection mechanisms described in this edition). In others, they will need to be built. In both cases, attention is necessary to ensure that these systems are integrated into national systems rather than siloed, so existing development institutions, policies and legislation, and finance can be leveraged for adaptation. Currently, only a small proportion of climate finance supports climate change governance. To ensure that these systems meet the needs of the vulnerable, platforms and processes for communities to assess progress towards their own goals and operationalize downward accountability are necessary.

While this transformational shift is likely to prove challenging, investments in supporting local agents of change in recipient countries, and public awareness and education in provider countries, can help build momentum for change. Instead of projects and project-based outcomes that favor short-term technological fixes, investment should target socio-economic processes and governance systems that build and sustain local capacity to counter the capriciousness of climate change.

Principles for Locally Led Adaptation

The eight Principles for Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) were developed by the Global Commission on Adaptation and launched at the 2021 Climate Adaptation Summit to guide efforts to promote LLA.

1 **Devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level:** Giving local institutions and communities more direct access to finance and decision-making power over how adaptation actions are defined, prioritized, designed, and implemented; how progress is monitored; and how success is evaluated.

2 **Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, disabled, displaced, Indigenous peoples, and marginalized ethnic groups:** Integrating gender-based, economic, and political inequalities that are root causes of vulnerability into the core of adaptation action and encouraging vulnerable and marginalized individuals to meaningfully participate in and lead adaptation decisions.

3 **Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily:** Supporting long-term development of local governance processes, capacity, and institutions through simpler access modalities and longer term and more predictable funding horizons, to ensure that communities can effectively implement adaptation actions.

4 **Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy:** Improving the capabilities of local institutions to ensure they can understand climate risks and uncertainties, generate solutions, and facilitate and manage adaptation initiatives over the long term without being dependent on project-based financier funding.

5 **Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty:** Informing adaptation decisions through a combination of local, traditional, Indigenous, generational, and scientific knowledge that can enable resilience under a range of future climate scenarios.

6 **Flexible programming and learning:** Enabling adaptive management to address the inherent uncertainty in adaptation, especially through robust monitoring and learning systems, flexible finance, and flexible programming.

7 **Ensuring transparency and accountability:** Making processes of financing, designing, and delivering programs more transparent and accountable downward to local stakeholders.

8 **Collaborative action and investment:** Collaboration across sectors, initiatives, and levels to ensure that different initiatives and different sources of funding (humanitarian assistance, development, disaster risk reduction, green recovery funds, etc.) support each other, and their activities avoid duplication, to enhance efficiencies and good practice.

CHAPTER 1

FIVE WAYS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS CAN ENABLE LLA

HIGHLIGHTS

- A conducive political and legal environment, or a history of decentralized development cooperation, can make it easier for some development partners to embrace locally led approaches, but challenges can still arise when domestic politics is focused on fast, tangible results and quick wins.
- Channeling adequate, flexible, long-term, and predictable funding to local actors is now widely recognized as one of the most impactful ways of promoting local agency and ensuring sustainability. Bilateral providers, however, still struggle to channel quality funding to local actors.
- Equitable partnerships between fund providers and local actors are critical enablers for nurturing local leadership and reshaping power dynamics. However, the absence of clear definitions and understanding of the value of equitable partnerships has fostered ambiguity and misunderstanding.
- A central challenge for development partners is the perception that working more directly with local partners poses additional risks. They therefore put in place requirements to avoid risk, such as heavy due diligence processes, which can become hurdles for working with local actors.
- While there are exceptions, most development partners do not, as yet, have robust targets, indicators or frameworks to track their own progress, or for local actors to track the progress of fund providers, towards achieving commitments to support locally led action.

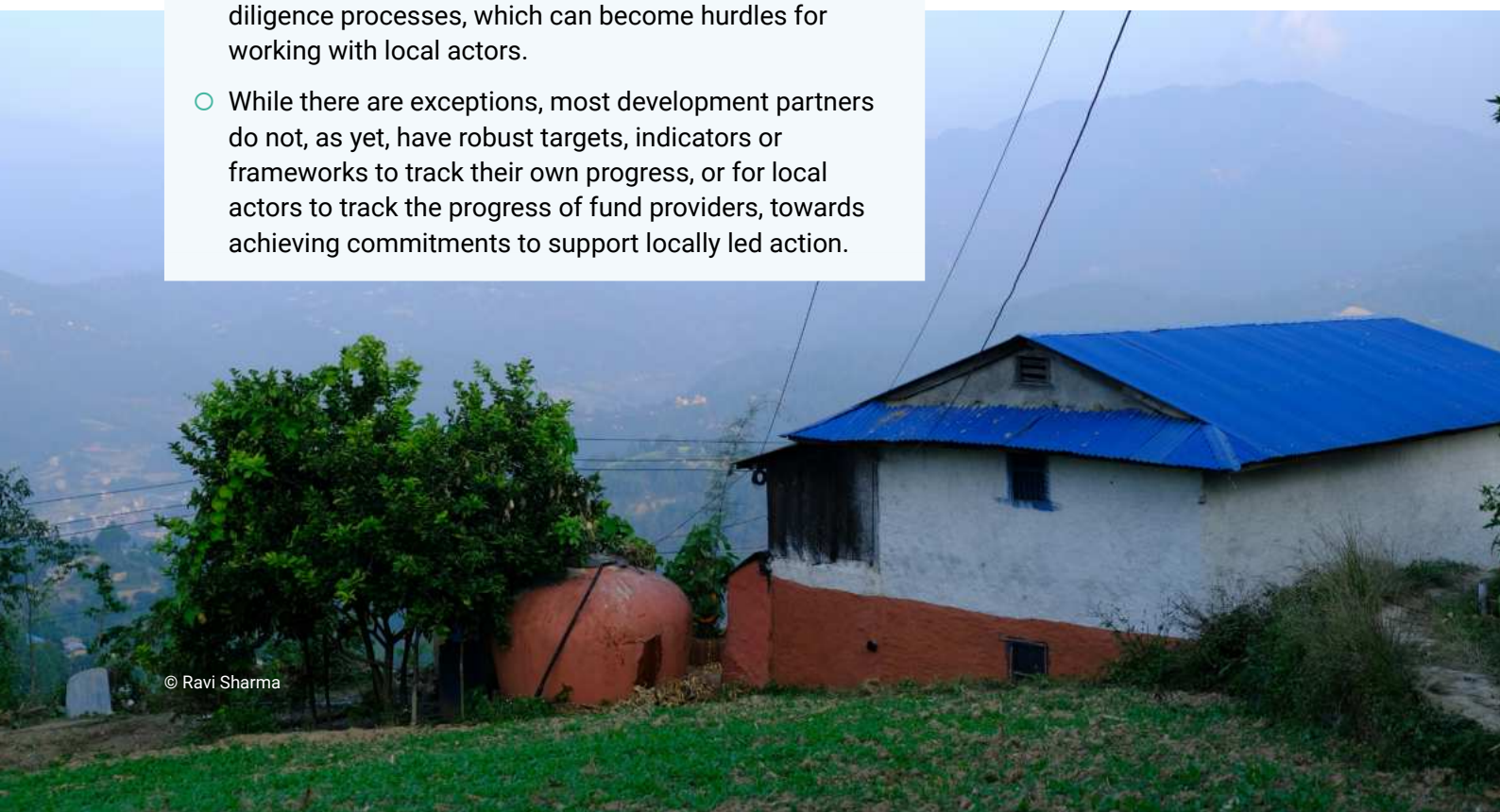
Devolving decision making

Patient, predictable, accessible funding

Investing in local capacities

Collaborative action

IN THIS CHAPTER



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LESSONS FROM LOCALLY LED DEVELOPMENT

The global landscape of development cooperation is evolving, driven by a growing recognition of the pivotal role played by local actors in driving effective and sustainable development.

At first, this change was driven by recognition that traditional aid practices, which generally viewed recipient countries as 'beneficiaries' of external resources and wisdom due to historical power imbalances, were not resulting in lasting impact on the ground. This resulted in a slew of agreements to improve the effectiveness of development cooperation – including the 2002 **Monterrey Consensus**; the 2003 **Rome Declaration on Harmonization**; the 2005 **Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness**; the 2008 **Accra Agenda for Action**; the 2011 **Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation**; and the 2015 **Addis Ababa Action Agenda**.

These and other agreements identified the principles of country ownership, a focus on results, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and mutual accountability as key to improve the quality, impact, and effectiveness of development cooperation. **A Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation** (GPEDC) was established in 2012, to promote the implementation of these principles.

The important role of local leadership and of locally led development have come increasingly to the fore in these agreements. The **2022 Effective Development Cooperation Summit Declaration** recognizes that locally owned and led development can lead to more enduring impact, particularly if ownership, inclusivity, transparency, and accountability are achieved at the local level. Also in 2022, several key development partners and foundations signed a **Donor Statement on Supporting Locally Led Development**, which commits signatories to channel high quality funding as directly as possible to local actors, whilst ensuring mutual accountability for the effective use of funds.[9]

In a recently concluded **peer learning and analysis** of efforts by development partners of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) to promote locally led development, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) recognizes that deeply rooted

> **Attention is now pivoting towards increasing the agency of local actors in framing, design, delivery, learning, and accountability of development cooperation.**

A local guide leads a donkey carrying supplies near the Soda Volcano, Ethiopia.

development cooperation norms, biases, colonial legacies, and power imbalances are now being challenged, with calls growing louder for system-wide change in the global development cooperation architecture. Traditional development cooperation delivery models are being disrupted by the changing face of development co-operation – including the rise of new development partners, of south-south cooperation, increasing budget constraints, calls for the decolonization of aid, and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Attention is now pivoting towards increasing the agency of local actors in framing, design, delivery, learning and accountability of development cooperation.[10]

At the same time, development partners face considerable challenges in responding to these calls for localization – including geopolitical shifts, humanitarian crises, economic and ecological uncertainties, rapidly evolving and heightened climate risks, political constraints, risk aversion, limited human resources and capacity, and a lack of consensus on key definitions.

This chapter summarizes key findings from the OECD peer learning and analysis, focusing on key insights that are relevant for locally led adaptation (LLA). The OECD identifies five key areas for development partners to focus on:

1. Policy and institutional frameworks of providers of finance.
2. Channels to fund local actors.
3. Partnership models and approaches.
4. Management systems and delivery practices.
5. Ways to measure progress towards locally led development.

Policy And Institutional Frameworks

While some development partners benefit from high levels of political and public support for the principles of locally led development, domestic circumstances prove a challenge for others. A conducive political and legal environment, or a history of decentralized development cooperation, can make it easier for some development partners to embrace locally led approaches, but challenges can still arise when domestic politics is focused on increasing incentives for the demonstration of fast, tangible results and quick wins.

Countries like Ireland and Switzerland, for instance, connect their approach to locally led development with their own history of economic and political transition, or their own domestic governance models and history of development cooperation. Switzerland's decentralized structure and tradition of citizen participation informs its understanding of development as a participatory process involving multiple stakeholders. The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation also benefits from a decentralized system with significant autonomy at the mission level. At the same time, however, a challenging domestic political environment can create tensions, where quick results and cost efficiency can be favored over the longer-term goals associated with locally led development cooperation.[11]

In Canada and New Zealand, the locally led development agenda is complementary to domestic efforts to empower Indigenous communities and integrate Indigenous worldviews. Engagement with parliament and public education are also key to shaping public perceptions and influencing political narratives in DAC member domestic contexts. In Ireland, initiatives such as **global citizenship education** have strengthened public support for development cooperation, especially among younger generations, who have a broader global perspective and understanding of the Sustainable Development Goals. In the UK, the parliamentary International Development Committee has sparked public discussions on issues like **racism in the aid sector** and the overall **culture of aid**. Constructive participation in these dialogues can support positive change.

Children learning to become global citizens.

While driving change can be challenging, developing dedicated policy commitments can be beneficial for providing incentives to move towards more locally led practices. USAID, for instance, has set out a **clear vision and approach** for localization (discussed in more detail in **Chapter 2**). In countries where the creation of dedicated policy commitments and guidelines is not feasible, the integration of locally led guidance into existing policy frameworks and

Civil society can play an active role in shaping and creating space for national dialogue on locally led development.

strategies, or committing to complementary initiatives (such as signing up to the LLA Principles) has been beneficial for many development partners in driving commitments to locally led development. Signing up to the Principles for LLA has helped countries such as Switzerland and the Netherlands (**see Chapter 2**) to further an agenda towards supporting locally led development.

Internal champions can play an important role in shaping institutional frameworks in countries that provide finance – for instance, by leading multistakeholder learning processes for a shared understanding of locally led development cooperation, and examining and reshaping relationships with domestic civil society and international partners. In Switzerland, for instance, civil society has played an active role in shaping and creating space for national dialogue on locally led development. A strategic dialogue with Swiss non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on localization in 2023 generated key recommendations on how to increase core contributions to partners, redefine risks through a bottom-up approach, address non-inclusive decision-making, and strengthen long-term partnerships, while promoting power shifts and mutual accountability.

Capacity strengthening is applicable not only to local actors, but providers of finance as well, where strengthening internal management structures, staffing, capacities, and skills to support locally led development is crucial.[12] Ensuring that staff have resources, time, and capacity to manage differently is a central challenge that some development partners, such as USAID, are addressing by increasing the number of staff in acquisition and assistance, and developing soft skills, contextual, and cultural understanding amongst staff to contribute to a better understanding of local actors and contexts. Decentralizing decision making to country offices and missions (for instance, in the case of Ireland) can promote more autonomy for locally responsive partnerships that create space for local agency.

Channels To Fund Local Actors

Channeling adequate, flexible, long-term, and predictable funding to local actors is now widely recognized as one of the most impactful ways of promoting local agency and ensuring sustainability. Bilateral providers, however, still struggle to channel quality funding to local actors, and continue to increasingly fund international intermediaries.[13] In 2022, 43% of development aid was channeled to and through multilateral channels, compared to 38.5% in direct bilateral aid.[14] By the early 2030s, the multilateral system is predicted to become the predominant channel for development aid. The use of multilateral intermediaries does not always contravene the goals of locally led development – in fact, it can help overcome issues such as the fragmentation of funding that often limits scale in locally led initiatives.[15] In the absence of clear goals and indicators for the intermediaries to support locally led development, however, high-quality funding is not transferred to local actors. Development partners have an important role in influencing international intermediaries – both multilateral organizations and international NGOs – to adopt policies and practices that promote locally led development, and to be accountable for them.

Development partners have also struggled to provide flexible and multi-year funding to local partners. Barriers include, among others, legislative and regulatory constraints; fiduciary risks; existing earmarking that precludes flexibility; the complexity of funding a larger number of organizations; the absorption capacity of local actors; heavy reporting requirements; limited flexibility in budget and financial agreements, including in the provision of overhead costs; gaps in provider capacity to manage direct funding relationships; resistance among provider-country CSOs; and difficulties in identifying local actors.[16]

Budget allocations in some provider countries are driven by institutionally set targets in specific sectors (such as health, climate, food security etc.) rather than country or regional strategies. This also limits the leadership role of local actors in defining priorities. Deep dives conducted by the OECD in recipient countries (Ethiopia, Nepal, and Colombia) highlighted that local actors tend to access funding through pre-defined calls for proposals that limit their role in the design of projects, particularly in the areas of goal setting and identifying sectoral and thematic areas of focus. Efforts to move towards more collaborative design approaches, for instance the use of co-creation workshops by USAID, can place local actors in the position of partners rather than leaders of projects.[17]

Some of the good practices identified by the OECD peer learning exercise include Iceland's **program-based approach** to channel funds to local governments to achieve positive long-term outcomes in line with national and local priorities, avoid building parallel systems, and target broader local and community ecosystems. Under the approach, Iceland signs trilateral agreements with local authorities and with line ministries, which provide thematic guidance. District authorities remain in the driving seat, however, and the program funds district development plans developed in consultation with communities. Funds are disbursed directly to district governments based on their work plans and budgets, and their systems for procurement and financial management.

To manage risks, the programs include capacity strengthening of district authorities, regular financial and progress reporting as a prerequisite for fund release, and internal and external audits. Support is provided in a way that allows integration across sectors, covering education, health, water, sanitation, and community development. The goal is to improve social infrastructure, community resilience, and livelihoods, with a strong focus on gender

Clear commitments are needed to support local agents of change.

equality, human rights, and climate. Efforts are made to ensure that support reaches at-risk and marginalized groups, often in neglected areas. Iceland is adopting this program-based approach in all partner countries, following **evaluations** that indicated that the approach is particularly suitable for smaller development cooperation partners; welcomed by national governments; facilitates synergies across sectors; and significantly increases and improves service provision.

Clear commitments to fund local agents of change, including NGOs and movements, have helped development partners channel funds to those excluded from formal decision making, and support actors with the social and political capital to bring about more systemic change. The Netherlands, for instance, established **Mama Cash** in 1983 to support women, girls, trans, and intersex people in their fight for gender rights. The initiative, which is now funded by multiple foundations and countries, has disbursed over €90 million to feminist movements through long-term, flexible grants that are decided by the activists themselves, allowing the activist groups to focus on strategic change.

Prospera is a similar network funded by the Netherlands, Sweden, and the US that provides multi-year, unrestricted, flexible grants for grassroots gender justice movements since 2016. It aims to reach groups and populations that are marginalized, traditionally underfunded, and sometimes not formally constituted, through "*trust-based, democratic, and decolonial philanthropy*", where funds respond to local needs and contexts.

France launched a **Support Fund for Feminist Organizations** in 2020 to deliver on its International Strategy for Gender Equality. Canada's **Equality Fund** supports women's rights organizations and movements through core, multi-year, flexible funding as well as technical support, institutional strengthening, and network building. It uses a variety of grant-making models with feminist values of collaboration, solidarity, and community at the core.

Development partners have also pooled funding to target the needs of local agents of change. In Ethiopia, for instance, the **Civil Society Support Program** pooled funds from multiple providers for efficiency, risk sharing, providing a critical financing mass. The multi-donor fund was managed by the British Council, which provided grants and capacity strengthening to local civil society organizations and supported platforms for effective civic

engagement and learning. Other examples include Ireland's **Civil Society Partnership for a Better World** and Canada's **Women's Voice and Leadership Program**, which provides longer-term institutional support for local women's rights civil society organizations seeking to enhance their sustainability.

Core funding for NGOs and CSOs can promote organizational independence and sustainability and allow for investments in institutional strengthening and capacity development, especially for smaller national and sub-national organizations. This type of support can allow local NGOs the space to better position themselves to take forward leadership. It also provides flexibility to pivot easily if priorities change, crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic occur, or adjustments are needed as lessons are learned. On the whole, however, although generic **guidance** exists, providers have made limited progress in developing policies to support overhead and indirect costs for NGOs and CSOs, and are more focused on project-based funding. This reduces the potential for local actors to take leadership by participating in activities that are not directly covered by project funds, such as dialogues with authorities, participation in equitable partnerships, or prioritizing accountability to their constituencies.

Partnership Models And Approaches

Recognizing and valuing the deep-seated knowledge and expertize of local actors in their diversity is foundational for locally led development cooperation and adaptation. Equitable partnerships with and between local actors are critical enablers for identifying and nurturing local leadership, reshaping power dynamics, and for achieving effectiveness and sustainability. However, the absence of clear definitions and understanding of the value of partnerships – particularly equitable partnerships – has fostered ambiguity and misunderstanding. Particularly in cases where development providers engage with local actors just as subcontractors to implement externally designed interventions, partnerships can be perceived as transactional, project-based, and technical rather than mutually beneficial and transformative, and can end up reinforcing existing power dynamics, leaving little space for local agency and decision making.

A principled approach to partnerships, with adequate time and resources allocated at the beginning of a program, can pave the way for mutual respect and reciprocity. Instead of overlooking the strong capacities of local partners, capacity strengthening should be a two-way process, benefiting both local and development cooperation partners. Successful approaches should focus on mutually deciding whose capacity needs strengthening, what areas to target, and how this will improve the overall organization, not just the individuals or projects involved.

The foundation for equitable partnerships is often a space or a platform for all actors to come together to frame discussions, identify priorities, and build relationships that allow them to learn together, accompany each other, and develop collectively. Such platforms are not a given in many projects and programs, though some partners are now encouraging greater listening to diverse local actors to understand local priorities, needs, and innovative ideas for shaping their communities and creating specific dialogue on locally led development. For instance, Australia's **International Development Policy** includes a commitment to locally led development and supporting local leadership across different

The Vanuatu Skills Partnership limited the role of international advisers to promote local leadership.

aspects of society. This includes a flexible and innovative approach to program planning and implementation to increase the participation of local actors; provide multi-year funding and capacity strengthening to local organizations; direct financing to partner governments; and a Civil Society Partnerships Fund to support local civil society organizations.

The **Vanuatu Skills Partnership**, an example of Australia's efforts to promote genuine partnerships and enable innovation through locally led approaches, aims to support the development of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector in Vanuatu. Led and implemented by a national team, the program works through local structures. It promotes local leadership to ensure sustainable reforms are driven by coalitions for change within the Vanuatu social and political context, who understand the diverse local culture and power dynamics, and are better positioned to think and work politically with local partners. The partnership redefined the role of international advisers, who previously led in-country program implementation. Their role is now limited to providing technical support where needed. This has not only resulted in more local leadership and ownership of the program, but also reduced adviser engagement costs, which are now an estimated 18% of total program costs – compared to more than half before these changes were made. An external managing contractor who was initially engaged to manage the program has also been replaced by a more flexible "support contractor," who provides technical support only in areas determined by the local team. Following the signing of a subsidiarity agreement based on principles of mutual accountability between the governments of Australia and Vanuatu, the Government of Vanuatu has assumed a more active role within the TVET system over the last 15 years.[18]

Development partners are also creating spaces and platforms to step back and listen, or to amplify partner voices. USAID's **Listening Locally** initiative, for instance, creates spaces for prioritized listening to local voices – communities, associations, civil society, the private sector, and local and national governments – to identify and support sustainable development efforts along the Dominican/Haitian border. During listening visits, USAID staff spoke with approximately 3,000 community members about local priorities, needs,

and innovative ideas for shaping their communities; and connected with other development partners, NGOs, private sector actors, and government representatives.

Australia's **Balance of Power** initiative recognizes that local actors are the most skilled in navigating "*under the iceberg enablers and blockers*" to identify and maximize entry points and drivers for change. The multi-country initiative in the Pacific aims to contribute to women's increased representation as leaders and has been designed to be led by Pacific Islanders, with all activity guided by their ongoing political economic analysis and their access to formal and informal networks and avenues of influence. Through its access to power bases and networks within each operating environment, it has established strong relationships across national and subnational governments, churches, traditional chiefs, the media, and regional institutions to increase focus on influencing social norms. It is convening and strengthening these coalitions of local actors, who are now stimulating demand for and making changes in thinking and practice around women's rights to leadership, framing discussions, and designing activities.

Influencing international intermediaries to move away from transactional, project-based relationships is an important enabler for locally led development. Rethinking the role of international CSOs is valuable, including in their capacity as interpreter, knowledge broker, and producer; trainer, coach, and co-learner; convener; connector, and ecosystem builder; advocate and amplifier; watchdog; critical friend; and sidekick.[19]

An overlooked but impactful aspect of locally led development is actively supporting local government cooperation partnerships. For instance, **collaborations** across cities and municipalities have proven to be a valuable way to promote sustainability and climate resilience. Peer-to-peer networks and South-South learning collaborations can also enable knowledge to be produced, shared, and scaled.

Management Systems And Delivery Practices

A central challenge for development partners is the perception that working more directly with local partners poses additional risks, particularly fiduciary risks. They therefore often put in place systems and requirements that are designed to avoid risk, such as heavy due diligence processes, which can become hurdles for working with local actors. The perception that partnerships with local actors are inherently riskier can also damage trust and the prospects for equitable partnerships. The security, legal, and political risks posed by fragile and conflict-affected contexts also shape the risk management approaches of bilateral funders.

Management processes can be adapted by rethinking and reframing approaches to risk to be more conducive to promoting local leadership. This includes taking more locally informed risks and setting clear acceptable risk levels for local projects; simplifying processes for partnering with local actors; introducing new management tools that allow for smarter, strategic risk-taking; involving local actors in the identification and management of risk, including in risk sharing; promoting collective accountability and learning; fostering risk appetite; and streamlining compliance and procurement processes.

Collectively reflecting on decision making power across the program cycle helps determine where power imbalances persist, including between local actors themselves. This is an important first step in building more inclusive and equitable partnerships and promoting local agency. Tools such as the **Decision Mapping Tool** allow mapping, reflection, and discussion on the allocation of decision-making power across an intervention — from local decision

Community workers in Maharashtra, India, engaging with community members.

spaces, where local actors are solely responsible and accountable, through partnership decision spaces, to external decision spaces, where external actors are solely responsible for making a decision.[20]

Provider accountability and learning mechanisms are often top-down, skewed towards institutional compliance objectives, and allow little space for co-design. Local actors in Ethiopia and Nepal identified monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL) frameworks as cumbersome and complex, lacking contextualization, and of limited use for local evaluators. They were also found to provide limited opportunities for peer learning on locally led development for development partner staff at the country level. Locally designed accountability frameworks can help focus the programs on the right and needed outcomes, as can fostering collective accountability through multistakeholder and participatory approaches.

Streamlining and simplifying compliance and procurement to remove barriers can make it easier for local actors to participate.[21] Processes can be simplified by accepting documents in local languages and allowing flexible reporting methods like oral or video submissions. Due diligence requirements can be streamlined through collaboration among diverse providers. For example, recognizing assessments made by other providers can relieve the significant administrative burden for local actors of meeting requirements of multiple providers. Local organizations that are familiar with provider requirements can also give guidance and accompaniment to other local actors to facilitate access.

Measuring Progress Towards Locally Led Development

While there are exceptions, most development partners do not, yet, have robust targets, indicators, or frameworks to track their own progress (or for local actors to track the progress of fund providers, towards achieving their commitments to support locally led action). (**Chapter 5** discusses monitoring frameworks for fund providers in more detail).

USAID's measurement framework, described in more detail in **Chapter 2**, is the first publicly tested framework by a development partner. It relies on two main targets and

includes methods and indicators to measure progress on localization with a view to nudging approaches across all channels of delivery. The two main targets include an agency-wide goal to provide at least 25% of program funds directly to local partners by the end of 2025;[22] and to take steps to ensure that by 2030, 50% of programs will place local communities in the lead to co-design a project, set priorities, drive implementation, or evaluate impact. USAID will also track sub-awards from the international NGOs and development contractors funded by USAID, and government-to-government programming (although this programming does not contribute to meeting its 25% target for funding to local actors), given that national and sub-national governments and institutions play a key role in advancing many development objectives through their policy and regulatory functions, management of domestic resources, responsibility for public service delivery, and remit to address public goods.

Some partners have developed approaches to measure progress along a sliding scale or continuum. For example, Canada's Evaluation Division has developed a pilot **Localization Analysis Framework**, an evaluation tool designed to measure a program's alignment with locally led development across nine dimensions (such as the degree of local leadership during each stage of project design, management, governance, etc.); and to identify key barriers and enablers to working with local organizations.[23] The pilot application of the framework in two program evaluations identified three major barriers that hindered programming with local organizations, including difficulties faced by local organizations in meeting the risk appetite of Global Affairs Canada (GAC); adverse local contexts (such as national legislation and government hostility toward GAC priorities); and limited GAC human resources and capacity to support local partners without previous experience working with GAC or other providers.

Other bilateral and multilateral funders and some international intermediaries are integrating locally led indicators, benchmarks, or principles into agreements with their partners, rather than introducing corporate targets for themselves. For example, Ireland's Civil Society Program team monitors locally led development benchmarks integrated in memoranda of understanding signed with Irish civil society partners.

Key Future Priorities

Bilateral supporters of locally led development can take diverse pathways to meet their commitment to enable locally led development cooperation. These are an important foundation for changing the practice of development cooperation, but a lot more remains to be done to achieve systemic change, which requires sustained political will and can benefit from a coordinated approach built on shared definitions and understandings from peer learning exercises, such as the one conducted by OECD. Navigating diverse priorities among local and international actors coming from different perspectives, and implementing changes in policies, mechanisms, and practices are essential to shifting power dynamics and behaviors.

This chapter presents findings from an OECD peer learning exercise on locally led development cooperation, drawing on an earlier published synthesis paper 'Pathways Towards Effective Locally Led Development Cooperation: Learning by example' (OECD, 2024) and its supporting materials, available at: https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2024/09/pathways-towards-effective-locally-led-development-cooperation_1c361308.html. The peer learning exercise was coordinated by the Peer Reviews Team in the OECD Development Cooperation Directorate, and conducted in partnership with The Share Trust, the Warande Advisory Centre, ODI and EPIC-Africa.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT ARE BILATERAL FUNDERS DOING TO SUPPORT LLA?

HIGHLIGHTS

- The UK's Least Developed Countries (LDC) Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR) aims to provide high-quality, predictable, and accessible finance, and to support LDCs in their intention to ensure that at least 70% of the climate finance they receive flows to the local level by 2030.
- The UK is also supporting the GCA's Adaptation Acceleration Program in Africa and Bangladesh to mainstream LLA into the investments of international financial institutions and knowledge-sharing efforts through the Global Hub on LLA.
- The Netherlands' Reversing the Flow program channels small grants directly to grassroots organizations through hubs for community-led interventions on landscape restoration, water security, and climate change adaptation.
- The Netherlands recognizes the need to shape new power relations and trigger systemic change, but finds the challenges lie in the willingness to do so and in operationalization along a whole chain of development actors that is used to doing things in a particular way.
- USAID has committed to channel one quarter of its funding to local partners, and ensure that at least half of USAID programs are locally led. New tools and resources have been developed to support staff to work in more locally led ways.
- Changes in ways of doing business have helped USAID to increase the number of new awards to local partners by 45% since 2021, and to increase the number of unique local partners by 24% in the same period.

Devolving decision making

Addressing structural inequalities

Patient, predictable, accessible funding

Collaborative action

IN THIS CHAPTER

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Noagha Tondé sends daily weather forecasts to farmers in his village in Burkina Faso.

THE UK'S STORY

Noagha Tondé "The Enlightened" has an important role to play in his village in Burkina Faso. He is trained to monitor rainfall levels using a rain gauge, and to receive and transmit weather forecasts through his mobile phone. "Twice a day, my neighbors and the teacher at the village school come by to ask how much it rained," he says. This is critical information for the farmers in his village who increasingly face erratic weather patterns, and must constantly adapt farming practices such as when to sow or which seeds to use.

Tondé is one of 400 farmers in Burkina Faso who was trained through the Building Resilience and Adaptation to Climate Extremes and Disasters (BRACED) program,[24] funded by the UK government and implemented across 13 countries in Africa and Asia from 2014 to 2019.[25] The program also supported Ecodata, a weather channel in Burkina Faso that sends out forecasts by text and voice messages to intermediaries like Tondé and to two million other farmers, project facilitators, and extension agents.

> **Almost every farmer household in even remote parts of the country has a mobile phone.**
>
> Alexandre Al Hassan Kabré, director of Ecodata

"Almost every farmer household in even remote parts of the country has a mobile phone," says Alexandre Al Hassan Kabré, director of Ecodata. Traditional methods of weather forecasting to inform farming decisions are becoming less reliable due to climate change, says Kabré, and farmers are keen to receive weather forecasts directly on their phones. He is exploring a collaboration with the Burkina Faso's Meteorological Office to scale up the service to the entire country.[26]

To date, the BRACED program has helped over 14 million people cope with climate and weather extremes and improved the resilience of over seven million people (of which nearly half were women). The program also influenced policy change and development at local, national, and international levels, and demonstrated how a supportive policy environment can attract public and private investments in climate resilience. These investments are key to improving low-income people's capacity to anticipate, adapt to, and absorb the impacts of climate extremes and disasters. BRACED demonstrated that direct investments in communities and local governments have positive impacts, and that with support, local organizations and community groups can prioritize and articulate their investment needs to build climate resilience.

Uganda started work on the LIFE-AR Initiative in 2020.

From BRACED To LIFE-AR

BRACED also provided targeted support to the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Group through the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED). LDC governments, representing nearly one billion of the world's poorest people, have been vocal in their criticism of northern governments and organizations, who implement time-bound and budget-constrained 'projects' and provide fly-in/fly-out 'experts' to deliver advice at high cost and for a short duration. They have also pointed out that climate finance does not reach climate vulnerable communities: of the 23-28% of global climate finance that reaches LDCs, only about 10% goes to the local level.[27]

In December 2019 at COP25 in Madrid, the LDC Group called on development partners to sign up to a partnership called the LDC Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR). The UK was among 14 government signatories committing, amongst other things, to:

- Provide high-quality, predictable, and accessible finance to help deliver the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.
- Support the LDCs in their intention to ensure that at least 70% of the climate finance they receive flows to the local level by 2030.
- Work together to reduce transaction costs and ensure mutual accountability.
- Work together to strengthen national and local institutional capabilities in LDCs.

A few months later, in April 2020, the UK agreed to provide modest initial funding to create the LIFE-AR initiative (together with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Ireland). The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) will continue to support the LIFE-AR initiative through to 2028, providing predictable funding over an eight-year timeframe. The US and Canada joined the UK and Ireland to contribute to the initiative. LIFE-AR is presently managed by IIED but will come under full LDC management by 2026.

Despite a slow start due to the COVID-19 pandemic, considerable progress has been made in supporting a locally led approach — driven by national commitments — to enable climate finance to reach the local level through the initiative. Initially, six frontrunner LDCs committed to deliver climate finance to the local level: Bhutan, Ethiopia, Uganda, Malawi, Burkina Faso, and The Gambia. They were joined, in 2024, by Nepal, Madagascar, Benin, and Senegal.

The countries undertook an initial national scoping to understand the existing climate finance landscape. This was followed by a joined-up 'whole of government' effort to build the national architecture to deliver climate finance effectively to support local level action. To ensure that this process is integrated into national structures and budget allocations, support from national treasuries and finance ministries was key.

Once the national structure was in place, countries started to establish sub-national structures and processes to deliver effective climate finance to the local level. Countries that are progressing quickly have worked with local government systems at the district level to set up the processes, systems, and procedures to support this transition. For instance, 12 district administrations are engaged in Uganda, and six in Malawi. The next step in these districts is to reach out to local communities at sub-district levels so that they can articulate their adaptation and resilience priorities and prioritize investments accordingly. The main focus is on empowerment, ownership, and inclusion, particularly for people marginalized by gender, ethnicity, ability, or age (see Box 1).

BOX 1: LIFE-AR SUPPORTS DEVOLUTION OF FINANCE IN UGANDA

Uganda started work on the LIFE-AR initiative in 2020. A two-year establishment phase focused on establishing a sustainable framework for long-term implementation including a national platform for governance — with representation from relevant ministries, departments, agencies, civil society representatives, and academia. Following widespread consultations, a national Devolved Climate Finance (DCF) Mechanism was established, along with a framework for monitoring, evaluation, and learning. The DCF Mechanism was designed by a technical working group with representation from local governments to align with the country's decentralized governance structure. The working group proposed establishing Parish Climate Change Committees (PCCCs) at the parish level, Uganda's smallest administrative unit.

The mechanism was piloted in 12 districts across Uganda's four water management zones, selected based on their vulnerability to climate hazards. Following capacity needs assessments at the district, sub-county, and parish levels — and the development of DCF operational guidelines and training materials — the mechanism was implemented in a phased approach across four pilot districts.

Capacity-Strengthening Phase

A Training of Trainers approach was implemented to equip technical staff in the pilot districts with the skills they needed to roll out the DCF mechanism. This brought together national and district actors to reflect on the operational challenges, opportunities, and complexities of working within Uganda's decentralized governance system.

"I appreciate the transparency in how this project is managed," commented Seydou Adolatona Opoka, district production officer, Pader, after the training. "Decisions are left to the communities, without any top-down dictation, allowing them to identify their own climate resilience challenges and solutions."

The training was also an opportunity to question existing practices. "Often, we focus too much on monitoring and evaluation but overlook learning," said Muhammad Semambo, principal climate change officer in the Ministry of Water and Environment, Climate Change Department. "Yet, it's through learning that we can identify best practices and improve."

Community awareness meeting in Kaabong District.

Implementation Phase

As part of the implementation phase, which started in May 2024, technical staff and political leaders from the districts were invited to take part in awareness campaigns about the initiative's objectives and processes. They selected which sub-counties and parishes to target, and raised awareness through radio, megaphones, and meetings. Existing government structures were strengthened, and new ones, like the PCCCs, were established where necessary.

"You brought the planning to us to ensure the community takes the lead," said Ocen Willy, a parish councilor in Pader. "To avoid bias and ensure transparency in selecting local leaders, let us have a transparent voting process for the parish committee."

"In the last two years, the district has suffered massive crop and livestock losses due to droughts and floods," said Captain Chris Mike Okiya, resident district commissioner of Kaabong, located in the semi-arid region of Karamoja, which is repeatedly impacted by climate extremes. "The way LIFE-AR is designed is unique as it puts communities at the center of making decisions on projects that are going to help them deal with these challenges. We must ensure strong community engagement and local leadership to ensure the program is owned at every level and delivers real change."

"As an agricultural district, climate change affects our livelihoods directly," said George Owile, district planner, Kibaale. "LIFE-AR is a blessing because it provides the resources we need to mobilize and engage communities. We will use a multimedia approach to create awareness about the project through community meetings, radio programs, and other methods (for example, church gatherings) but also talking to our community leaders at sub-county and parish level. We hope that through LIFE-AR we can work together with all stakeholders including women, youth, and people with disabilities to improve livelihoods and avert poverty in our communities."

Gender-Based Challenges

Existing gender equity challenges surfaced in a community awareness raising meeting. "As women of Kiti village, we cultivate our coffee alongside our husbands," said a resident of Kassunga Parish in Kalungu District. "We suffer with the work to get the best yields. But when the selling time comes, our husbands exclude us… They sell the coffee without consulting us and use the money to marry other women. Despite our involvement in the harvesting, drying, and packaging, we're not given access to the money."

The need for gender balance is clearly articulated in the DCF implementation guidelines. The DCF mechanism also includes a toolkit to help identify how climate priorities differ for men, women, and young people — allowing each group to articulate their livelihood strategies and preferences in response to climate risks.[28]

Next up for the initiative in Uganda is building the capacities of PCCCs to work with communities. The focus is on identifying local solutions to climate challenges, and establishing effective monitoring, reporting, and accountability processes — together. Lessons from the pilot districts will also guide how the initiative expands in new districts.

Uganda's journey has demonstrated that the process is just as important as the end goal. By working with national experts, the program continues to strengthen existing country systems, processes, and institutions. The focus is on strengthening local institutions instead of creating new ones, and introducing new ones only where gaps exist. The long-term success of LIFE-AR will depend on sustained, multi-year funding from committed funders — alongside leadership from those who are most impacted.

BOX 2: LINKING LLA APPROACHES TO TRADITIONAL FUNDING STREAMS

Communities in Mongla, Bangladesh, are preparing People's Adaptation Plans under the GCA's Adaptation Acceleration Program, with funding from the UK.

The climate crisis has increased the hardships that young girls like Munira Begum, a resident of Digonto Colony in Bangladesh, are forced to endure. "We have to walk longer distances to fetch water every day, and have less time to learn, work, and earn," she says.

Digonto Colony is an informal settlement in Mongla, a port city that draws in migrants from the neighboring districts of Barisal, Bagerhat, and Noakhali, particularly in the aftermath of devastating storm surges and cyclones. Life is not much easier in Mongla, however. Migrants must live with informal and unsafe housing, rising levels of salinity that are worsening an already acute drinking water shortage, food insecurity, threats to livelihoods, and added climate-related impacts on mental and physical wellbeing.

Munira and her fellow Digonto residents would not normally have a say in defining priorities for investments by international financial institutions (IFI) in their country. A UK-funded project, implemented under the GCA's Adaptation Acceleration Program, is now making sure that Munira's concerns are heard and addressed.

The GCA is working with local partners in Bangladesh to support the residents of informal settlements across several cities to develop People's Adaptation Plans.

The process for developing these plans is based on best practice by the affiliates of Slum Dwellers International, developed over decades of experience in multiple countries around the world and described in this **Guide**. Facilitated by local partners and community mobilizers from within the community itself, the process is first and foremost an opportunity for communities to map and understand climate threats. That way, they can negotiate priorities better amongst themselves, with their local and national governments (including through IFIs), and with external fund providers.

The broad methodology focuses on community engagement down to the household level; a recognition of interdependent, multisectoral climate challenges faced by vulnerable communities; genuine partnerships between government, residents, civil society, and academia; and where necessary, a rethinking of conventional approaches and legislation to confront vulnerabilities and resource scarcity.

Planning begins with stakeholder mapping to define roles within communities and build partnerships, along with climate risk assessments conducted by local universities to build institutional capacity. Community members are identified and trained as mobilizers and co-researchers to undertake data collection on behalf of the community, and to map key geographical features and public services on global information systems. Settlement profiling delivers a broad understanding of climate risks and challenges. A process of house-to-house enumeration follows, engaging at the household level. The community then comes together for a climate risk profiling to identify and rank climate risks, and to guide a co-planning process. The result of the co-planning process is a People's Adaptation Plan, with prioritized and budgeted interventions to guide investments.

"Drinking water was our highest priority," says Munira. "We therefore prioritized investments in rainwater harvesting systems and the re-excavation of ponds in the colony."

For the residents of Uporer Char, also in Mongla, the priority was flooding. "Our community is in a low-lying area, so we often deal with flooding," said Hira Aktar, a resident. "In the absence of drains, even moderate rainfall causes flooding. When it floods, wastewater from toilets mixes with the pond water. In our discussions, we realized that focusing only on drains will not solve the problem. We identified a range of priorities, including toilets built on raised plinths, better drainage infrastructure, and re-excavating canals."

The planning process is also an opportunity to think outside the box and to develop community systems. In Digonto Colony, for instance, the communities determined that a 50,000-litre water tank is necessary to store enough rainwater for the five months of the dry season. The challenge, however, was the lack of space for a catchment for such a large tank. The community decided to use the local primary school's roof as the catchment area, and negotiated a written agreement with the school management committee. A water distribution committee of five members was formed to ensure equitable distribution of water.

This committee also has the mandate to collect a small contribution of US$ 1-2 from the households for maintaining the system and has opened a bank account to manage this maintenance fund.

Under the Adaptation Acceleration Program model, the People's Adaptation Plans are typically linked to investments by IFIs to ensure that the plans can be implemented. But they also become a vehicle for fundraising from other sources. In Mongla, for instance, the residents of climate-vulnerable communities used the plan to negotiate for some of the interventions to be funded from the city's annual development budget. "The planning process has opened doors of communication between the municipality and the community," said Sheikh Abdur Rahman, former mayor of Mongla. "I consider this kind of comprehensive planning the most difficult part of the process. Once that is done, we should be able to implement priority solutions one by one, including as part of the annual development plan."

The UK is also supporting the GCA's **Global Hub on Locally Led Adaptation**, which among other things supports knowledge management to inform community adaptation and resilience building efforts, and peer-to-peer learning among communities for problem solving. For instance, community leaders from Mongla **shared** their experience in developing People's Adaptation Plans with residents of informal settlements in Kuakata, another secondary city in Bangladesh where the GCA is supporting a People's Adaptation Plan to inform investments by the Asian Development Bank's Coastal Towns Climate Resilience Project.

From Principles To Action

The UK and Ireland were the first two governments to endorse the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) when they were announced at the Climate Adaptation Summit in January 2021. This commitment to move towards a more equitable and partnership-based approach is now being brought to life through an increasing range of program investments and tools.

The UK's contributions are enabling an incremental transformational shift in how climate finance can support local-level engagement and local ownership of the decisions on investment priorities for effective adaptation and resilience building.

THE STORY OF THE NETHERLANDS

Water management has been an important development aid priority for the Netherlands since 2006 for two reasons: the increasing severity of water problems in recipient countries; and the expertise of the Netherlands, as a low-lying deltaic country prone to flooding, in water management. The country's aid policy evolved from a broad focus on integrated water resource management plans and transboundary water management to a more specific focus on efficient use of water in agriculture, improved watershed management, and safe deltas, along with the closely interlinked issues of climate change, environment, governance, gender equity, and poverty reduction.

In 2016, the Netherlands committed to **The Grand Bargain** – an agreement between donors and humanitarian organizations to get more means into the hands of people in need, and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action.

In 2017, a 10-year (2006-2016) **review** flagged that the implementation of the water aid policy was mostly successful – but only in achieving short-term outcomes. Sustainability remained a fundamental challenge, leading to cycles of what the review called "*build, neglect, repair*". Moreover, it found that support provided did not always reach people most in need or address their actual aspirations.[29] While the earlier approach of trying to influence broader national-level institutional and policy change had been challenging, the review found that the new focus on smaller projects was proving too ephemeral.

Both events highlighted the need for an alternative approach, and led to the birth of a new program, in 2021, called **Reversing the Flow** (RtF), to fund local actors directly.

The design of RtF challenged traditional procedures and systems within the Netherlands government. It called for the approval of undefined actions and outputs, and it was not clear where, when, and by whom these activities would be delivered. Committed policy officers persevered to push for this flexibility, making the case that greater ownership by recipients would result in greater efficacy and efficiency.

Their efforts received a boost in 2021, when the Global Commission on Adaptation presented its eight **Principles on Locally Led Adaptation** (LLA) during the Climate Adaptation Summit. As co-host of the Summit, the Netherlands decided to take a bold step to implement the Principles. The decision was finally made to relax central control and accept perceived higher fiduciary risks to shift decision-making to communities in the RtF Program.

Piloting A New Approach

RtF was initiated in five countries where Dutch Embassies expressed an interest to support the LLA approach (Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Sudan). Civil society organizations (CSOs) with deep roots in the community, which were well-placed to bridge the gap between governments and communities and between a locally led approach and a broader landscape approach (essential for integrated watershed management), were invited to serve as hubs.

Accountability documentation.

Community meeting.

The final selection of hubs was based on conversations with leaders and staff to ensure that they were on board for a new paradigm of development cooperation that went beyond a donor-recipient relationship; and were firmly committed to the needs of the community instead of their own vision of what the community needed.

Selected CSOs were invited to submit proposals outlining an approach that would be best-suited, given the local context, to channel small grants to communities, preferably using existing structures and institutions. Unlike traditional proposals, they were not required to describe specific interventions or outputs in the proposals; these would be defined by the communities during the planning phase. No formats were provided for the proposal or budget initially to allow the CSOs the freedom to use own templates, but this ended up delaying the proposals, as the CSOs were unsure of what to write and afraid of saying the wrong thing. Further reassurance and trust-building was necessary to convince them that the program was committed to decision-making by the communities.

Once the proposals were accepted, 10 hubs in the five countries of operation started to work with the communities to detail what activities should be supported, how the communities would organize themselves, and who should receive the funds. The hubs supported decision-making by the communities (including on criteria and indicators for landscape improvement); facilitated access to technical support when necessary; and formed networks between communities and organizations within the watershed, to enable them to take a broader watershed approach and to participate in policy and investment dialogues on more equal terms with more powerful development actors.

The hub in Kenya has been providing small grants since July 2023.

The hubs worked with existing institutions and capacities, and sometimes these were sector-based groups (like Kenya's Community Land Management Committees, Water Resources Users Associations, and Community Forest Associations). In other countries, these were groups that had a broader, more integrated mandate (like Ethiopia's watershed organizations).

The hubs are responsible for administering the small grants, for coordinating and monitoring implementation, and for reporting back to **Netherlands Enterprise Agency** (RVO). While an audit report is required of their own expenses, the hubs are not obliged to present audit reports of spending by the community groups. Instead, accountability back to peers in the community is supported.

REVERSING THE FLOW

The Maasai communities of north Laikipia County, Kenya, live on the foothills of majestic Mount Kenya, near the expansive Mukogodo Forest. They are no strangers to the harsh realities of drought, a recurring challenge to their pastoral way of life. But even they have been left reeling by the recent dry spells that have depleted their water sources and pastures. The delicate mountain and forest ecosystems, so essential for their survival and for the water cycle in the region, are in danger of collapsing due to deforestation and climate change.

The communities are exploring ways to adapt to changing weather patterns by creating alternative income streams to build resilience to extreme weather shocks. "Our approach is based on the belief that communities are the best custodians of their own resources," says James Mema from IMPACT Kenya, a local NGO that is supporting the communities with funding from the Netherlands' **Reversing the Flow** (RtF) program. "We provide the support that communities need to implement their own solutions."


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> We used to rely solely on the rains for our water and when we had no water, we had to travel to nearby villages to get water from communal boreholes. But now, with the help of this project, we have managed to build a pipeline from the rainwater harvesting tank built by the municipality. This has made a big difference in our lives, ensuring we have a consistent water supply by capturing rainwater.
> James Masaine, IMPACT Kenya

The RtF program, implemented through RVO, aims to trigger systemic change for funding to flow to local actors directly, by channeling small grants directly to grassroots organizations through hubs for community-led interventions on landscape restoration, water security, and climate change adaptation. IMPACT is one of these hubs, and supported the Maasai communities of Laikipia in defining, designing, and implementing ways to adapt to climate change. IMPACT acts as a facilitator, providing technical support and ensuring transparency.

Based on their longstanding relationship with the Masaai community in the county, IMPACT identified three interconnected wards with vulnerable pastoralist communities who share resources. After disclosing the project approach and budget to the communities, IMPACT facilitated an initial resource mapping process to inform discussions, and supported communities to identify key priorities and develop proposals and budgets. These processes encouraged broad community engagement and the intentional inclusion of vulnerable groups such as women, youth, elderly, and people with disabilities.

Communities proposed projects through existing management structures, such as the land committees and women's groups. "Every idea that we proposed came from the community," says Tom Putunoi from the Musul Land Committee.

"We sat down as a community, wrote our proposal, the budget, outlined what we needed," says Jackson Nkaiduri from the Musul community. "There was no complicated method we used. It was very simple. Once IMPACT reviewed our submission, they allocated funds which were deposited into our community account." Communities received direct funding into these registered community bank accounts and made decisions on resource allocation.

The communities designed and implemented initiatives such as water conservation projects, women's economic empowerment programs, and land restoration activities by leveraging traditional knowledge and mobilizing local capacities. Local structures and individuals lead project implementation, leveraging traditional knowledge and building on local capacity through self-organization. Open communication about project budgets continues to ensure transparency and accountability. Monitoring is conducted by inter-ward and ward committees through community meetings and visits to specific projects across the wards. They report on each project visited through WhatsApp groups, and this regular reporting by communities fosters accountability and allows for monitoring of project progress.

> Our group has been able to explore the use of solar-powered lighting in our communal space where we work. When there is no water or grass, our animals suffer and we struggle to survive. But through this project, we have learned new ways to conserve our resources and diversify our livelihoods by building greenhouses where we plant vegetables that serve both as produce for sale and for seeding our own kitchen gardens.
>
> Mary Sarioyo, secretary, Naatum Women's Group

While these initiatives have yielded positive results, the project has not been without its challenges. Limited resources, government bureaucracy, and the need for technical expertise continue to pose obstacles. However, communities have persevered, demonstrating remarkable resilience and determination, and are eager to share the lessons they learned:

- **Direct funding:** Empowering communities with direct funding fosters ownership and encourages innovative solutions. "The Naatum Women's Group was able to create a new fund themselves which they use as a savings and credit facility for the community," says Jackline Kenge, vice chair of the Naatum Women's Group.
- **Community-led monitoring:** The focus on monitoring by and for the community enables learning and course correction. "At the beginning of our project, we built semi-circular bunds (to channel water) in places where there was too much water flowing, so they were destroyed," says Jackson Nkaiduri from the Musul Land Committee. "But we've learned and moved the bunds to another site, where they are working successfully. We have documented our progress to make sure we are preserving the learning for the next phases."
- **Transparency and collaboration:** IMPACT's deep roots in the community were instrumental in establishing a trusting partnership. Open dialogue and cooperation with both communities and key stakeholders has been essential to continue to foster trust and ensuring the long-term viability of community efforts.

Lessons From The Hubs

RtF is still in an early stage, but first experience indicates the challenges of changing ways of working that have been in practice for decades in the development sector, and are often reduced to meaningless jargon and tick-box processes. Local knowledge, capacities, and strengths are often ignored, while communities are expected to build capacity for processes dictated by finance providers. Considerable trust-building is necessary to convince fund providers to let go, and for communities to take ownership.

The hub in Kenya, which is in the most advanced stage of implementation, has been providing small grants since July 2023. The grants have catalyzed the community into contributing their own time and money to contribute to the overall effort. They have also led to discussions with the local government to support community efforts and provide further funding. Hubs have also started advocating the locally led approach to other donors.

Community members demonstrating the water distribution system in Lakipia County.

Systems Change In The Netherlands

Meanwhile in the Netherlands, following the commitment to the Principles for LLA, an internal working group on locally led approaches was established by the Director General of International Co-operation in 2021, to develop an inventory of local led approaches and provide entry points on how to expand this work. The working group reviewed experiences with participatory planning, implementing The Grand Bargain, strengthening of civil society organizations, and building climate resilience. It identified opportunities for further progress on four issues: developing a clear narrative; programming LLA; identifying internal barriers (such as issues related to fiduciary management, risk sharing, and mutual accountability) and solutions; and learning.

In 2022, the Netherlands, with 20 other countries, signed the **Donor Statement on Supporting Locally Led Development**, committing to shift and share power, channel high quality funding as directly as possible, and publicly advocate for locally led development. Locally led development was subsequently incorporated in the **2022 policy** as one of the six working methods for maximum development impact.

In 2023, OECD peer reviewers **noted** that the Dutch ambition for locally led development needs to be put into practice while ensuring the thematic approach is adapted to context and clarifying the risk appetite.

During COP26 in Glasgow in 2023, the Dutch government endorsed the eight Principles of Locally Led Adaptation, and the **Generating Ambition for Locally-Led Adaptation** program was launched in September 2024.

Just when the RtF program was gathering speed, political change in the Netherlands in June 2024 following elections in November 2023 resulted in a substantial budget and personnel reduction for international development cooperation. Consequently, grants planned for four new RtF hubs were put on hold by Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This top-down decision led to a breach of principles and lack of confidence in providing reliable long-term funding to the RtF approach, showing once again that LLA requires continued strong commitment and political will to share power.

While some development co-operation providers have set top-down quantitative targets for locally led development, the approach of the Netherlands was based on practice, flexibility, and learning, with fund recipients to develop context-specific solutions. The Principles for LLA provide guidance to shape new power relations and trigger systemic change, but the challenges lie in the willingness to do so and in operationalization along a whole chain of development actors that is used to doing things in a particular way. It is also challenging to match fluctuating domestic priorities in both fund providing and fund receiving countries, with a genuine commitment to the Principles for LLA.

USAID'S STORY

Jane Asimit and her family of six live in the Nakuprat Gotu Community Conservancy in northern Kenya. This is Kenya's most marginalized and under-developed region, with arid and semi-arid lands, economic instability, and resource-based conflicts. With no education and few occupational options for women, Jane's only source of income was herding goats and selling milk.

When the conservancy manager told her about a mobile vocational program, Ujuzi Manyattani (Skills in the Village), Asimit, who always had a desire to study and learn, signed on for a three-month tailoring class.

Ujuzi Manyattani aims to help young men and women from pastoral communities pursue alternative livelihoods in Northern Rangelands Trust member conservancies. Implemented by MashinaniWORKS through a grant from USAID, the program is part of a larger regional effort to help communities develop economic and climate resilience through hands-on training in masonry, carpentry, motorcycle mechanics, mobile phone mechanics, welding, tailoring, hairdressing, and cookery.

Asimit attended the first Ujuzi Manyattani meeting in June 2021 with trepidation, worried that her lack of education would hurt her eligibility. She not only graduated three months later, but went on to launch a seamstress business from her house with the sewing machine she received as part of the program. She got her first big break shortly after, from a local school which ordered 400 uniforms. The proceeds from this job enabled Jane to transfer her son from a local public school to a private school in Isiolo town.

Asimit's business continues to grow. She is now financially independent, able to provide for her six children and pay for their schooling. In March 2023, she opened her own shop, Mama Simiyu Tailoring and Dress Making, at the Ngare Mara Center. She continues to receive

large orders for school and church uniforms and has since mentored four young women in tailoring. Looking ahead, she plans to buy four electric sewing machines to reduce labor and boost output.

Asimit encourages other young women who lack formal education to join vocational training programs like Ujuzi Manyattani. "I tell them it impacts their family as it creates work and brings in resources," she says.

Jane Asimit opened her own shop, Mama Simiyu Tailoring and Dress Making, after learning to be a seamstress.

Ujuzi Manyattani is one of the initiatives supported by USAID's Local Works program, which seeks to empower local communities to lead their own development and shift USAID's role to be a catalyst for locally led change. USAID Missions select local partners through listening tours and co-creation. Partners receive flexible funding, technical support, and other tools over a period of five years, which puts them in the driver's seat of their own development. Lessons from Local Works helps inform USAID's broader commitment to locally led development and humanitarian assistance.

Adaptation Is A Local, National, And Global Priority

Americans have seen the impacts of climate change in their own backyards – wildfires, water scarcity, and flash flooding have increased in intensity, wreaking havoc on families, communities, and infrastructure. But the effects of climate change disproportionately impact the poorest and most marginalized communities around the world, and the need to prepare for and adapt to those impacts are more important than ever. Climate change affects virtually everything that USAID does, threatening the development progress supported by the agency over more than 60 years. USAID recognizes that investments in adaptation save lives, livelihoods, and money; and that for investments to be successful and sustainable, they should be locally led, rooted in local contexts, and draw on local priorities, knowledge, and solutions.

Since 2021, the President's Emergency Plan for Adaptation and Resilience (PREPARE) has been working to help more than half a billion people in developing countries adapt to and manage the impacts of climate change by 2030. Led by the U.S. Department of State and USAID, PREPARE is implemented by 20 federal agencies. The U.S. government is scaling its assistance – securing US$ 2.3 billion to implement PREPARE in 2022 and continuing to work with Congress to meet the president's pledge to fund international adaptation at US$ 3 billion annually by 2024. Through the agencies implementing PREPARE, the U.S. government is preserving hard-won development gains, safeguarding future sustainable development, and contributing to stability and economic growth.

USAID's investments in adaptation programming are guided by the **2022-2030 Climate Strategy**. The strategy takes a new "whole of agency" approach to the challenge, calling on all corners of USAID to advance equitable and ambitious actions to confront the climate crisis. Two of the strategy's mutually reinforcing embedded principles are locally led development and equity and inclusion, which align with another of the agency's priorities: localization. USAID's commitment to localization encompasses a set of reforms, actions, and behavior changes to help ensure the agency's work – including climate adaptation programming – puts local actors in the lead, strengthens local systems, and is responsive to local communities.

USAID's **Localization Vision and Approach**, released in August 2022, outlines the agency's commitment to:

- Adapt its policies and programs to foster locally led development.
- Shift power to local actors and promote space for them to influence and exercise leadership over USAID programming.
- Channel a larger portion of funding directly to local partners.
- Use the agency's convening power and partnerships to catalyze a broader shift toward locally led development.

USAID has two agency-wide targets to hold itself to account for making progress towards this commitment:

- Channel a quarter of USAID's funding to local partners.
- Ensure that at least half of USAID programs are locally led.

Progress Towards Commitments

In the past two years since the climate strategy and localization commitments were adopted, USAID has made progress in directing more bilateral assistance to adaptation than ever before, and agency-wide changes are underway to allow more of that assistance to flow to local levels and to reflect local knowledge and priorities.

In 2023, USAID supported communities in 64 countries to build resilience to climate impacts, a fivefold increase in the number of countries from 2018. In FY 2023, the agency invested US$ 240 million in bilateral assistance to support adaptation, and mobilized an additional US$ 16.7 billion for adaptation and mitigation from other public and private sources. USAID and the State Department marshaled corporate actions valued at over US$ 3 billion for adaptation through the **PREPARE Call to Action to the Private Sector**. USAID's development portfolio was aligned to National Adaptation Plans and Nationally Determined Contributions in 80 countries.

USAID has also undertaken a wide range of efforts to advance locally led development and humanitarian response, and implement the Principles for LLA. For instance, USAID has developed new tools and resources to support staff to work in more locally led ways, including through co-creation, the use of accountability and feedback mechanisms, equitable local sub-awards, and more. A **primer** and **guidance note** has been developed to help staff and partners implement the Principles, and barriers to entry for local partners are being reduced through increased outreach, use of local languages in award making processes and documents, and more flexible and tailorable pre-award assessments for local partners. USAID is expanding the use of mechanisms with lower compliance burdens, taking steps to support partners' full cost recovery, and encouraging staff to reduce reporting burdens.

USAID supported communities in 64 countries in 2023 to build resilience to climate impacts.

These and other changes have helped USAID to increase the number of new awards to local partners by 45% since 2021, and to increase the number of unique local partners by 24% in the same period. In 2023, USAID obligated US$ 1.5 billion to local partners, with another US$ 68 million to **regional partners** and US$ 156 million through government-to-government assistance. USAID also introduced a **new way to track** how its programs create space for local leadership in program design, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Examples of USAID's efforts to promote LLA include the Asia Resilient Cities (ARC) Project, launched in 2022. ARC uses inclusive and participatory approaches to address crosscutting urban development challenges in secondary cities in Asia by promoting sustainable urban growth; supporting resilient, low carbon urban infrastructure; and integrating climate change and environmentally conscious approaches. ARC is collaborating with municipal officials and residents to create more resilient and livable environments. Investments are responsive to local community needs through an inclusive and participatory approach, including, for instance, in co-defining the impacts of the work in each municipality through the program. The project is being implemented in **Khulna**, Bangladesh (by BRAC), **Rajkot**, India (by John Snow India Private Limited), **Bishkek**, Kyrgyz Republic, and **Ulaanbaatar**, Mongolia (by the Asia Foundation). ARC connects city residents, municipal governments, and other stakeholders to create relationships that will continue past the end of this project.

In Kenya, **USAID Kuza** works through local systems to expand economic opportunities, particularly for women, youth, and marginalized groups, in places with recurring crisis, and to strengthen the institutional and governance capacity of county governments and non-governmental organizations. In Lamu County, USAID Kuza is supporting the Government of Kenya at the county level by providing technical assistance on policy, planning, and institutional structures to support inter-sectoral mainstreaming and coordination of climate action. Along with stakeholders, USAID Kuza co-created an Impact for Northern Kenya Fund, a US$ 38 million impact investment vehicle that lends to small and medium sized enterprises, including women and youth, and communities negatively impacted by drought, floods, and other natural disasters. Loans to organizations such to Solargen, a small firm that provides pay-as-you-go solar power for rural communities, and to companies that

USAID's ARC Project in Bangladesh supports climate-conscious development for more inclusive cities.

develop gabions aligned with local planning efforts to prevent erosion and landslides, ensure Kenyan enterprises can continue operations, provide food security, and create employment opportunities, even in the face of climate change.

Growing The Momentum

A global approach and rethinking of the aid system is necessary to tackle climate change by shifting more resources and agency to local actors, who best know their challenges and are driving solutions in their communities. Alongside Ireland, USAID is proud to support the growing momentum for the Principles for LLA, particularly among governments. An intentional advocacy campaign by the U.S. and Ireland, including high-level outreach and technical briefings, resulted in seven governments signing on to the Principles for LLA in 2023. Donors now convene regularly to share best practices on ways to implement the Principles. Working together to pool resources, leverage, networks, and power to advance LLA is critical to shield vulnerable communities from climate change.

CHAPTER 3

HOW ARE MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS SUPPORTING LLA?

HIGHLIGHTS

- The role of MDBs in advancing LLA is crucial because of their ability to have large-scale impact across the development spectrum, including on country systems, the delivery of public services, and empowering local governments.
- A key goal for MDBs is to shift away from fragmented, project-based approaches in favor of sustainable national systems to deliver locally led climate action, in line with the Principles for LLA of delivering long-term, predictable financing that leaves an institutional legacy.
- A focus on long-term, system-wide approaches can embed LLA into national frameworks. Innovative financial models, such as results-based and policy-based financing, are providing predictable funding to help countries like Bangladesh scale community-led resilience strategies.
- Programs like Kenya's FLLoCA not only decentralize funding but also foster local ownership, allowing communities to prioritize their own climate risks and solutions. This creates a bottom-up approach that strengthens trust between citizens and governments, making adaptation efforts more effective and scalable.
- MDBs are also leveraging their experience with community-driven development programs, which have proven effective at reducing vulnerability and building resilience. By institutionalizing these programs, MDBs can enable local governments to integrate climate adaptation into their development agendas.
- Strong and meaningful partnerships with grassroots organizations can ensure that local knowledge is integrated into MDB strategies to enhance the sustainability and inclusiveness of climate programs.

Devolving decision making

Patient, predictable, accessible funding

Investing in local capacities

Flexible programming and learning

IN THIS CHAPTER

When the heads of 10 Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) met in April 2024 for their annual group of heads of MDBs meeting, they recognized that their collective mission – to eradicate poverty and hunger and reduce inequalities – faces a common threat: climate change.[30]

In the crosshairs are the millions who already live in and near poverty, whose lives the 10 MDBs are working to change. More than 100 million people in developing countries could be pushed below the poverty line by 2030 due to climate change.[31] They now face more weather-related shocks, water scarcity, food and livelihood insecurity, health impacts, loss of land, displacement, threats to cultural identity, and other risks. Inequalities are set to rise, crop yields decrease, disease patterns change, and labor productivity decline. Climate change could also drive 216 million people to migrate within their own countries by 2050, with hotspots of internal migration emerging as early as 2030.[32]

These threats are felt at the local level, and require urgent, targeted, locally-tailored responses to reduce impacts on the poor and most vulnerable. As yet, however, local adaptation and climate resilience building efforts are fragmented and patchy at best, with very limited climate finance reaching local governments and communities. Country systems, which have proven so vital in delivering poverty reduction and basic services to local communities, need to be strengthened and primed to fund and facilitate locally led strategies to address the climate crisis and promote resilience development in a more systematized way.

This is where the MDBs come in. With experience in supporting the strengthening of country systems for sound governance, inclusive development, delivery of public services, and mobilization of local resources, they can play a critical role in making predictable sources of concessional funding available to support the agenda, and embedding the localization of adaptation efforts in existing national institutions, policies, and processes.

This chapter presents the perspective of two MDBs: the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Both have strong track records in investing in strengthening country systems to support devolution and decentralization efforts of governments, while providing support to strengthen performance-based fiscal transfer systems, sector-based service delivery, and capacity of local governments. These are crucial elements to enable local level climate action at scale.

A young girl near a roughly dug well in a dried-out river in rural Kenya.

MDBs can make predictable sources of concessional funding available to support LLA.

Investing in Decentralization, Devolution, And Stronger Local Government Systems

The World Bank has extensive experience in supporting devolution and decentralization in low and middle-income countries, focusing on enhancing local governance, accountability, and service delivery. These efforts are part of a broader strategy to empower subnational governments, enhance their capacities, and ensure that decentralization leads to tangible improvements in public services and economic opportunities for local communities.

In Mozambique, for instance, the World Bank has **supported** decentralization reforms aimed at improving fiscal transfer systems and local service delivery, contributing to peace and stability in the country.[33]

In Kenya, the World Bank's Kenya Devolution Support Program (KDSP) has been instrumental in establishing foundational institutions and systems to support devolution since 2013, following the structural reforms introduced by the 2010 Constitution. KDSP has significantly improved governance and service delivery at the county level, fostering local economic development and job creation through tailored economic strategies.[34]

In Bangladesh, through three phases of Local Governance Support Programs supported by the World Bank, mechanisms for the management of fiscal transfers, provision of capacity building support to local levels, and assessments of local performance have been tested and refined, forming a solid base for further engagement. The ADB has provided similar support to Bangladesh since 2003 through its Urban Governance and Infrastructure Improvement Program (UGIIP). UGIIP provides performance-based financing to strengthen good governance and improve the capacity of urban local governments to mobilize resources and deliver better services to people, including by engaging with communities through grassroots organizations. Recent phases have included a focus on climate and disaster risk management.

These projects build essential foundations for effective decentralization and devolution of climate action through stronger and more local government systems. The foundations laid by KDSP, for example, provided an important building block for a scaled up, nation-wide program on financing locally led climate action (see Box 1).

Leveraging Community Led Programs

For years, MDBs have worked with governments to invest in Community Driven Development (CDD) programs that emphasize citizen voice and control over investments, development planning, decision making, and implementation. The World Bank alone has invested well over US$ 30 billion in CDD programs over the past decade, supporting basic service delivery, livelihoods, social services, poverty reduction, and other community priorities at a large scale.

In several countries (for instance, Indonesia, Philippines, Rwanda, and Mongolia), governments have institutionalized these programs as multi-sectoral service delivery platforms, supported primarily though national budgets. More recently, some CDD programs have begun to integrate climate and disaster risk management considerations (for instance, Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Ethiopia). Both the World Bank and the ADB have also used CDD programs to deliver post-disaster recovery support, as seen in the aftermath of Typhoon Yolanda in the Philippines. Experiences from the Philippines have shown that community infrastructure built through CDD has survived the impacts of high-intensity typhoons.

Both the World Bank and ADB also support efforts by governments to work more closely with communities. ADB, for instance, supported the development of gender action plans to ensure that the infrastructure needs of women are prioritized for financing as part of the Kerala Sustainable Urban Development Project in Kerala, India.

A key lesson from CDD is the importance of strengthening both vertical and horizontal linkages. Vertical linkages (from communities to local and national governments) are vital

Both the World Bank and ADB support efforts by governments to work more closely with communities.

to ensure that decisions are made at the most appropriate level in line with the principle of subsidiarity, strengthen country systems for climate risk management, and ensure that national level climate commitments and programs are informed by realities on the ground. Horizontal linkages (across pro-poor development programs) are vital to ensure that communities receive the full range of support needed to build resilience, including across areas such as resilient livelihoods, skill building, financial inclusion, and social protection.

MDB Strategies And Investments For Scaling Up LLA

MDBs are also stepping up efforts to invest directly in locally led climate action. A key goal is to shift away from fragmented, projectized approaches in favor of sustainable national systems to deliver locally led climate action, in line with the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) of delivering long-term, predictable financing that leaves an institutional legacy. In addition to financial and technical support, policy-based financing, results-based financing, and funding through financial intermediaries (such as microfinance institutions or local banks) are some of the mechanisms being used to progress in this direction.

For instance, as an implementing partner of the Climate Investment **Fund's Dedicated Grant Mechanism for Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities**, the World Bank has mobilized US$ 80 million to support community-led, context-specific programs that draw on local expertise to advance sustainable forest stewardship and elevate the voices of Indigenous peoples and local communities in local, national, and global climate action. The **Capacity Building Program** of the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility has allocated US$ 15 million for similar purposes. Another US$ 24.5 million World Bank trust fund called Enhancing Access to Benefits while Lowering Emissions (**EnABLE**) promotes inclusion and equality in result-based climate finance programs, helping marginalized and disadvantaged communities to enhance their access to carbon and non-carbon benefits generated through emissions reduction programs.

MDBs are mobilizing funds for community-led programs to promote sustainable forest stewardship and amplify the voices of Indigenous peoples in climate action.

WORLD BANK'S STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION

To operationalize the Principles for LLA, the World Bank promotes the integration of features that enable local leadership in the design of projects, including:

- Applying the principle of subsidiarity for climate finance and ensuring the flow of funds and decision-making power go to the lowest appropriate level for the project to address climate risks while ensuring accountability, transparency, and coordination among actors on multiple levels.
- Supporting participation, inclusion, and community empowerment around climate action, to ensure an inclusive approach to integrating local knowledge and climate science into participatory climate decision-making.
- Ensuring that investments are informed by climate science and strategies for climate results to promote effective adaptation and alignment with existing national climate commitments.

Key strategies for the World Bank to scale up locally-led climate action include both the expansion of CDD programs to promote climate action by integrating community-led climate action in wider pro-poor development programs; or building on national efforts to promote climate action through decentralization processes and fiscal transfer mechanisms from national to local governments.

The **Guinea Support to Local Governance Project,** for instance, leverages local knowledge to address both climate and conflict-related risks. The project developed a tool to harness local knowledge on the most direct climate and fragility, conflict, and violence risks and integrate this feedback into multi-year planning cycles. By channeling funds directly to communities and engaging them in decisions about how that money is spent, the project ensures that infrastructure investments are more resilient to climate shocks. Additionally, the project supports diversified livelihoods and strengthens community voices, which are crucial for sustainable and scalable local economic planning.[35]

In 2022, the World Bank and the Government of Kenya collaborated to launch the Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) Program, which sets an important precedent as the first national scale model of devolved climate finance. FLLoCA channels climate finance and decision-making power to county governments, while also providing technical support and capacity building to county and local governments to work in partnership with their citizens to assess climate risk and identify solutions, which then get financed by the program. The program uses performance-based grants to incentivize change among county governments to manage climate risk. It focuses on building trust and empowering people to drive their own development process while at the same time strengthening a country-owned, national scale system that can attract and manage finance for climate and disaster risk management, ensure that the funds reach the most vulnerable on the ground, and give people a voice and choice in what happens to them. The heart of the FLLoCA Program is a Participatory Climate Risk Assessment and action planning process, which ensures collaboration between citizens and their local governments for identifying and implementing climate investments. This bottom-up process also allows local priorities to inform Nationally Determined Contributions and other national climate commitments. Finally, FLLoCA is serving as a national platform to attract other sources of climate finance (see Box 1).

BOX 1: FINANCING LOCALLY LED CLIMATE ACTION IN KENYA

Kenya's constitutional commitment to devolution in 2010, followed by investments in building the capacity of local governments including through the World Bank's Kenya Accountable Devolution Program, enabled the development of the world's first national scale model to devolve climate finance. The Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) program, initiated in 2022, channels 90% of the funding it receives to the county and community level to ensure that it reaches those most at risk from climate change.

FLLoCA scaled up a County Climate Change Funds (CCCF) model piloted by the Ada Consortium in Kenya. The CCCF was implemented in five counties (Isiolo, Garissa, Kitui, Makueni, and Wajir), where county-level funds were created to finance around 100 public good investments prioritized by the communities through a highly consultative process. More than 500,000 community members, mostly women, benefitted from investments that included the rehabilitation of bore holes and installation of solar equipment; water harvesting, storage, and distribution systems; sanitation facilities; and governance activities, among others. A large-scale household survey conducted in 2018 found that the CCCF investments resulted in 100% greater access to water for households and livestock.[36] A 2019 assessment of the CCCFs found that the investments had additional direct and indirect benefits, including improved livelihoods, incomes, and food security, new economic opportunities, and fewer conflicts within households, communities, and between neighboring villages. Overall, it was found that the pilots led to significant adaptation benefits for households and communities, while also strengthening county institutions and improving the responsiveness to local needs, including of vulnerable and marginalized groups.

FLLoCA was developed with support from the World Bank, with additional contributions from the governments of Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, and KfW. County governments themselves contributed over Ksh 3 billion (approximatively US$ 23 million), which is almost half of the grant they receive from the program. Delivering 100% climate co-benefits to all 47 counties in Kenya, FLoCCA supports partnerships between local governments and their citizens to assess climate risks and identify socially inclusive solutions tailored to local needs. Depending on what communities prioritize, investments may focus on, for example, activities that promote livelihood diversification; community level preparedness for multiple risks; water conservation and more efficient use of water; natural resource management; the rehabilitation of degraded lands; or early warning systems.

Two and half years into implementation, a **review** of the program found that FLLoCA has strong national and county government ownership as well as community awareness and support. So far, 1,549 climate investments have been funded by 30 counties using their own resources. FLLoCA has provided a platform to coordinate LLA interventions and foster a close working relationships among national level agencies and between national and county governments. Moreover, the review revealed numerous cases where non-government organizations and donors are leveraging FLLoCA and providing technical assistance for the participatory climate risk assessments and planning.

A 2021 study that sought to assess financial arrangements that facilitate LLA through metrics such as devolution and subsidiarity of climate decision-making; devolution of finance to sub-national level; flexibility; and patience, predictability, and equity scored FLLoCA very high on these parameters, describing it as "potentially the start of a wider wave of increased emphasis on devolved climate adaptation finance in Kenya and elsewhere".[37]

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Supporting local climate action is a growing priority for the World Bank.

Responding to interest from other countries to develop similar programs for devolved climate finance, the World Bank is working actively with a number of governments, and has partnered with bilateral and multilateral donors to catalyze and prepare investments in large scale, country-owned, locally led systems for climate action. A key mechanism for these partnerships is the Social Sustainability Initiative for All (SSI4ALL) Umbrella Program, which aims to foster the development of inclusive, resilient, and empowered societies. SSI4ALL supports knowledge generation and sharing, data and analytics, country engagement, and financing to move the needle on key social challenges, including the climate crisis. It serves as a platform to convene key actors to learn together, identify and test solutions, and leverage their impact. The social resilience pillar of SSI4ALL supports World Bank teams and governments to bolster community-level resilience, expand access to resources, and ensure responsive governance. The governments of Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden are providing cofinancing to Kenya's FLLoCA Program through SSI4ALL. In addition, the Nordic Development Fund recently joined the partnership to provide catalytic funding to replicate the devolved climate finance model in other countries.

The World Bank is working actively with a number of governments, and has partnered with bilateral and multilateral donors to catalyze and prepare investments in large scale, country-owned, locally led systems for climate action.

ADB'S STRATEGIES AND SUPPORT FOR LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION

Supporting local climate actions is an increasing priority of the ADB. A range of strategies are being pursued, including integration into different sectors (especially social and human development, urban development, and agriculture and natural resources management); use of different financing modalities, such as policy-based financing and results-based financing, to advance reforms necessary for local leadership on climate actions; targeted use of concessional financing for community-led resilience; and support for innovations to test new approaches for building local resilience. For example, as part of urban sector operations in Indonesia, ADB has **supported** urban informal settlements to reduce risks of flooding through community participation and introduction of nature-based solutions.

Leveraging Financial Modalities And Programmatic Approaches

In Nepal, ADB is supporting local government reforms to implement climate-resilient infrastructure and service delivery through policy-based financing (where funds for general budget support are disbursed only when the country completes policy reforms or actions that have been agreed with ADB).

Concessional finance, especially grant finance, can also play a critical role in incentivizing a focus on local climate action. The **Asian Development Fund,** which provides grant-only financing to ADB's poorest and most vulnerable developing member countries, established a thematic window to fund transformational adaptation projects during its 13th replenishment cycle (ADB 13). Bangladesh is benefitting from the ADB 13 thematic window to support informal settlements in coastal towns to implement small scale adaptation measures identified through participatory planning processes.

Implementation of local climate actions requires testing new ideas and innovative approaches to deliver resilience on the ground. For the past decade, ADB has been working closely with the **Huairou Commission**, a global network of grassroots women's organizations, including by providing small grants to network members in Indonesia and the Philippines to pilot innovative approaches that demonstrate the role of grassroots women's groups in building resilience. Lessons from these are being documented to inform ADB's wider operations.

ADB has established the **Community Resilience Partnership Program** (CRPP), operationalized through the CRPP Trust Fund and a CRPP Investment Fund financed through the Green Climate Fund, to systematically scale up its efforts in supporting locally-led climate actions (see Box 2). CRPP aims to strengthen the integration of community-led climate adaptation in government policies and plans; influence increased allocation of financial resources for community-led climate adaptation through actions in different sectors; and strengthen meaningful participation of poor and vulnerable women and men in adaptation-related decision-making processes.

For example, in Nepal, the CRPP is **providing** grant resources and technical assistance to women's cooperatives to implement community-led adaptation solutions linked to the agricultural value chain. In Laos PDR, the CRPP has supported the national government in designing a women-targeted poverty graduation program linked to a conditional cash

transfer program. The program will support 5,000 women and mothers to build climate resilience and reduce poverty through carefully sequenced activities across the five pillars of the graduation approach – social protection, livelihoods promotion, financial inclusion, social empowerment, and coaching and mentorship. In Bangladesh, the CRPP is supporting the rolling out of the government's adaptive social protection strategy by focusing on increasing the knowledge and capacity of social protection program beneficiaries on climate adaptation and resilient livelihood measures.

At a program level, the CRPP is creating a space for likeminded partners such as bilateral donors, global climate funds, global policy think tanks, and grassroots women's groups to come together and explore partnerships and innovative ways of working on community-led adaptation (see Box 2).

BOX 2: COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The Community Resilience Partnership Program (CRPP) was established in late 2021 to support ADB's developing member countries to scale up investments in community adaptation at the local level, especially investments that address the nexus between climate, poverty and gender.

The CRPP is funded through a financing partnership facility. This includes a multi-donor Trust Fund and an Investment Fund to provide concessional financing of US$ 180 million for community-led adaptation. The CRPP multi-donor Trust Fund is currently supported by the Nordic Development Fund, the French Development Agency and the Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office of the United Kingdom. It provides technical assistance and grant resources for upstream support – including for generating evidence and knowledge, building institutional capacity, and preparing large-scale community-led adaptation public sector projects. The CRPP Investment Fund, supported by the Green Climate Fund and the ADB, is a mechanism to provide climate adaptation finance to downstream investment projects that have been identified and developed by the CRPP Trust Fund.

This unique arrangement of providing upstream support through the CRPP Trust Fund and downstream support through the CRPP Investment Fund helps in creating demand from national governments for increased investments in community-led adaptation, and incentivizes the involvement of national government agencies involved in pro-poor development. It also helps in influencing ADB's investments in other sectors to support community-led adaptation, thereby increasing the share of ADB's climate financing for local climate actions.

The CRPP has established institutional partnerships with the International Institute for Environment and Development and the Huairou Commission to bring in global expertise and experiences in implementing LLA. This partnership demonstrates a unique way of working between different organizations – a MDB, a global policy think-tank, and a global grassroots women's network – committed to scaling up the implementation of community-led adaptation.

Annual CRPP Partnership Forums bring together national governments, civil society organizations, think tanks, and financing partners to share their experiences; demonstrate the benefits of investing in LLA; and mobilize long-term partnerships to influence policies, programs, and allocation of increased resources to support LLA.

A man struggling to cross a flooded street in India.

COLLECTIVE ACTION TO SUPPORT LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION

The Group of Heads of MDBs forum underlines the importance of collective action by the MDBs to meet the multiple interrelated crises that the world is facing today. The World Bank and ADB are also working together to help client governments prioritize locally-led climate actions through improved policies and investments. In Bangladesh, for example, the two MDBs are supporting the government in developing a national framework for LLA. Based on the priorities identified in Bangladesh's National Adaptation Plan (NAP), the national LLA framework is expected to promote a common understanding of the desired outcome of LLA; identify opportunities and approaches to scale up LLA through government systems; identify actions to overcome barriers and strengthen the enabling environment for LLA; and help guide the country's investments in climate adaptation.

The experience of the World Bank and the ADB shows that for climate investment decisions to take place at the lowest appropriate level, entire systems need to be strengthened. These include the systems for creating vertical linkages, to increase the flow of funds, information, and capacity to and between communities, local governments, and national governments; and for creating horizontal linkages, to maximize complementarity between various sectoral programs being implemented at the local level. Community voices need to be strongly reflected in climate investment decisions and feed into national strategies such as the NDCs and NAPs.

A field worker holding bundles of paddy in Nepal.

MDBs are responding to the call for more locally led climate action by growing partnerships, leveraging portfolios, exploring new financing modalities, and developing programmatic approaches to scale up LLA. They are building on lessons learned from mechanisms like CDD, innovating to build national systems of devolved climate finance like FLLoCA, and integrating climate adaptation and resilience into local governance projects. However, much more still needs to be done to scale up within and across countries, learn from collective experiences, and truly meet the vision put forward by the LLA movement.

CHAPTER 4

SMALL GRANTS TO BRIDGE LARGE GAPS

Addressing structural inequalities

Patient, predictable, accessible funding

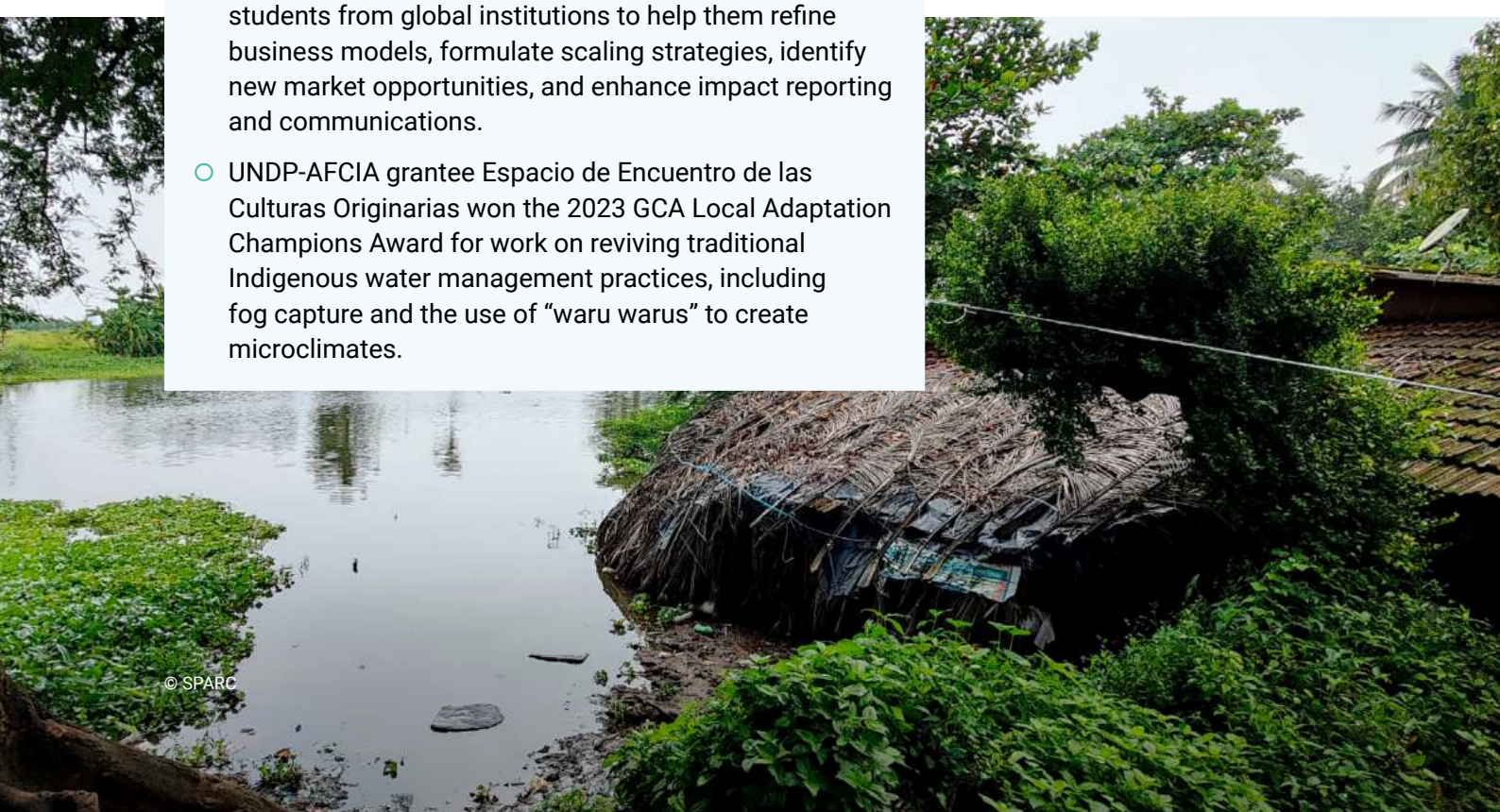
Investing in local capacities

Flexible programming and learning

HIGHLIGHTS

- The UN Development Program's Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (UNDP-AFCIA) provides small grants directly to local non-profit organizations to fund adaptation.
- To date, UNDP-AFCIA has awarded 44 grants of US$ 60,000-250,000 to local initiatives in 33 countries, with total funding of US$ 7.45 million and US$ 6 million provided through technical assistance.
- Under the program, communities in Cambodia are embracing cricket farming, an innovative, sustainable alternative to traditional livestock.
- Communities in Mumbai, India, are restoring water bodies through nature-based solutions to combat extreme heat and flooding, while managing wastewater to protect local ecosystems.
- In Micronesia, the Chuuk Women's Council is revitalizing traditional agroforestry practices and equipping women with food processing skills to improve food security and generate economic opportunities.
- The Accelerator also links local partners with business students from global institutions to help them refine business models, formulate scaling strategies, identify new market opportunities, and enhance impact reporting and communications.
- UNDP-AFCIA grantee Espacio de Encuentro de las Culturas Originarias won the 2023 GCA Local Adaptation Champions Award for work on reviving traditional Indigenous water management practices, including fog capture and the use of "waru warus" to create microclimates.

IN THIS CHAPTER



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Uy Oun, Cambodian cricket farmer.

A couple display the produce of their cricket pen in Cambodia.

As longer dry seasons and intense wet seasons compromise the viability of traditional agriculture, smallholder farmers in rural Cambodia are pushing the frontiers of farming by turning to a unique "crop" that is more resilient to climate change: two-spotted crickets *(Gryllus bimaculatus)*.

In Micronesia, communities are addressing climate threats by growing crops such as taro, which are more climate resilient, and by processing harvests for longevity.

In Tanzania, Indigenous communities are restoring degraded rangelands with Indigenous seed varieties saved through community seed banks.

In Brazil, water scarcity is addressed through new techniques for wastewater purification.

In India, heat islands are moderated, and livelihoods created, through the re-wilding of water bodies.

Each location must tackle the impacts of climate change in its own unique way to honor the ecosystem, culture, and Indigenous practices. With small grants of US$ 60,000 to US$ 250,000 from the **UNDP**-implemented Adaptation Fund Climate Innovation Accelerator (UNDP-**AFCIA**), contextual challenges and solutions are developed, delivered, and scaled from the ground up by those with intimate knowledge of their homeland.

About UNDP-AFCIA

UNDP-AFCIA is a US$ 16 million program funded by the Adaptation Fund and the European Union. It is open to not-for-profit organizations, civil society organizations, business member associations, cooperatives, and community-based organizations registered in developing countries. The program aims to foster local innovation for climate adaptation and resilience.

Grant funding between US$ 60,000 and US$ 250,000 is awarded to applicants on a competitive basis for initiatives that enhance local climate action and accelerate the delivery of targets outlined in the Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals.

Farmers show the impact of drought on their land in Pernambuco, Brazil.

> **By supporting locally driven climate innovations, these grants enable us to rethink the way we support climate resilient development. This means embracing the UN's New Way of Working and Grand Bargain agreements, breaking down silos, working across the society, following the localization agenda, scaling up locally led adaptation, and accelerating climate resilience of vulnerable communities.**
>
> Srilata Kammila, Head of Climate Change Adaptation, UNDP

To date, UNDP-AFCIA has awarded 44 grants to local initiatives across 33 countries, with a first round of funding totaling US$ 4,459,728. The program received an impressive 797 applications from 92 countries, with the highest number coming from Africa (54%). Following a rigorous selection process, supported by an international consulting firm and a grant selection committee composed of UNDP-AFCIA partners, the 44 initiatives were chosen based on four key criteria:

1. Effectiveness in adapting to climate change.
2. Innovation in the business model or solution.
3. Positive social and environmental impact.
4. Potential to self-sustain, replicate, or scale.

An extensive due diligence process was carried out for the shortlist, which involved reviews from UNDP's technical, financial, safeguards, and management teams. Grant agreements with the 22 selected initiatives from the first cohort were issued in April 2022, and grant agreements for the second cohort finalized in August 2023. Selected initiatives operate and manage the grants by themselves with support from UNDP-AFCIA for investment brokering, international advocacy, and peer-to-peer knowledge sharing.

An additional US$ 3 million is being delivered to ongoing work of the grantees through 2024-2025 (US$ 1.5 million for the first cohort and US$ 1.5 million for the second cohort). The

Cricket farm with newly hatched crickets.

second round of funding will support the long-term sustainability of initiatives, and scaling and replication efforts. The total funding directly provided for the local initiatives is US$ 7.45 million with a matching amount of US$ 6 million in technical assistance provided by the program.

Of the 44 initiatives, 40% are based in Africa, 36% in Asia and the Pacific, 20% in Latin America and the Caribbean, 2% in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and 2% in the Arab States. Across the regions, while the context and specific impacts of climate change differ, the goal of implementing local solutions with social and environmental benefits remains. The following examples of initiatives in Cambodia, India, Brazil, Micronesia, and Tanzania uphold the common values of:

- **Community involvement**: Engaging local communities, and emphasizing collaboration, capacity building, and leadership.
- **Climate resilience**: Addressing local environmental challenges including heat, drought, flooding, and ecosystem degradation to build long-term resilience against climate change impacts.
- **Empowering vulnerable groups**: Equipping women and Indigenous people with training, income opportunities, and decision-making power in their communities.
- **Sustainability and replicability**: Focusing on sustainable and scalable solutions, with the potential for replication and long-term environmental and economic benefits.

Crickets need less land, feed, and water than resource intensive traditional livestock.

UNDP-AFCIA INITIATIVE WINS GCA AWARD

In 2023, UNDP-AFCIA grantee, Espacio de Encuentro de las Culturas Originarias (EECO) won the GCA Local Adaptation Champions Award under the Capacity Building category for its work reviving the traditional Indigenous practice of digging water channels between crops (called "waru warus") to create microclimates that protect against frosts, complemented by an innovative fog capture method for continual water supply. Several other UNDP-AFCIA initiatives have been shortlisted as finalists for the prestigious award, including the South Asian Forum for Environment in India, Footsteps in Bangladesh, INMED in South Africa in 2023; and the Association la Voûte Nubienne, described later in this chapter, in 2024.

The work of EECO and other grantees featured in this chapter highlight the potential of local actors to deliver locally led action that is small but powerful if the gap between the local and national or global climate finance is bridged.

The Adaptation Innovation Marketplace

The UNDP-AFCIA program operates within the framework of the **Adaptation Innovation Marketplace** (AIM), which supports incubation and acceleration of innovative adaptation technologies, practices, and businesses. The virtual marketplace is designed to channel flexible adaptation funds directly to local actors and support local adaptation practitioners to sustain and scale up their solutions by connecting them with regional and global funders.

AIM partners, who provide technical support to the program, include the **International Centre for Climate Change and Development**, the **Least Developed Countries Universities Consortium on Climate Change**, the **Global Resilience Partnership**, the **Climate-Knowledge Innovation Community**, and the **UN Capital Development Fund**. Additionally, AIM has engaged global alliances like the **Climate and Development Knowledge Network** and impact investment networks like the **Asia Venture Philanthropy Network** (AVPN), **African Venture Philanthropy Alliance** (AVPA), and **Latimpacto** to further strengthen its efforts in driving climate adaptation initiatives.

Two women receiving training on cricket farming supported by the UNDP-AFCIA program.

AFCIA is also delivered through other Adaptation Fund-accredited Multilateral Implementing Entities such as the Climate Technology Center and Network hosted by the UN Environment Programme (since 2019), the World Food Programme, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (since 2024). Collectively AFCIA, targets a broad range of potential finance recipients, including governments, non-governmental organizations, community groups, young innovators, and other vulnerable groups to foster innovation of adaptation practices (see Chapter 8 of the ***2022 Stories of Resilience*** report).

THE CRICKET FARMERS OF CAMBODIA

In Cambodia, the initiative to farm crickets was led by the **Livestock Development for Community Livelihood Organization** (LDC), with a small grant of US$ 170,000 from UNDP- AFCIA. LDC has established 100 cricket farms to build local food security, increase household farming capacity and incomes, create collective market channels, and develop adaptive skills and knowledge capacity within the community.

The insects are versatile – they can be eaten whole, fried with sides of greens and noodles, or processed into cricket flour and protein powder. Crickets are an ideal substitute for resource-intensive livestock, requiring significantly less land, feed, and water. They are easy to farm, resilient to drought and floods, emit few greenhouse gases, and have minimal environmental impact. They grow quickly, contain 60% protein, and are a validated source of vitamin B12, with equal or even higher levels of iron and manganese than traditional sources such as beef.

The cricket farms have been provided to those most in need across seven villages in Takeo, Kampot, and Kandal provinces. Vulnerable community members were identified through a selection process coordinated through local authorities who identified women-led households with at least one child under five years old. LDC trained 200 new farmers, and each received two cricket pens (floating pens where flooding is a risk), cricket eggs, and cricket farm training.

Each cricket pen can yield 15 kg of fresh crickets, 40 bowls of cricket eggs, and 30 kg of cricket frass within a 40-day production cycle. This translates to a gross total income of US$ 62.60 per cycle. Farmers are encouraged to retain some of their produce to eat at home and ensure good nutrition within their own households.

LDC also provided the farmers with seedlings of chaya (*Cnidoscolus chayamansa or C. Aconitifolius*), a fast-growing, drought-tolerant, perennial shrub that grows easily in Cambodia. Also called the spinach tree, chaya's young leaves and succulent stems are an excellent source of protein, calcium, phosphorus, iron, vitamins A and C, niacin, riboflavin, and thiamine.

Satisfied with the livelihood and nutritional benefits of cricket and chaya farming, farmers are using profits to expand their farms. Uy Oun, a cricket farmer from Kroam village, Takeo province has expanded her business to 20 pens and expects to earn up to US$ 1000 per 40-day cycle. She also produces 20 kg of chaya a month. "Since I started my own cricket farm and chaya garden, my family eats cricket and chaya at least once every week," she says. "I also give the crickets chaya to reduce feed costs."

REVIVING WATER BODIES IN INDIA

Heat, increased flood risk, and the lack of water and sanitation services are a risky combination with particularly severe impacts on the residents of slums in Mumbai, India. The Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers (SPARC), with a UNDP-AFCIA grant, supports the residents to design and implement nature-based solutions to deal with wastewater and sewage, while restoring wetlands that play a critical role in controlling flood risk and local temperatures.

Using remote sensing, SPARC identified 85% of the 3,071 water bodies in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, and the 900 informal settlements near them. Although the organization aims to restore all the water bodies, it initially focused on two pilot locations, Ganeshpuri and Satpala, to build strong community engagement. These locations were chosen based on the enthusiasm of community members during site visits. A temporary federation of

Community members enjoy a boat ride across a revived waterbody.

20 members was formed to facilitate engagement within their local communities. “The federation that we had formed, and to whom we have made extensive presentations, led us to these specific communities of Ganeshpuri and Satpala,” says Aneerudha Paul, SPARC’s technical consultant.

The water bodies near Ganeshpuri and Satpala, which were used as dumping grounds for untreated sewage and waste, had become unpleasant. The communities agreed to a plan to channel wastewater through a series of chambers with biodigesters and reed beds to clean it, before safely releasing it back into the water body. The initiative will help to restore local flora and fauna, enable carbon sequestration, and mitigate the heat island effect (usually generated in cities) through the creation of green cover.

The UNDP-AFCIA grant (covering 2022-2023) focused on the initial stages of this large-scale initiative to build the database of polluted water bodies, engage authorities, and advocate for the adoption of nature-based solutions for restoration. Ganeshpuri was the first location to fully participate, enabling a detailed wastewater survey, while Satpala is currently in the survey phase.

SPARC collaborated with Shramjeevi Sanghatana, a local NGO with strong political connections, to secure the necessary permissions for restoration efforts. A prototype embankment was constructed and presented to the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority to encourage further investment. The block development officer of Ganeshpuri signed an official letter supporting the proposed nature-based solutions. With a second round of funding from the UNDP-AFCIA program (covering 2024-2025), SPARC will start the full restoration of the pilot water bodies.

THE WATER RECYCLERS OF BRAZIL

Heat, drought, and acute water scarcity are also key climate threats in the semi-arid region of Pernambuco, Brazil, where temperatures are predicted to rise by as much as 5.3˚C in the long term and the duration of heat waves from 18 to 214 days by 2085. Rainfall is projected to decrease by nearly 20% by 2060.[38]

To address these current and future climate threats, **Centro de Desenvolvimento Agroecológico Sabiá** works with communities to install *Reúso de Águas Cinzas* (greywater reuse) and *Sistema AgroFlorestal* (agroforestry) systems – together called RAC-SAF systems – to filter wastewater.

RAC-SAF is an adaptation technology that is comprised of a wastewater collection tank, natural grit filters, and a storage tank for the filtered water. It is connected to a pumped irrigation system of pipes and hoses leading to agroforestry plots that provide the local people with food and shade.

Since work was initiated in August 2023, 30 families have installed the wastewater systems (treating 1,500,000 liters annually) and started agroforestry. More than 623 people have benefited, just over half of them (52%) women. “It would not be so green here without this

Two men installing a RAC-SAF water recycling system to sustain crops during dry seasons.

water recycling system, as there isn't enough water to keep all these plants alive," says Maria José Henriques Ferreira, a local farmer.

Centro Sabiá, which has facilitated the installation of more than 500 RAC-SAF systems across Brazil, describes them as simple and affordable, with non-patented technology that can be easily built by farmers in semi-arid regions with minimal training. Each unit costs less than US$ 1,000. This initial investment currently comes from the UNDP-AFCIA grant, but in future can be subsidized by state authorities (who have already shown an interest in replicating the solution) or through federal water management policies.

Farmers who install the system have an increased water availability for irrigation and earn an average monthly income of at least US$ 170 from the sale of agroforestry products.

THE CHUUK WOMEN'S COUNCIL OF MICRONESIA

The lagoon islands of Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia face multiple climate threats: a growing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, including more intense storms and cyclones; up to five inches of sea level rise by 2030; increased land and sea surface temperatures; and ocean acidification.[39]

In response, the women of Chuuk are reintroducing resilient traditional crops and improving food processing methods to enhance local food security and reduce dependence on imports.[40] In collaboration with the **Island Food Community of Pohnpei**, the Chuuk Women's Council launched the "Let's Go Local! Food Security and Income Generation" initiative. The initiative, supported by UNDP-AFCIA, is reviving traditional agroforestry practices, growing Indigenous crops such as breadfruit, banana, and taro, and training women on food

processing techniques that convert surplus produce into long-lasting products like flour to extend their shelf life.

The Island Food Community of Pohnpei delivered three workshops on food processing attended by 51 women from the community. Participants received hands-on training with the drying and milling equipment, as well as machines for packaging and labeling their processed goods. Six new products were developed during these sessions, including pancakes, banana chips, banana and taro flour, banana bread loaf, and porridge. The participants also discussed strategies for engaging local businesses, bakeries, and restaurants to market and sell these products for additional income.

To further expand the initiative's reach, a recipe competition was organized on the main island at the Truk Stop Hotel. Using locally processed flour as the central ingredient, participants showcased a range of breakfast dishes, entrees, and desserts. Local restaurant and bakery owners sampled the creations, helping to highlight the potential of locally produced food within the community and promote the integration of traditional crops into local diets and businesses.

Farmers presented local crops and recipes during a contest to celebrate World Food Day.

THE SEED CHAMPIONS OF TANZANIA

The vast savanna grasslands of Tanzania are critical for the resilience of the country's Indigenous communities, who use them as rangelands. They are threatened by an increasing population, overgrazing, soil erosion, water loss, and invasive species.[41] Efforts to remove invasive species often leave the land bare and devoid of essential plant cover.

In response, a native plant initiative was launched by Savannas Forever Tanzania in 2023, with support from UNDP-AFCIA. Introducing native seeds can help restore grasses, stabilize watersheds, and enhance biodiversity, making land restoration more sustainable.

Farmers in Tanzania planting native grasses to improve soil health.

Six focus groups of Maasai elders, both women and men, were consulted to share their knowledge of traditional plants used for forage, thatching, food, and medicine.

The Tanzanian Wildlife Research Institute also contributed detailed lists of native species found within national parks and protected areas. The combination of this scientific data and the Indigenous knowledge gathered from the focus groups resulted in a "wish list" of thirty critical native plant species. A Maasai botanist identified these species in the rangelands, and seeds were collected.

Savannas Forever Tanzania engaged 45 "seed champions", with a focus on women and youth, to collect, store, and sow native grass and legume seeds. They receive training in collaboration with the Pastoralists Women's Council on financial literacy training, including savings and investments through microfinance.

Efforts are underway to transform the initiative into a social enterprise, employing women from the local communities in operations and sales. In addition to selling seeds for ongoing restoration initiatives, there is potential to collaborate with carbon-credit companies like Soils for the Future. These companies pay local villagers for below-ground carbon sequestration achieved through land restoration. There is also emerging interest in "biodiversity credit" programs, which could provide additional revenue as they continue to develop.

> **Introducing native seeds can help restore grasses, stabilize watersheds, and enhance biodiversity, making land restoration more sustainable.**

A woman tending to her cow in Tanzania.

FROM INNOVATION TO ENTERPRISE

In 2022, UNDP-AFCIA partnered with the **Global Resilience Partnership** to launch an MBA Internship Program. This initiative connects UNDP-AFCIA local partners with business students from top institutions such as Yale, Oxford, and other schools within the Global Network for Advanced Management. The interns contribute by refining business models, formulating scaling strategies, identifying new market opportunities, and enhancing impact reporting and communications. These are crucial elements that help strengthen the financial sustainability of grassroots initiatives and attract further investment. Through this partnership, 45 interns were assigned to various initiatives, directly supporting their business development efforts.

Karen Adeboye and Di Wu, MBA candidates from the Saïd Business School at the University of Oxford, worked with three UNDP-AFCIA initiatives in 2024 in Uganda, Kenya, and West Africa.

In Uganda, Adeboye helped **Sample Uganda** refine a **lease-to-own aquaponics model** for smallholder farmers. Initially, the business model for the Ugandan aquaponics kits assumed a direct sales approach, where customers would purchase the kits upfront at full cost. However, the reality on the ground showed that the initiative operates on a lease-to-own model, which bases payment on the size of the kit and the customer's financial capacity. This approach makes the kits more affordable and accessible to a broader range of people, but it presents the challenge of limited upfront cash flow, which is crucial for sustaining the enterprise.

Sample Uganda, armed with this insight, developed a business model that balanced the cost of the aquaponics kits with the cash flow generated from the lease-to-own option. The new model ensures that the enterprise remains financially sustainable over the long term, while providing clear financial projections for future investors.

Four men working on the construction of a Nubian vault.

Man feeding a dairy goat in Kenya.

Supported by these efforts, Sample Uganda secured a commitment of US$ 258,000 from a Ugandan national savings credit cooperative. The investment will be used to purchase 2,200 aquaponics kits, enabling further expansion.

In Kenya, **World Neighbors**, boosted by a UNDP-AFCIA grant, enhanced the quantity and quality of dairy **goat feed** formulated from locally available materials to boost herd health and milk production. They also support the next generation of goat herders and helped 10 young people purchase goats and another 10 save toward buying goats.

Adeboye identified a second lucrative global market for goat milk and yogurt. She proposed forming cooperatives to capitalize on this demand, which could generate additional revenue and ensure financial sustainability. This new direction offers World Neighbors the opportunity to strengthen local livelihoods and tap into the expanding global dairy market.

In West Africa, **Association la Voûte Nubienne** (AVN) achieved the first sale of carbon credits in the voluntary carbon market for the construction of earthen **Nubian vaults**, climate-friendly houses that use traditional methods and local materials to reduce heat stress and carbon emissions. Wu supported AVN in preparing for accreditation and participation in the carbon market. The cash amount required to pay mason's salaries, which make up 25% of the total building costs, can be covered through the carbon credits.

Learning From The Ground Up

An important lesson for UNDP-AFICA is the use of community-defined indicators to ensure local ownership and uptake of proposed initiatives. Locally led initiatives must balance meeting donor requirements with addressing the community's specific needs. While funding criteria must be met, communities should retain flexibility to set their own priorities once an initiative begins. UNDP-AFCIA grantees have achieved this through extensive consultations and participatory approaches, ensuring that indicators align with community goals, foster local ownership, and deliver effective, context-specific solutions.

Capacity building remains crucial during the implementation of initiatives supported by UNDP-AFCIA, particularly to embed climate adaptation and ensure sustainability. The capture

and dissemination of Indigenous knowledge and technologies is highly valued and supported as key activities. Where new technology is brought in, it is adapted to local needs, ensuring its accessibility and the use of local labor and knowledge for construction and maintenance. In this way Indigenous knowledge is rescued and local livelihoods are upheld.

A key lesson from the first initiatives (2022-2023) is the value of building strong partnerships with regional organizations that can support capacity building at the local level. UNDP-AFCIA works with partners like USAID-Pacific Climate Ready, which has backed multiple initiatives from Small Island Developing States and plays a vital role in helping local organizations strengthen and refine their proposals. This collaboration highlights the importance of hands-on support, especially for smaller organizations that often face difficulties accessing international funding.

Strong financial sustainability strategies and investment brokering are key elements of long-term success. UNDP-AFCIA supported the delivery of six investor round tables, three Impact-Live events at global investors conferences, and registration for all initiatives on deal share platforms owned by partners like AVPN, Latimpacto, and AVPA. The platforms connect initiatives with hundreds of social investors, family offices, and corporate foundations.

While each UNDP-AFCIA initiative is tailored to fit the unique social, cultural, and environmental contexts of its community, several key lessons are common across initiatives:

- **Direct funding:** The provision of direct funding to local actors has proven highly efficient and effective in developing climate adaptation solutions. Local NGOs, CSOs, cooperatives, and other groups have been empowered to take ownership of initiatives on the ground, leveraging the direct funding mechanism to work closely with communities and tailor responses to local needs.

Jane Ogolla, a woman beneficiary, displaying fermented milk and ghee in Kenya.

- **Local and international partnerships:** Building strong partnerships is critical for long-term success. In India, gaining political support was necessary to facilitate access to resources and empower communities to re-wild water bodies. In Brazil, the involvement of state authorities and alignment with federal water management policies was critical for scaling the water recycling initiatives. Achieving large-scale impact requires both technical and financial support. By leveraging its local presence and global reach, UNDP-AFCIA brings together the necessary expertise and resources to support local actors in driving change.
- **Capacity building:** In Micronesia, Cambodia, and Tanzania, supporting community members to develop operational, climate-related, and leadership skills was essential to empower them to take charge of initiatives. Strengthening these competencies ensured that initiatives were implemented efficiently and remain sustainable in the long term. In Brazil, India, and Tanzania, using local labor and contractors not only strengthened community capacity but also helped control costs, boost the local economy, and foster a greater sense of ownership and inclusivity.
- **Communication and advocacy:** In India and Micronesia, effective communication was key to support adaptation. In Micronesia, community competitions helped raise awareness, while in India, subtle and culturally appropriate communication strategies were employed to secure buy-in for nature-based solutions over conventional gray infrastructure. In both cases, communities took the lead in advocacy, assuming autonomy in driving the initiatives forward.
- **Practicality over novelty:** Both Cambodia and Brazil showed that the success of innovations hinges on their seamless integration into daily life. In Cambodia, cricket farming efficiently utilized unused land and time; while in Brazil, low-maintenance system allowed farmers to maintain operations without expensive upkeep, ensuring long-term viability and scalability.
- **Gender and youth empowerment:** Engagement of women and youth has been a key driver of success across all initiatives. In Micronesia, women led the processing of Indigenous crops, while in Cambodia, women-owned cricket farms thrived. Similarly, in Kenya, youth-led goat enterprises are flourishing, illustrating the pivotal role of gender and youth inclusion in adaptation efforts.

Chaya seedlings for distribution to prospective farmers.

Recycled water helps beat drought in Brazil.

Water recycling in Brazil supports food security.

A revived water body in Mumbai, India.

- **Business model clarity:** For successful adaptation solutions to attract investment, the real risk-return profile must be clearly demonstrated. While grant-based finance is limited, unlocking private capital and exploring alternative revenue streams, including blended finance options, ensure long-term sustainability. Transparent financial data can attract investors and encourage innovative financing models. In West Africa, carbon credit models have drawn private investment, while in Kenya and Uganda, the disaggregation of revenue streams has helped identify profitable avenues for future growth. The MBA Internship Program has been instrumental in business model development to generate revenue and attract investment at local, national, or international levels.
- **Phased funding for impact:** A multi-stage funding approach – which begins with initial grants followed by larger investments – is vital to the successful scaling of innovative solutions, as evidenced in India, Kenya, and Uganda. This approach enables deep engagement with local communities, providing technical assistance and fostering connections with strategic partners. By providing sustained backing, it helps local actors not only implement solutions effectively but also build resilience and ensure long-term sustainability.

CHAPTER 5

RETHINKING ACCOUNTABILITY TO MEASURE PROGRESS ON LLA

HIGHLIGHTS

- Climate finance relies on top-down accountability systems that prioritize accountability to taxpayers in the global North, not to climate-affected communities in the global South. Communities beleaguered by climate impacts are left shouldering the additional burden of proof to show that they are affected by climate change and capable of using climate finance in line with conditions set by funders.
- Reflecting power asymmetries between providers and recipients of climate finance, existing monitoring and evaluation (M&E) tools often operate only in one direction: local communities or their representatives reporting to funders.
- The current accountability system places far too much emphasis on outcomes, often at the expense of processes that can support enhanced participation, strengthened and more equitable systems, greater accountability, and, as a result, greater climate resilience.
- New methodologies are necessary for mutual accountability between funders and communities, and where metrics and outcomes are built around local measures of success. The process of defining what success means is in itself a very powerful tool to initiate community leadership and ownership. It also makes M&E a more useful learning process locally, by enabling communities to evaluate progress towards their own goals, and improving their efforts iteratively to adapt to a changing and capricious climate.

Devolving decision making

Addressing structural inequalities

Patient, predictable, accessible funding

Investing in local capacities

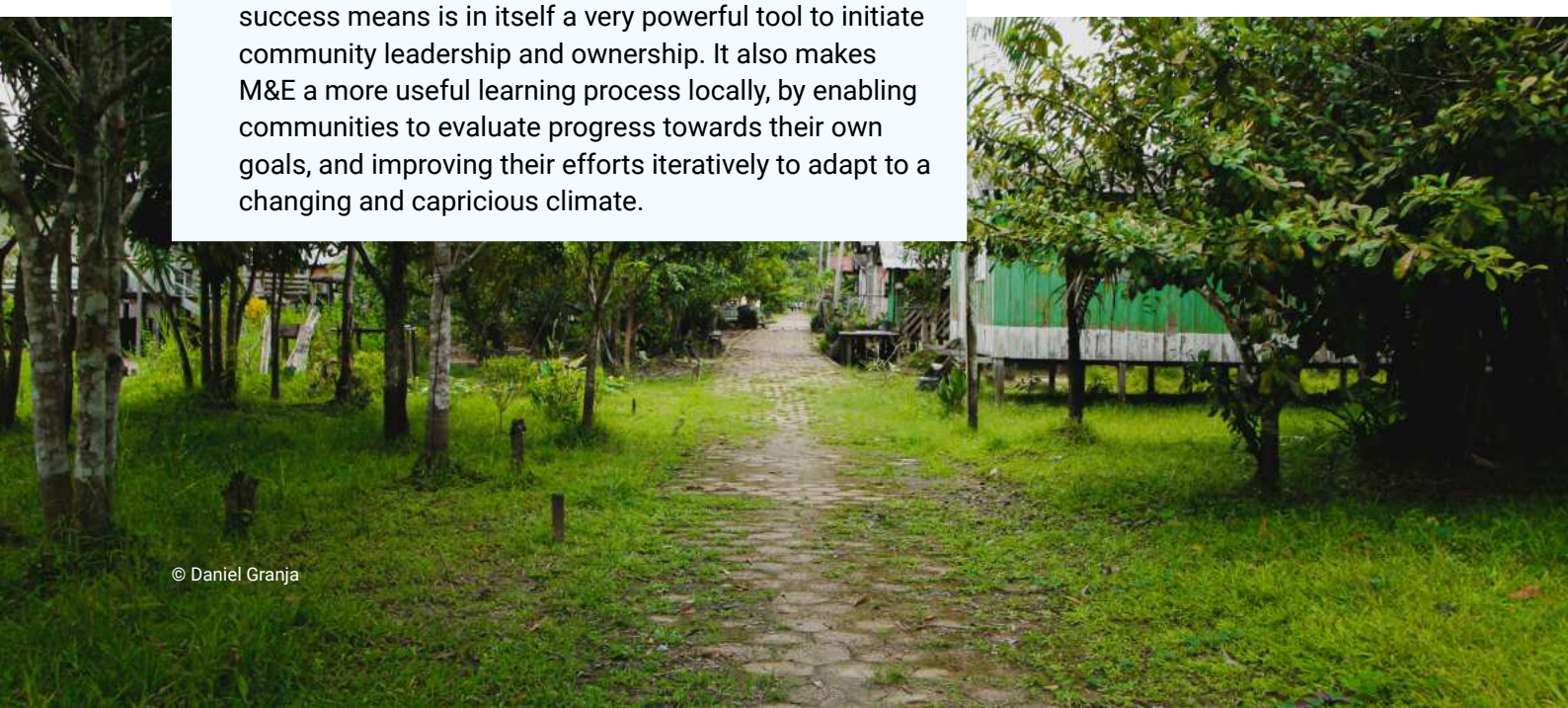
Building understanding

Flexible programming and learning

Transparency and accountability

Collaborative action

IN THIS CHAPTER



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This is what we defend. If a donor comes with an environment project, but I see that this will affect the culture, then I can't accept this project.

Froylan López Jiménez, Costa Rica

WHAT DO WE MEASURE...

When we measure progress on adaptation and climate resilience?

Or, when we measure progress on implementing locally led adaptation (LLA)?

What counts as success?

Which way should accountability flow, for success in adapting to climate change?

These are fundamental questions that the global community is grappling with to reform decades of entrenched practice in unidirectional accountability. For Froylan López Jiménez, a representative of the Cabécar Indigenous community from the Talamanca Mountains of Costa Rica, the answers are clear. The terrestrial and coastal-marine ecosystems of his ancestral lands, the Nairi Awari Indigenous territory, and the livelihoods of his people are severely threatened by climate change, not of their making.[42]

"When we measure, we should take into account other things such as culture, tradition, Indigenous cosmovision," he says. "This is what we defend. If a donor comes with an environment project, but I see that this will affect the culture, then I can't accept this project. These are things which people often don't understand well – behind all this is a culture, a cosmovision, ancestral lands or sacred lands which they have to understand well."

López Jiménez's comments were in response to an exercise of downward accountability by Fundación Avina, a Latin American philanthropic foundation, inviting the community to evaluate the extent to which the support they provided for adaptation enabled local agency and leadership.

Fundación Avina supports the Building Approaches to fund local Solutions with climate Evidence (BASE) initiative and has been working with local communities and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) to develop ways for local partners and providers of finance to evaluate the quality of support they receive for adaptation.

Interactions with communities such as López Jiménez's, and the Afro and Awá Indigenous communities from the highly climate sensitive coastal mangroves and forests

FFLA's consultation with the Afro-Ecuadorian Confederation of Northern Esmeraldas.

of Guaitara-Carchi and Mira-Mataje watersheds, between Colombia and Ecuador, have provided interesting insights on how communities rate the impacts of adaptation projects. Fundación Futuro Latinoamericano (FFLA), a non-profit organization from Ecuador that is also part of the initiative with IIED, found, for instance, that intermediaries tend to rate project benefits higher than community members, and that not all community members are willing to comment, fearing negative feedback may be disrespectful, or compromise future support.

The Principles for LLA have been endorsed by a growing number of over 130 signatories, including governments, non-governmental organizations, bilateral funders, and multilateral agencies. Despite this, climate finance still relies on top-down accountability systems that are designed for Official Development Assistance (ODA) and prioritize accountability to taxpayers in the global North, rather than to climate-affected communities in the global South. Communities beleaguered by climate impacts are left shouldering the additional burden of proof to show that they are indeed affected by climate change and capable of using climate finance in line with conditions set by funders.

Shifting accountability to communities requires an overhaul not just of the international climate finance system, but also of colonial concepts of development and aid on which the system is built.

> We need to break this tension that exists between having ... flexibility and more time ...[and] short term results, not only to respond to funders, but also ... to do the things we want to do that actually impacts communities.
>
> Why do we still put so much energy and time in trying to convince the donors? Is this the way it is, and we really make the effort to adapt to the donor's requirements? What is the other way? ... perhaps the result that is hoped for is more long-term impact.
>
> Victoria Matusevich, Fundación Avina

WHAT AILS THE SYSTEM?

Key to the current accountability system are M&E tools that are developed around success indicators defined by funders and intermediaries, and based on formats and structures dictated by their institutional, bureaucratic, and legal obligations.

Reflecting the power asymmetries between providers and recipients of climate finance, these tools operate only in one direction: local communities or their representatives are obligated to be accountable to funders.

Current indicators of success do not reflect what success means to communities;[43] measure asymmetries of power or justice (such as the equitable allocation of funds between actors in the finance value chain); or ensure that the funding is spent in line with local priorities.[44]

> Success, for me, is when I implement a project in a location and the community fully participates and engages in the process. It's important that the community is involved, as changing mindsets and behaviors is often challenging, and the community's involvement is tailored to its potential and needs. Before setting any indicators, we conduct assessments using various methods, ensuring that women are included in this process. The community does not simply accept these indicators as they are; we need to assess if they are feasible within the local context. Some aspects need to be quantified, while others do not.
>
> We appreciate receiving feedback from donors, but it is also important for us to evaluate whether the activities they suggest can be realistically implemented in our local communities. While we value their input, we don't automatically agree to everything. Our response depends on our internal capacity and the feasibility of their suggestions. However, there has been some frustration with donors, with questions about whether their involvement is just to spend funds. We often do not have a proper mechanism or platform to express our concerns or provide feedback. In some cases, we have chosen to withdraw from a project because we did not agree with the donor's approach, prioritizing our comfort and alignment with the project goals. Our comfort in the project is most important, and there have been times when we felt uncomfortable.
>
> Trouce Landakura, Humba Hammu Network Association

Whose performance?

With no reciprocal obligation for funders to be accountable to local communities, the tools invariably exclude performance metrics that interrogate the policies and practices of funders and intermediaries. For instance, they do not interrogate overly stringent due diligence procedures that require burdensome documentation and significant time investments and incur high upfront costs. These procedures severely curtail the ability of climate-vulnerable communities to access much-needed climate finance.

Whose success?

Progress on adaptation is notoriously difficult to track, monitor, and evaluate – unlike mitigation, where reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are relatively easy to monitor.[45] Adaptation is a subjective, context-specific experience that takes place in complex local environments, with multiple social, economic, and environmental factors at play. It is a process or pathway more than an endpoint, which by definition needs to be adaptable to shifting circumstances.[46] Success often depends on local or even individual expectations and perceptions.[47]

Current indicators of success are not reflective of local or individual perceptions of success.[48] In fact, it could be said that they measure not success, but rather the funder's perception of success.

> What is actually the right target for the indicator? Should we always just increase more and more and more? Should we target 200 people, improving 500 hectares of land? And how do we evaluate which number is a good number? Actually defining indicators way before projects start is usually really difficult because things will always go slightly different than what you expected from the start.
>
> Fabian Wiropranoto, su-re-co (Sustainability & Resilience)

Flow to a trickle

Adaptation finance is delivered through a chain that typically comprises of providers who provide the funds, intermediaries who hold and reallocate the funds, and recipients who receive the funds from intermediaries to implement adaptation actions. Funds dwindle as they travel down this delivery chain – with only 10-17% arriving in trickles to recipients.[49]

Outcomes over processes

The current accountability system places far too much emphasis on outcomes, often at the expense of processes that can support enhanced participation, strengthened and more equitable systems, greater accountability, and, as a result, greater climate resilience.[50] This focus on outcomes assumes a linear cause and effect relationship between an intervention and an outcome. It relies overly on quantifiable indicators that can be reductive and cannot adequately capture the complexity of knowledge and variables which contribute to actual impact in a person's life.[51] It also restricts participation, creativity, and flexibility,[52] and undervalues the contribution of local communities.[53]

Outcome-based indicators assume that project interventions will achieve measurable 'outcomes' in an individual's lived experience.[54] They can be blind to maladaptation or other unintended negative outcomes resulting from a project intervention.[55]

A Framework For Mutual Accountability

The need for effectiveness and efficiency in targeting the needs of the climate vulnerable has never been greater. Not only are climate impacts accelerating, but sources of funding are shrinking at the same time. Adaptation finance flows to developing countries declined by 15% in 2021, leaving an annual gap of US$ 194-366 billion between developing country needs and adaptation finance flows.[56] Aid flows have also stagnated, with aid as a share of national income (ODA/GNI) rising from 0.31% in 2010 to only 0.37% in 2023.[57]

Adaptation finance flows to developing countries declined by 15% in 2021.

The Principles for LLA, endorsed also by local actors, provide a substantive framework to design a accountability system that:

- Supports downward accountability to communities, by also assessing the performance of funders and intermediaries in implementing the Principles for LLA – for instance, the Principles related to devolving decision-making, addressing structural inequalities, providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed easily, and investing in local capabilities.
- Accommodates the different expectations and perceptions of adaptation success by local communities.
- Focuses on process, not just outcomes.
- Reduces the burden of reporting on communities that are already strapped for capacity.

IIED, with partners, is developing a set of LLA markers to track progress in implementing the LLA Principles. They provide a tool to assess how well each actor in the delivery chain of an adaptation project operationalizes the Principles for LLA.

The markers were predicated on the need for greater mutual accountability on localization for each actor in the delivery chain. The chain comprises of providers who provide the funds, intermediaries who hold and reallocate the funds, and recipients who receive the funds from intermediaries to implement adaptation actions.

Given the different responsibilities of international actors (including funders, international intermediaries, and multilateral organizations) and national and sub-national actors (including national governments, local governments, national NGOs, local civil society, community leaders, etc.) in operationalizing LLA, two sets of markers are being developed:

- Markers for **international actors**, which draw on literature on reforming the aid sector from research organizations, aid watchdogs, and the humanitarian sector; and on sharing risk fairly between actors in the aid delivery chain.
- Markers for **national and sub-national actors**, which draw on pilots conducted with communities in Costa Rica, Bangladesh, Ecuador and Indonesia with the International Centre for Climate Change and Development, Fundación Avina, El Centro para la Autonomía y Desarrollo de los Pueblos Indígenas, and FFLA.

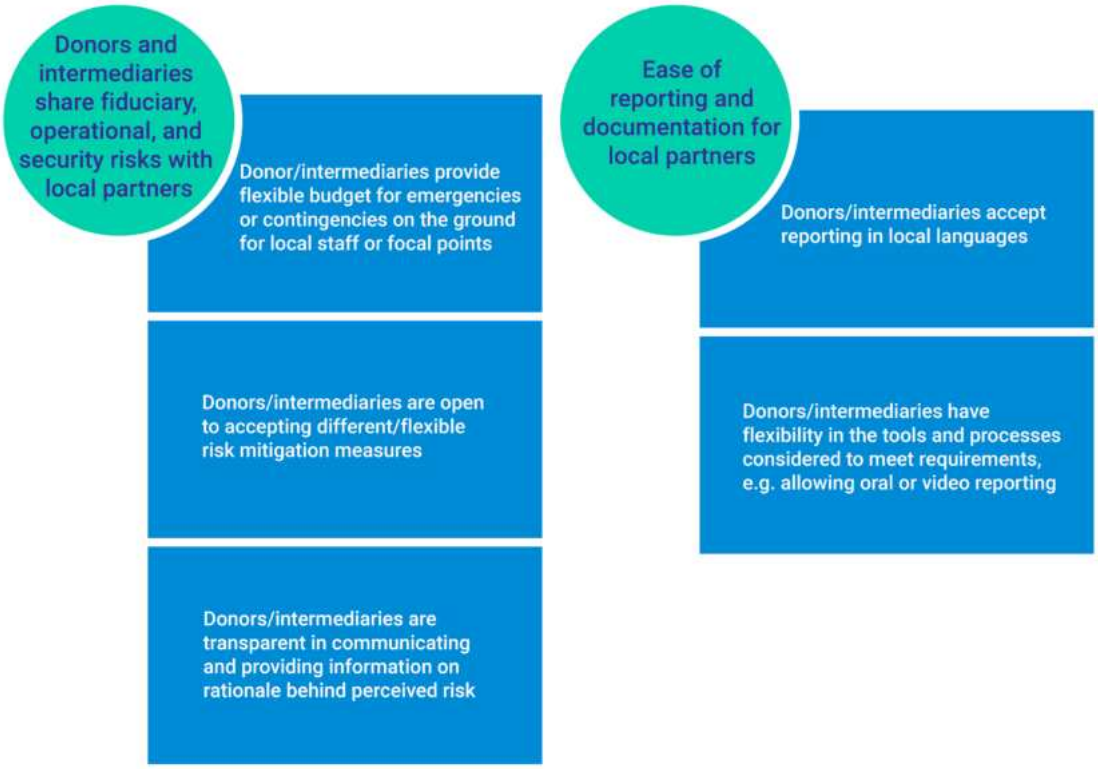
This chapter focuses on the markers for funders and intermediaries. The set of markers for local intermediaries and communities is in the process of development.

Eight markers have been identified for funders and intermediaries, each of which correspond to several relevant Principles for LLA and include a set of corresponding indicators. The markers relate to both procedural and substantive aspects of programming and financing that donor and intermediaries are typically responsible for. Procedural markers cover issues such as risk management and mitigation measures, tendering protocols, reporting requirements, conditionalities attached to financing adaptation projects, and use of locally led indicators to measure impact (markers 1,2,3,4, and 6 respectively in Figure 2). More substantive markers relate to programming considerations that can enable greater and sustained capability building within communities, greater awareness and use of climate information, and comprehensive and effective climate programming (markers 5,7, and 8 respectively in Figure 1).

The markers and indicators are linked to a questionnaire, called a scorecard. The scorecard has questions designed to elicit responses for evaluating a project or program against the markers and indicators. Please refer to the **Annex** to explore the markers in more detail.

Figure 1: Markers for funders and intermediaries aligned with the Principles for LLA

Figure 2. Examples of indicators linked to markers



Beware the measurement burden

While validation by local actors is essential to determine the LLA alignment of a project, it is especially important to ensure that local actors are not burdened with another set of M&E metrics imposed from above. The markers are therefore deliberately oriented towards organizational leadership, to help actors at each level to assess how their immediate upstream partner (donor, international intermediary, national intermediary, etc.) is performing. They function as a health check to assess whether program dynamics are equitable, and risks are shared fairly between international and local partners.

Nevertheless, the marker approach requires valuable time from local actors. In the current system, local actors are typically not compensated for their time for participating in M&E activities. In assessing LLA alignment, they must be compensated by intermediaries or providers for their involvement.

Trust between enumerators and communities is important to elicit honest responses. Trusted enumerators or facilitators from the community should be involved in the process, and ensure that participants are clear on the purpose (assessing alignment with LLA) and can exercise their right to free, prior, and informed consent.

AN EXERCISE IN SELF-REFLECTION

The initial long list for the questions for the scorecards came from researchers at IIED, based on their ideas of what successful LLA initiatives should look like. Consultations with partner organizations and local community respondents followed, to tailor the questions to local context. These consultations still felt like a top-down, extractive process. It also soon became apparent that approaching the community with an extensive list of questions was ineffective and time-consuming, and often did not elicit the best results.

As an alternative, Fundación Avina proposed **filming** the Nairi Awari community, describing what the Principles for LLA and successful adaptation meant to them. This initiated an exercise in thinking about alternative LLA monitoring mechanisms that are both designed and delivered by the community.

To reduce the reporting and accountability burden on communities, M&E tools should embrace mechanisms for measuring and evaluating success that already exist in local communities. These include, for example, community meetings to gather perspectives, participatory mapping, and storytelling (see, for instance, Chapter 6 in ***2023 Stories of Resilience***).[58] These tools are more likely to take into account local knowledge, traditions, culture, languages, and experiences of climate change, all of which impact a community's perception of success.

Markers and process

The set of indicators linked to each marker (Figure 2) are linked to a scorecard or a questionnaire to assess LLA alignment.

When used as a scorecard, participants use a traffic light system (red, orange, and green) to indicate how well an organization is doing in each category. Ideally, scorecards are completed for and by all the different organizations (funders, intermediaries, and community recipients) involved in a project's finance delivery chain. Community recipients can either conduct the assessment themselves, or use a trusted community enumerator to understand how well the project gives them agency. Organizations higher up the chain should be assessed by someone lower down, or by an independent third party. Self-assessments, while possible, will not be as robust.

Given that the ultimate purpose of the scorecards is to improve accountability at all levels, publicly sharing the results will send a strong signal of a commitment to transparency. For even more accountability, transparency will need to be accompanied by a willingness to support verification of scorecard results, and make improvements through shared learning. This verification and learning can take place, for instance, through dialogues with other actors in the project delivery chain, which will have the added advantage of providing partners with an opportunity to contribute suggestions on how alignment with the Principles for LLA can be improved.

We emphasize building trust with the community by maintaining open communication and using simple monitoring tools. Success is measured not just by immediate outcomes but by long-term changes in behavior and practices among community members. This community-led approach involves regular meetings and assessments, allowing the community to actively participate in defining and evaluating the project's impact. The dual approach to focusing on both quantitative and qualitative aspects ensure a comprehensive understanding of the project's impact, with monitoring methods tailored to be accessible and relevant to the community, such as interviews and visual storytelling. In addition, there should be flexible communication between donors and members to discuss progress and all project-related matters.

Imelda Sulis Setiawati Seda, YPK Donders

Conclusion

The Principles for LLA are driving a new paradigm of adaptation action which is still being road-tested, but which clearly calls for transformational change. Existing M&E methodologies are not fit for purpose for LLA. Their extractive nature impedes local learning, and because they are led by external 'experts', discount the value of local knowledge.

New methodologies are necessary, which provide for mutual accountability between funders and communities,[59] and where metrics and outcomes are built around local measures of success.[60] The process of defining what success means is in itself a very powerful tool to initiate community leadership and ownership. It also makes M&E a more useful learning process locally, by enabling communities to evaluate progress towards their own goals, and adjust and improve their efforts iteratively to adapt to a changing and capricious climate.

Accountability mechanisms should also assess project dynamics between partners to ensure that they are equitable, that risks are being shared fairly, and that accountability is mutual, to support learning on both sides.

While there is an urgent need to measure LLA and understand what works, where, and why, this measurement process must be tightly calibrated to the philosophy and practice of this alternative approach to adaptation action, to ensure that local actors drive and own the process.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE

Addressing structural inequalities

Investing in local capacities

Building understanding

Transparency and accountability

HIGHLIGHTS

- There is growing recognition that the research community must commit to action-oriented adaptation research driven by the needs of communities, co-produced with local experts, and equitable in practice.
- The Adaptation Research Alliance, with 260 members, has developed and committed to six Adaptation Research for Impact principles that closely align with the Principles for Locally Led Adaptation (LLA). Those principles emphasize that research must be needs-driven, solutions-oriented, and lead to a positive impact on the lives of those at risk from climate change.
- Community-led research models emphasize the importance of engaging local actors in designing and conducting research. These models prioritize practical, locally relevant solutions over traditional, top-down research approaches.
- Although too rare, good examples of this type of research are already transforming how communities engage with climate adaptation. The DARAJA initiative in Tanzania and Kenya shows how co-created weather information systems, developed in collaboration with local communities, significantly improved access to weather information that directly benefited the community.
- Locally driven adaptation research plays a crucial role in empowering marginalized groups. Fit-for-future research organizations, such as the Jameel Observatory's Dryland Futures Academy, bake in action-oriented research models of working with communities as equals and genuinely integrating traditional knowledge.

IN THIS CHAPTER

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We had low attendance of students, approximately 10% in each class during the rainy season, because most of the students live in a flood plain or in the lower Msimbazi basin.

Esther Lugulu, Gilman Rutihinda Primary School


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Students at Mtakuja Primary School in the Mji Mpya informal settlement learn about weather and safety as part of DARAJA.

WHATEVER THE WEATHER

Access to better weather forecasts can boost academic performance. This realization came as somewhat of a surprise to Esther Lugulu, a teacher at Gilman Rutihinda Primary School in Kigogo Mbuyuni. Kigogo Mbuyuni is an informal settlement in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Agnella Malilima, another resident, was also surprised to learn that paying attention to weather forecasts could bring her economic and social benefits.

Informal settlements like Kigogo Mbuyuni are often the most climate vulnerable areas in cities, suffering the most from excessive rainfall and heat. In Dar es Salaam, over 70% of households live in climate-vulnerable informal settlements.[61] Yet, their needs are completely overlooked by providers of weather-related information, including national meteorological and hydrological services, whose efforts usually focus on agriculture and aviation sectors.[62] Weather forecasts that are tailored to the needs of informal settlements, and are easily accessed and understood by their residents, are rare.

This was a gap that Developing Risk Awareness through Joint Action (DARAJA) set out to bridge. DARAJA ("bridge" in Swahili) is an initiative led by Resurgence, a UK-based organization that seeks to improve access to, understanding, and use of weather and climate information for one billion under-served people in urban informal settlements. It was launched in 2018 in Tanzania and Kenya, to connect national weather forecasters with the communities that need their forecasts the most.[63]

Resurgence partnered with Kounkuey Design Initiative and the Kenya Meteorological Department in Kenya, and the Centre for Community Initiatives and Tanzania Meteorological Authority in Tanzania, as part of their efforts to bring community members and forecasters together as equals.

The process started with community-driven research. Community members were trained to gather data on community needs through mixed methods of research including: survey questionnaires, focus groups, and key informant interviews. The emerging data was analyzed and considered by all stakeholders, including residents, media, city authorities, and disaster risk experts.[64] The stakeholders then came together to develop simplified weather terminology in Swahili along with simple weather icons, to generate forecasts that everyone, even those who could not read, could understand. Feedback loops

Weather forecast chalkboard in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania as part of the DARAJA service.

were created between the forecasters and the community to align forecasts with community needs. Communities and national weather agencies also collaborated to find the best ways to disseminate forecasts to reach those who need it most through SMS, radio, public notice boards, loudspeakers and schools.[65]

Implementing the joint recommendations of the communities and forecasters resulted in a dramatic increase in access to, and use of, weather forecasts in both countries. In Nairobi, the number of residents with access to actionable weather information skyrocketed from 56% to 93%. More importantly, DARAJA's approach enabled people to act ahead of adverse weather and protect themselves and their households from loss and damage. The community understood the weather icons and trusted the system because they were part of its creation from the start. Early warnings enabled them to take proactive measures, such as repairing homes and roofs, safeguarding possessions, and cleaning drains to prevent flooding. 98% of residents reported using DARAJA's information to prepare for extreme weather, leading to substantial increases in anticipatory actions. Home repairs increased by 300%, moving possessions to safety by 166%, and cleaning drains by over 100%. For every dollar invested, there was a 20-fold return in enhanced productivity and avoided climate-related economic loss.[66]

Back at the Gilman Rutihinda Primary School, access to weather information resulted in improved school attendance rates, leading to better academic performance. Before DARAJA, heavy rains often damaged uniforms and books, causing students to miss school. "We had low attendance of students, approximately 10% in each class during the rainy season, because most of the students live in a flood plain or in the lower Msimbazi basin," says Lugulu.

With DARAJA's clear and real-time weather updates and safety tips, families, students, and teachers can protect supplies and keep children attending class. Parents now know exactly when to escort younger children to or from school through extreme weather alerts, keeping attendance high. There is now a dedicated room for students to store their bags when severe rain is forecast. DARAJA's training about the effects of climate change and extreme weather has catalyzed positive changes in personal hygiene, like better hand washing, tending to the school gardens, and taking care of the environment in general. Lugulu feels that students are more proactive and better equipped to adapt to climate change. "We did not foresee that

by just following weather information, we could boost and maintain students' attendance at school and contribute to a better academic performance," she says. "We learned this through the DARAJA project." [67]

Malilima used to lose out on wages when she missed workdays during floods. She would have to stay home to help her aged parents remove mud brought into the house by floodwater, wash stained clothes, and supervise repair work on the house. Better planning in response to weather warnings helped her reduce the number of days she needed to be away from work, and she was able to invest in preventative measures, including raising the foundation of her house to reduce the risk of flooding. She was also proud to be one of the people selected by DARAJA to turn downscaled forecasts into SMS and WhatsApp messages to send to fellow residents.

The initiative not only enhanced climate resilience at individual, community, and city levels, but also strengthened trust between residents and the meteorological services.

Since its launch in 2018, DARAJA, backed by the **Weather and Climate Information Services** Africa Program, has reached nearly one million people in Kenya and Tanzania. It is now expanding across East Africa, extending its services to Ethiopia, Sudan, and Uganda, and continuing its vital work in Kenya and Tanzania.[68]

Making Adaptation Research Responsive To Local Needs

In recent years, there has been increased recognition that the predominant top-down model of deciding adaptation research priorities, and the use of extractive methodologies that do little to build resilience of vulnerable communities on the ground, needs to change. A group of organizations spread across almost 50 countries on six continents came together in 2021 to form the Adaptation Research Alliance (ARA), committing to enable action-oriented adaptation research that is driven by user needs, co-produced with local experts, and equitable in practice. In 2024, the ARA consists of over 260 member entities who coalesce around a shared vision and mission.

ARA members, including Resurgence, developed and committed to the six Adaptation Research for Impact principles (closely aligned with the Principles for LLA), which address the purpose of research, the research process itself, the value and benefits of research, and the linkages between research and action:

1. **Who or what is the research for?** Research is needs-driven, solutions-oriented, and leads to a positive impact on the lives of those at risk from climate change.
2. **How should research be carried out?** Research is transdisciplinary and co-produced with users.
3. **How is research valued?** Research emphasizes societal impact.
4. **What can research enable?** Research builds capacity and empowers actors for the long-term.
5. **How can research address root causes of risk?** Research processes address structural inequalities that lead to increased vulnerability and reduced adaptive capacity of those at risk.
6. **How can research and action links be strengthened?** Learning-while-doing enables adaptation action to be evidence-based and increasingly effective.

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Students in a school in Dar Es Salaam reading the day's forecast.

COMMUNITIES LEADING RESEARCH

Projects that put the needs and voices of the most vulnerable at the center were found to most often fulfill multiple Adaptation Research for Impact principles. For instance, the Mukuru Special Planning Area (SPA) process in Mukuru, Kenya, extensively **documented** by the Global Center on Adaptation (GCA), first worked with the research community to establish a meaningful partnership between the residents of Mukuru and their local government representatives. Action research revealed Mukuru residents, with no other option, paid far more per unit for lower-quality shelter and services than residents in nearby formal estates — nearly four times more for water, twice as much for electricity and 20% more for rent. They suffered a **poverty penalty**. Despite these high costs, there was a thriving informal economy estimated at US$ 59 million annually, clearly demonstrating that residents could afford to pay for service delivery. This caught the attention of policymakers, public utilities, and the media, making the case for formal provision of public services to the settlement, following the SPA process.

The SPA process itself was a **community-led research exercise** – data was gathered by the community, for the community, to both empower them to advocate for their needs, and to help them understand their challenges, for better locally led planning. The research organizations who contributed to the effort, including the University of Nairobi, catered to community needs by facilitating the use of technology (training community members to use

…I also knew how data defends people. How the data spoke for us in the government. And also I learned how to bring people together and empower people. I also learned how to talk with these people in these big offices, because I come from the slums, I don't have to despise myself, I have to know that I have information that they don't have.

Christine Mwelu, community mobilizer, Mukuru, Nairobi

Global Information Systems to map the settlement) and the analysis of data. The goal was for the residents to collect their own data about themselves (instead of relying on outsiders to tell them about themselves), and to own and use the data to inform both their fellow residents and government authorities about key challenges and priorities. The data was power – it empowered residents to speak the same language as governments and their development partners. As one of the community mobilizers for the process, Christine Mwelu, commented, "…I also knew how data defends people. How the data spoke for us in the government. And also I learned how to bring people together and empower people. I also learned how to talk with these people in these big offices. Because I come from the slums, I don't have to despise myself, I have to know that I have information that they don't have."

The Mukuru model has become a blueprint for the GCA's support in facilitating vulnerable communities to develop People's Adaptation Plans, linked to funding for implementation from international financial institutions (see box on Mongla's People's Adaptation Plan in **Chapter 2**). In addition to supporting a data collection and analysis process for and by the communities as a basis for community planning, the GCA has also adopted the practice of creating closer links between the vulnerable communities and their local universities. This provides communities with technical capacity and networks that they need to sustain the processes of iterative planning and monitoring (for instance, GIS mapping and data analysis). At the same time, it is an opportunity to engage the university faculty and students in understanding the research needs of their more immediate community, and influence future career decisions of young researchers.

Similar processes, using methodologies developed by ARA member Slum Dwellers International, have been employed in informal settlements around the world to generate accurate, up-to-date, and accessible information that is necessary to underpin slum upgrading projects, to make them more resilient to climate change. In Indonesia, the detailed household database generated by the community has enabled local government to identify which homes need improvement and which households meet the income eligibility criteria to access subsidies and loans. Community-led data collection techniques have been used in Ghana and Tanzania, to provide the detail necessary for communities to make decisions about what they can afford to do and how they want to do it, and to support constructive negotiations not just with local government but also banks and other financial institutions that provide grants or loans.

THE iSHACKS OF ENKANINI

Sometimes, research is initiated by researchers in direct response to community challenges. One such example is from Enkanini, an informal settlement located at the periphery of Stellenbosch, South Africa, with over 3,500 shacks and home to over 176,543 inhabitants. A group of transdisciplinary researchers from the **Sustainability Institute** in Stellenbosch launched a community engagement process in Enkanini in 2010, to address challenges related to the lack of public services.[69] The question they set out to answer was: While residents of informal settlements wait for state provision of conventional service delivery, what options are available in the interim?

After two years of applied research in Enkanini, they identified the need for improved energy and sanitation solutions. Grant funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation assisted with the installation of the first 20 improved shacks – or **iShacks** – in 2011. iShacks are well

insulated, north-facing shacks, fitted with solar panels and biodigesters. The biodigesters improve waste management and generate biogas for cooking, while the solar systems provide power for lighting and charging devices. The successful pilot resulted in additional funding of ZAR 17 million (approximately US$ 600,000) from a Green Fund managed by the Development Bank of South Africa as a zero-interest loan for another 1,500 iShacks in Enkanini.

Installed solar panels over shacks and homes in South Africa.

The lack of funding to expand this model to Siqalo, an informal settlement in Cape Town, resulted in a partnership between the researchers and the community to launch a "Help-To-Buy" social innovation model. iShack researchers consulted residents and community leaders in Siqalo to explore the idea of a community fund, which would help residents buy the iShacks over 24 months and pay off the cost in affordable monthly installments. Early adopters agreed to volunteer as 'Solar Captains' to recruit new clients. These Solar Captains disseminate information (technical and financial) and mediate if clients are late with payments. This loose social process, which relies mainly on clear upfront communication and induction of new clients, has worked relatively well, with unresolved cases of payment defaults at less than 5%. iShack demonstrates how collaborative research and community-driven solutions can create resilient, adaptable systems that meet today's challenges while empowering communities to thrive in the future.

ARA documents other such examples of action research with communities in the lead, including the **Mahila Housing SEWA Trust's** (MHT) project on Women's Action towards Climate Resilience for Urban Poor in South Asia in Ahmedabad, India, where women take the lead through collective action and technology incubation to devise locally relevant, pro-poor, gender-sensitive and climate-resilient solutions. For example, women were trained to be energy auditors to encourage households to switch to more efficient products, by forming a women-led distribution network of green energy and building products. Other solutions include using sprinkler taps to reduce the flow of water, harvesting rainwater, and other behavioral changes leading to more than 60% of households reporting to have increase in water quantity and more than 32% having sufficient water during summers. Through projects like these, MHT is empowering women to act against heat waves, flooding, water scarcity, and water-vector-borne diseases. These slow-onset events attract less attention but frequently impact poor people, particularly women, the most.

BOX 1: THE POTENTIAL OF CITIZEN SCIENCE

Citizen science can impact decision-making, contribute to monitoring and evaluation, empower citizens, lead to more effective and transparent government, raise awareness, and foster behavioral change. According to analysis led by the European Commission's Joint Research Center, it offers an effective way to connect citizens and policy, bringing societal and economic as well as scientific and political benefits. However, current challenges that prevent greater uptake of citizen science include diverse legislation, resistance from professional scientists, managing the expectations of participants, and data comparability.[70]

Citizen science initiatives are generally more successful in involving citizens who have the most resources (time and capital) to engage. If one of the main goals is to offer more possibilities for citizens to generate knowledge for policy formulation and implementation, deliberate efforts are necessary to include under-served communities and unheard voices.

The analysts point to inequalities in the way research findings are taken up by policymakers. For example, community-based participatory research, community-based science, and research by social movements or civil society organizations has been found in the past to be systematically unfunded or ignored by traditional research bodies.

They also point to inequalities when citizen science does take place: invitations for collaboration tend to originate from scientific organizations, which largely predetermine the research objectives, while the involvement of citizens tends to be limited. Even the language can be one-sided, describing citizens as enlisted, recruited, or, more typically, as a crowd of data collectors.

Embracing bottom-up perspectives will require acceptance of a wider range of knowledge co-creation and sharing practices than traditionally included in evidence-based policy making, focused on citizen empowerment and inclusion in defining the conditions and purposes of evidence. In 'extreme or collaborative science', citizens are seen as equal to scientists when it comes to decisions about research questions, methods, or processes and can challenge the ways scientists produce knowledge, including their assumptions and standards about what constitutes scientific knowledge.

Citizen science has the potential to complement, validate, and enhance data collected through official channels with broader, timely, and cost-effective data sources, as has already been showcased in areas such as biodiversity monitoring or environmental pollution monitoring. Adequate standards and infrastructure are needed to deliver further on this potential, including revised data validation protocols, multiple methods for data quality, data interoperability and management, and innovative and robust technologies. To be truly effective, this should be complemented by the formulation of more participatory processes, which may imply the review of legislative frameworks.

High-level commitment from top scientists, management, policymakers, and institutions and coordination, with clear definitions of opportunities, roles, and responsibilities at different levels of governance, could strengthen coherence and expand the application of citizen science to policy areas where it has a strong potential – such as climate monitoring, agriculture and food security, urban planning and smart cities, health and medical research, and humanitarian support and development aid.

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CHAPTER 6

Announced at COP28 in the United Arab Emirates in 2023, the Drylands Futures Academy aims to enhance the resilience of drylands communities.

Fit-For-Future Research Organizations

To move away from ivory tower models of the past, fit-for-future research organizations are baking in action-oriented research models of working with communities as equals and firmly integrating traditional knowledge. The Jameel Observatory for Food Security Early Action is currently co-designing a Dryland Futures Academy for the Horn of Africa, which points the way forward.

Announced at COP28 in the United Arab Emirates in 2023, the Dryland Futures Academy aims to enhance the resilience of dryland communities in the face of ever-increasing climate shocks with a focus on innovation, education, and training. It has ambitions to engage diverse actors, from communities needing to understand forecasts, local governments, and organizations seeking to understand the impacts of different investment decisions, to policy makers and businesses wanting to better understand the dynamics of drylands, or students and young professionals aspiring to be future leaders.

Approximately 300 million people living in the drylands of East Africa rely on pastoralism. Their adaptation options are limited due to the remote and unsuitable nature of rangelands. Recurrent droughts devastate livelihoods, pushing families into poverty. A lack of reliable data and tested solutions leaves pastoralists and organizations struggling to respond to climate-driven food security and nutrition shocks. While “anticipatory action” has become a mantra to resolve these challenges, the pastoralists, who have relied on traditional knowledge for centuries to survive in these difficult environments, are seldom involved in finding solutions. “Our knowledge is valuable, but we are rarely asked to contribute,” says a pastoral elder, underscoring the marginalization of Indigenous knowledge in formal planning.

Working with a diverse community of practice composed of humanitarian agencies, civil society organizations, government officials, and pastoralists, the Jameel Observatory for Food Security Early Action has identified five key challenges in this area:

Young Maasai grazing his cattle in a dryland.

- **Data:** Anticipatory action requires reliable prediction of forthcoming shocks. Although there are various existing early warning systems in the Horn of Africa, and the quality and reliability of predictions has improved considerably in recent years, effective action to mitigate the worst effects of drought in advance of them taking on crisis proportions is still missing. This challenge is to improve the usefulness of early warning systems; for instance, through better visualization, improved accessibility by communities, the use of impact-based forecasts, and better explanations of the uncertainty associated with forecasts.
- **Coordination:** Responding effectively to food shocks involves stakeholders involved in prediction, preparedness, and response. There are many actors in the food security sector in the Horn of Africa, including regional bodies, researchers, and national and county government stakeholders. Preparedness and response to food shocks is the responsibility of national government actors, county governments, development partners, and local communities. Coordination of prediction, preparedness, and response as crises unfold is complex and entails multiple actors at different levels. The challenge here relates to how co-ordination among disparate actors can be improved so that scarce resources can be used more effectively and there is no duplication of effort.
- **Finance:** Acting in advance of a crisis is cheaper and more effective than dealing with an emergency. However, drought emergencies continue to recur. There are various structural reasons for this related to lack of agreement on triggers for action, bureaucracy surrounding timely release of funds, perils of false alarms, lack of evidence of effectiveness of early financing, etc. This challenge relates to looking for ways to improve access to and use of funds to deal with food shortages before they take on crisis proportions.
- **Trust:** Primary food security data is not neutral in the humanitarian or development sector and can quickly become a political tool, especially when there is competition for scarce funds among humanitarian actors and between communities. Loss of trust in data can quickly undermine efforts to use or align funds effectively. This challenge relates to identifying appropriate incentives for different actors to develop and embrace a unified and trusted framework for robust data or evidence generation; and assessing

and enhancing the capacities of policy makers and communities to make meaningful decisions on early action on food and nutrition security based on data.

- **Local action:** There is often a disconnect between formal national or international efforts to deal with food crises and more informal local or community actions to deal with crises. Formal systems often miss local perspectives and needs and fail to harness local expertise and energy. This challenge relates to addressing the disconnect between formal and informal prediction and response and identifying ways to build systems that are more locally responsive and locally effective.

The Dryland Futures Academy aims to acknowledge the unique knowledge and practices of pastoralist communities; harness local knowledge and foster collaboration; and integrate Indigenous and scientific knowledge. It seeks to promote strategies that preserve and restore ecosystems; promote climate-resilient livelihoods and diversification; strengthen adaptive governance and policy support; leverage technology and innovation for new tools and approaches to support decision-making; and use data-driven anticipatory action for proactive responses.[71]

Sparking Research Ideas In Local Communities

While research organizations are focused on identifying new frontiers for research, communities rarely have the opportunity to convene to identify new areas of research that will benefit them in increasing future climate resilience. ARA's **Grassroots Action Research Microgrants** are designed to link action and research partners with local communities, to identify areas for collaboration on critical adaptation issues on the ground.

Children collect water from a drain in Kibera, an informal settlement in Nairobi, Kenya.

The first round of microgrants of £10,000 (approximately US$ 13,083) each were awarded in 2021 to 25 grantees. They enabled co-creation processes between diverse stakeholders – including affected communities, government, researchers, civil society organizations, intermediaries, and knowledge brokers – to identify burning issues for action research to develop adaptation responses in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. In May 2023, a second round of microgrants, of up to £15,000 (approximately US$ 19,625) each, were awarded to 30 projects across 22 countries.

The microgrants catalyzed the creation of local research and advocacy groups – for instance, on the links between climate impacts and mental health in the Philippines. They facilitated safe spaces for learning and exchange among diverse groups of stakeholders – for instance, between slum dwellers and the County Government in Nairobi, Kenya; and between planning and architecture students and youth living in informal settlements in India. In Ghana, a microgrant provided an opportunity for the grantee to map local sources of information for building the resilience of coastal communities to cope with coastal erosion. Relevance to the community was a common factor for the winning grantees. As Herman Alamou, one of the grantees put it, "When you are bringing something to someone who is searching for it, they value it better than when you bring something to someone who doesn't need it and people don't really care."

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At Karakata School in Dar Es Salaam,Tanzania, children read rainfall, temperature, and weather conditions from a community chalkboard as part of the DARAJA service.

BOX 2: INDIA'S BAREFOOT ENGINEERS, METEOROLOGISTS, AND HYDROLOGISTS

The concept of "barefoot engineers" was born in Rajasthan, India, in 1972. Sanjit 'Bunker' Roy, founder of the Barefoot College in Tilonia, sought to harness the skills and intelligence of rural people to work together with specialists with degrees, to empower local communities and to enable marginalized rural communities to participate in planning, executing, maintaining, and monitoring their own frameworks for development. The College has since grown to serve an international clientele in 2,000 villages in 93 countries, effectively demonstrating the potential of empowering people by demystifying modern scientific knowledge and skills, and enabling them to combine these with traditional knowledge.

The Barefoot College trains community members to specifically address issues concerning marginalized communities and individuals, including women, the exploited, and the impoverished rural poor, relating for instance to water, climate change, health, advocacy, environment, communications, and rural livelihoods. For instance, 3,500 women from 93 countries (in Latin America, Africa, South Asia, South-East Asia, Central Asia, Middle East, and Pacific Islands) have been trained to become "Solar Mamas" – rural women with little-to-no formal education or literacy, who are trained in assembling, installing, and maintaining solar panels and equipment. The initiative addresses energy poverty while empowering women to become agents of change within their communities, and ensuring that the knowledge stays within the communities to benefit generations to come.

The concept has been scaled up through other initiatives across India. "Barefoot hydrologists" were trained as part of the Andhra Pradesh Farmer Managed Groundwater Systems project in India, following the realization that sustainable management of groundwater is feasible only if groundwater users understand the various parameters influencing the hydrological cycle. The science of groundwater was demystified, and the scientific concepts of hydrogeology and groundwater management were translated to make them accessible to groundwater users with or without literacy skills. These were communicated to water users through Farmer Water Schools and Farmer Field Schools, using formal and informal techniques – including cultural shows, folk art forms such as the kalajatha (folk theatre), practical training, exposure visits, exchange visits, and workshops. Groundwater Management Committees (GMCs) were formed at the village level, and several GMCs were grouped to form a Hydrological Unit Network, which was responsible for data collection, analysis, and management for ensuring sustainable groundwater management. The project reached out to a population of 900,000 in the former state of Andhra Pradesh, and is considered the first global example of large-scale success in groundwater management by communities only through empowerment with new knowledge, and without any incentives.[72]

In other parts of India, as well, community members are trained to merge traditional and modern knowledge for better natural resource management. In the state of Odisha, for instance, young people are trained as water stewards – Jala Bandhus – to support their communities to rejuvenate water sources and conserve land. The Jala Bandhus acquire a range of skills, from monitoring springs, developing degraded land and undertaking social and agroforestry plantations, to conserving soil and moisture and intercropping to improve land and water sources. They learn about hydrogeology, accounting, and the use of technology such as Google Earth Pro and Vertical Electric Sounding tests. The training has helped the Indigenous community to navigate the challenges posed by changing climate while supporting local entrepreneurship. Similar approaches are underway in other parts of India to harness the power of local communities to collect and transmit meteorological data and information.

The Way Forward

A move to action-oriented research in future can empower communities to lead, address systemic inequalities, and respect traditional values.

- **Community-centered research:** The recent shift in research practices that prioritizes communities and actively involves them enables communities to define and articulate their own challenges, co-create solutions, and ensure that adaptation research truly meets their needs.
- **Equitable partnerships between communities and universities:** Building local research capacity enables community members to lead their own research projects. This not only empowers them but also helps to shift the priorities of local universities to address the pressing, real-world issues these communities face daily. Academic institutions should move beyond traditional roles and actively collaborate with communities to address local challenges. As in the case of climate finance, communities should be partners in decision-making process related to adaptation research, rather than simply beneficiaries or contributors, to ensure that research funding and priorities align with their needs.
- **Participatory research to challenge inequities:** Vulnerable communities are often caught in cycles of poverty due to systemic inequalities. Participatory action research can help identify and address these root causes, resulting in deeper, more impactful change.
- **Traditional knowledge for lasting impact:** When research respects local knowledge and cultural values, it becomes a tool for real change. Respecting and integrating local practices ensures community buy-in and lasting impact, making solutions not only accepted but enduring.
- **Driving policy change through research:** When research processes and findings are used to influence policy, entire communities can benefit. From local water management policies to national climate action plans, research that directly informs policy can lead to fairer distribution of resources and better protection for vulnerable populations. By working more closely with communities and policymakers, research can translate into tangible outcomes like stronger climate action plans, better resource allocation, and legal frameworks that protect vulnerable groups.
- **Focus on long-term solutions for lasting resilience:** Real-world adaptation is about building resilience that can last for generations. Action-oriented research helps develop sustainable practices, whether through investing in sustainable agriculture, diversifying livelihoods, or creating community-based disaster risk management plans.

CHAPTER 7

SCALING UP LLA THROUGH NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLAN PROCESSES

HIGHLIGHTS

- The National Adaptation Plan (NAP) process is an important tool for climate risk and adaptation to be regularly and systematically considered in how countries plan, allocate human and financial resources, and measure progress on adaptation.
- The NAP guidelines emphasize the importance of strategic and intentional links between national and sub-national adaptation planning, implementation, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning. 40% of NAPs mention LLA.
- The six enabling factors for effective NAPs, which include leadership and institutional arrangements, and financing should be primed to enable LLA.
- LLA practitioners should actively seek ways to leverage and engage in the NAP processes, bringing their valuable expertise and lived experiences to the national process.
- The NAP process is also an important vehicle for establishing financing mechanisms that can direct finance all the way to the sub-national and local levels. There are promising emerging experiences in several countries in mobilizing resources for local-level adaptation, including in Kenya, Eswatini, and Tonga.
- A strong focus on institutionalizing LLA through the NAP processes can strengthen scaled up and coordinated action on adaptation, enabling programmatic whole-of country, whole-of-government approaches instead of ad hoc sector- and project-based approaches. It can provide a strong foundation for national action on adaptation, grounded in the reality of its most vulnerable citizens.

Devolving decision making

Addressing structural inequalities

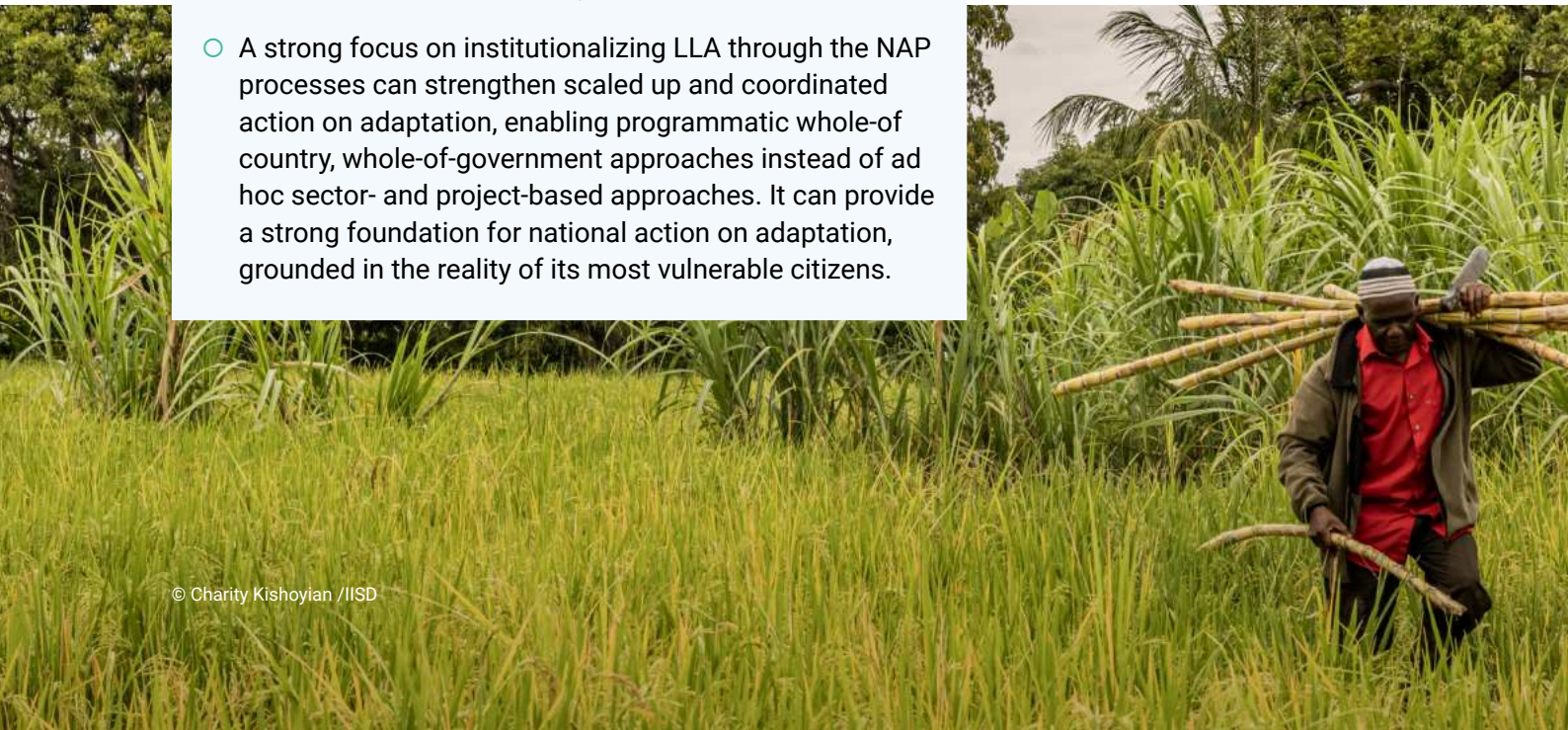
Patient, predictable, accessible funding

Investing in local capacities

Building understanding

Collaborative action

IN THIS CHAPTER



> **Anyone who says climate change is not real must be living under a rock. Our coral reefs are being decimated.**
>
> Chester Nathoniel, co-owner, Action Adventure Divers

THE CORAL GARDENERS OF SAINT LUCIA

In the village of Soufriere, which lies on the shores of the Caribbean Sea in Saint Lucia, a group of young people have come together with their government and the private sector to protect the coral reefs that surround their island country. These coral gardeners of Saint Lucia recognize that a threat to the health of coral reefs is a threat to the culture and livelihoods of Saint Lucians.

The cost of climate change-induced damage to coral reefs in Saint Lucia could reach between US$ 1.7 and US$ 3.4 billion by 2050.[73] The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned, with "very high confidence," that 70-90% of coral reefs around the world will be lost even if global average temperature rise is limited to 1.5°C.[74] "Anyone who says climate change is not real must be living under a rock. Our coral reefs are being decimated," says Chester Nathoniel, co-owner of Action Adventure Divers. "Coral bleaching, a result of warming ocean temperatures, is threatening our fundamental way of life."

The Coral Restoration Programme, led by the Centre for Livelihoods, Ecosystems, Energy, Adaptation and Resilience in the Caribbean Limited (CLEAR Caribbean

Coral gardners at work with Saint Lucia's Piton mountains in the background.

NAPs are a critical tool for countries to plan how they will adapt to climate change.

Ltd), aims to produce approximately 4,000 coral colonies on selected reefs with the help of its coral gardeners. Initiated in 2016, it is delivered through a partnership between the Anse Chastanet and Jade Mountain Resort hotels, the Sandals Foundation, PANORAMA, and the Department of Fisheries of the Government of Saint Lucia, and has become a testament to the success of public-private partnerships for climate change adaptation.

The program was identified as a priority action for the fisheries sector in Saint Lucia's NAP (2018-2028). It is designed to help local coral reef ecosystems adapt to the effects of climate change by introducing species of coral that are not prone to bleaching in warming waters. Shallow water populations of elkhorn (*Acropora palmata*) and staghorn (*Acropora cervicornis*) are being restored by planting fragments of corals, grown in coral nurseries, in the reef. While some gardeners focus on tending existing corals during dives, others transport the coral fragments from the nurseries and plant them in frames constructed and installed for the purpose.

The program has been very successful so far, and is highlighted in Saint Lucia's NAP progress report as a key achievement for the country's fisheries sector, one that has not only led to positive ecosystem results but also enhanced human and institutional skills and knowledge to adapt to climate change.[75] "It's amazing to see how once nearly dead reefs can come back to life as a direct result of what we do," says Deuxmille Alexander, a coral gardener.

NAPs are a critical tool for countries to plan out how they will adapt to climate change. Led and driven by national governments, they are an increasingly important vehicle for putting adaptation at the heart of development planning and budgeting. Inclusive NAP processes are therefore a critical part of supporting local communities to protect lives and livelihoods in a changing climate.

A Global Overview Of NAP Processes

Almost all countries have NAP processes underway. The processes are an important method for climate risk and adaptation to be regularly and systematically considered in how countries plan, allocate human and financial resources, and measure progress.

The NAP process was established under the Cancun Adaptation Framework in 2010 for countries to identify and address their medium- and long-term adaptation priorities through development planning and budgeting. From the start, the importance of adaptation being locally led and involving sub-national authorities was recognized, with the official NAP Guidelines emphasizing the importance of strategic and intentional links between national and sub-national adaptation planning, implementation, and monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL).[76]

NAP documents provide a valuable overview of a country's existing efforts, national priorities, and gaps and needs for support. Many NAP documents are recognizing the importance of local-to-national linkages in adaptation, also referred to as vertical integration of adaptation.

GLOBAL STATUS OF NAPs AT A GLANCE

142 out of **154** developing countries have NAP processes underway.

102 countries have approved NAP proposals to the Green Climate Fund.

58 countries have submitted a NAP document to the UNFCCC's NAP Central.

Community members planting mangroves in Grenada.

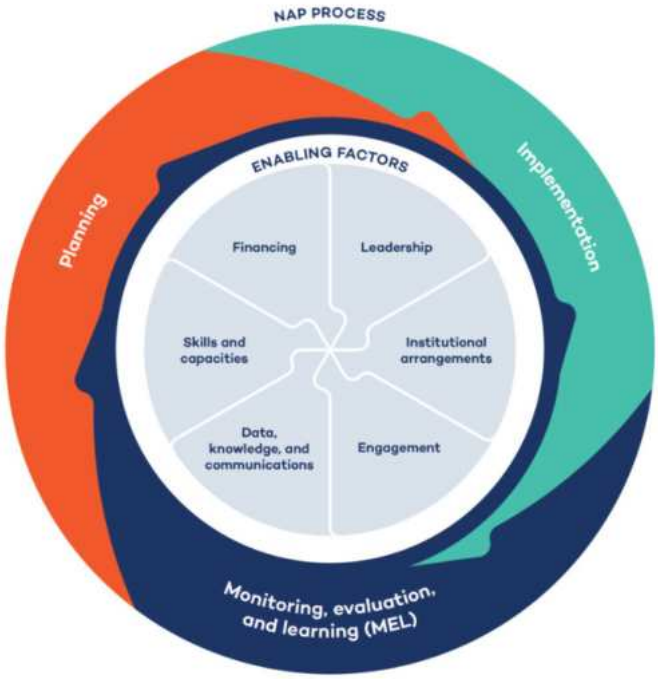
A 2023 review of NAP documents by the NAP Global Network Secretariat explored how countries' NAP teams are creating intentional and strategic linkages between different levels of governance. [77] This report found that:

- All NAPs referenced non-government sub-national actors relevant for vertical integration in adaptation – including communities, civil society organizations (CSOs), and local businesses.
- More than three-quarters of NAPs define a role for sub-national governments in adaptation planning, implementation, and MEL.
- Fewer than three-quarters (69%) of NAPs mentioned mechanisms to provide finance to sub-national levels.

This review also found that approximately half the NAPs refer to community-based adaptation (CBA), and a growing number (40%) mention locally led adaptation (LLA). While gaps remain, this is a strong foundation to build on for scaling up LLA through NAP processes.

How NAP Processes Can Scale Up LLA

The NAP process can be seen as consisting of three broad phases: planning, implementation, and MEL. [78]



Envisaging the NAP process

40% of NAPs mention LLA.

A woman collecting water from a local pond in Kenya.

The NAP Global Network advocates six enabling factors for NAP processes to be effective.[79] The table below describes how these can be primed to support LLA.

TABLE: Priming the six enabling factors for the NAP process to support LLA

ENABLERS FOR THE NAP PROCESS...	...PRIMED TO SUPPORT LLA
Leadership: The active involvement of high-level political leaders and recognized "champions" who are committed to addressing adaptation.	Champions and leaders at the sub-national level are empowered and enabled to lead in the development, implementation, and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) of adaptation action.
Institutional arrangements: The rules, regulations, and associated organizational structures that enable coordination on adaptation across actors at all levels, as well as the systematic integration of adaptation into development processes.	Sub-national governments have a clear mandate and guidance to integrate adaptation in local development planning. Mechanisms to involve non-state actors and civil society organizations in adaptation planning, action, and MEL are institutionalized across levels.
Engagement: Efforts that enable a range of diverse actors at all levels, including civil society organizations, the private sector, communities, the media, and academia, to participate in and influence decision making in the NAP process.	Non-state actors at the sub-national level are recognized as important partners in delivering adaptation and their capacities to participate in adaptation-related decision-making is supported.
Data, knowledge, and communications: The generation and use of: • Data and information, especially climate data. • Knowledge, including local knowledge and research. • Key messages tailored to specific audiences to advance the NAP process.	Local impacts of climate change and adaptation outcomes are monitored and evaluated to support adaptive learning and management. A commitment to enhance access to, and use of, climate information systems by sub-national actors. Full transparency on adaptation decision-making processes, and clear lines of communication with sub-national actors. Local, traditional, and Indigenous knowledge informs sub-national adaptation policies and actions.
Skills and capacities: Investments in individuals and organizations at all levels to ensure they have the skills and capacities to enable effective and efficient NAP processes.	A clear commitment to strengthen the capacities and competencies of sub-national governments and actors to design, implement, monitor, evaluate, and learn from adaptation policies and actions.
Financing: The availability and accessibility of public and private financing for climate adaptation from domestic and international sources to actors at all levels.	Effective mechanisms exist to channel sustained adaptation finance to sub-national levels. Specific actions to support locally led adaptation are identified and included in adaptation policies, plans, and budgets.

Adapted from NAP Global Network, 2023, and Ceinos A. & Dazé A. (2024). *CBA Scale + Policy Analysis Methodology – Analyzing the enabling environment for Community-Based Adaptation* [in press].

In addition, NAP processes can support LLA through:

- A focus on gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) in local adaptation processes and actions to ensure equitable benefits for people of all genders and social groups, including Indigenous peoples.
- Aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals and recognizing the close links between LLA and ecosystem-based adaptation and nature-based solutions; and between conserving, protecting, and sustainably managing ecosystems, strengthened climate resilience, and multiple benefits for human wellbeing and ecosystems.

STORIES CONNECT COMMUNITIES WITH GOVERNMENTS

On the night of 23 May 2023, 63-year-old Generosa Hategekimana was abruptly awakened by a distress call from one of her four children, who realized that their house was succumbing to a landslide. Escaping in time, she stood at a distance watching her house crumble before her eyes.

Landslides have become a regular hazard in the district of Gakenke, in the Northern Province of Rwanda, where Hategekimana lives, especially during periods of intense rainfall that are now made more frequent by climate change.

Hategekimana scours the land where her house previously stood on 25 February 2024.

Hategekimana spreads rocks to set a foundation for her new house.

> **Bringing real life experiences of climate change to life through stories for decision-makers in the NAP process is critical for a people-focused approach. This is the goal of the Envisioning Resilience initiative.**

Generosa Hategekimana.

Hategekimana's story of rebuilding her life by taking on a heavy burden of debt and working to buy a new home highlights the urgent need to support communities whose lives and livelihoods are being battered by climate change.[80]

The NAP Global Network teamed up with Lensational, an NGO, to bring Hategekimana's story to the attention of Patrick Kareka, Rwanda's Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, at a workshop for policy makers and storytellers in March 2023. Kareka said that the story emphasized to him the role of women as agents of change for adaptation.

Bringing real life experiences of climate change to life through stories for decision-makers in the NAP process is critical for a people-focused approach. This is the goal of the Envisioning Resilience initiative, a collaboration between Lensational and the NAP Global Network, funded by Global Affairs Canada. The initiative trains women from underrepresented groups in photography and storytelling to develop stories on climate risk and adaptation. The stories are then used for policy dialogues with decision makers leading NAP processes. The initiative also promotes economic empowerment, with the trainees licensing their photographs via Lensational. Envisioning Resilience has so far had cohorts of trainees in Ghana, Kenya, Jamaica, and Rwanda.[81]

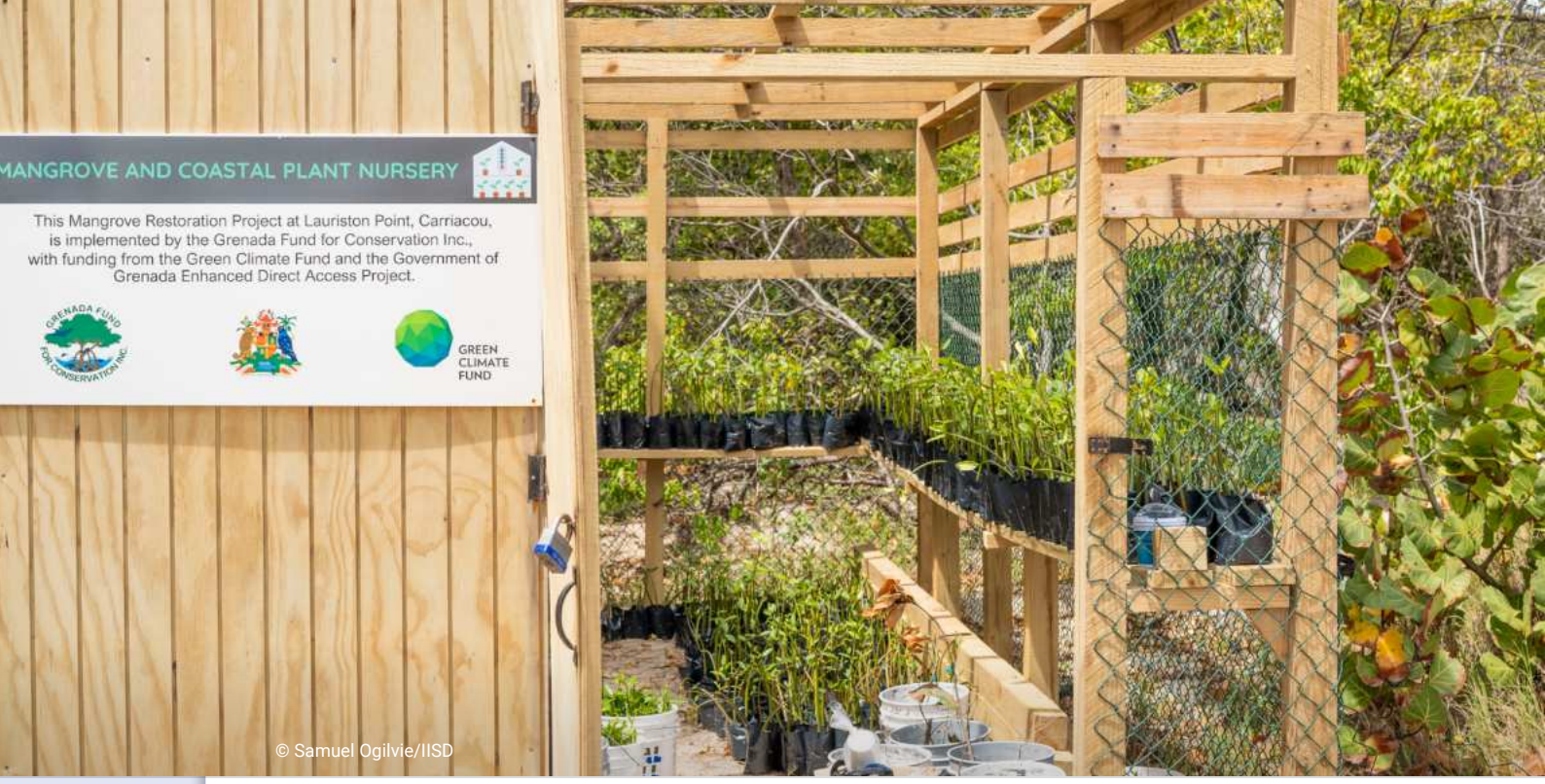
The initiative emphasizes the opportunity for the NAP process to strongly reflect that climate change impacts are not gender neutral, and adaptation efforts at all levels need to address GESI.[82] In Rwanda, Envisioning Resilience partnered with the Rwanda Women's Network to engage seven female photographers to document how climate change is affecting their communities, and approaches and policies needed to respond. Hategekimana's experiences were profiled by trainee Clementine Twizerimana.

THE ISLE OF REEFS

For the people of Carriacou, a tiny island of just 31 km^2 in the Caribbean Sea, every inch of land is precious. Known popularly as the 'Isle of Reefs', Carriacou is now increasingly battered by hurricanes and worn down by coastal erosion caused by climate change, leaving residents distraught. In June 2024, for instance, Carriacou was hit by Hurricane Beryl, a Category 4 storm that caused three deaths and damaged 98% of the island's buildings, leaving 10,000 people seeking shelter.[83] The slow onset impacts are equally noticeable. "Over the last 30 or so years, this area — Lauriston Beach and Lauriston Point in Carriacou — has suffered a lot of coastal erosion," says Tyrone Buckmire, executive director of the **Grenada Fund for Conservation**.

In response, the island's communities, local NGOs, and local government are uniting to replant mangroves to protect against erosion, damage from storms, and sea-level rise. The Lauriston Restoration and Rehabilitation Project unites local NGOs like the **Grenada Fund**

Planting mangroves in Carriacou.



A mangrove nursery in Carriacou to support replanting efforts.

for Conservation, the Kipaji Development Initiative, and the Kido Foundation with federal ministries and communities to come together to establish mangrove nurseries.

Replanting efforts have aimed to reverse the loss of coastal mangroves to stabilize the coastline and protect the rich local biodiversity. The project team established a mangrove nursery to cultivate red and white mangrove saplings, which act as natural buffers to shield the coast against erosion, storm damage, and sea-level rise. The initiative showcases the remarkable potential of local communities collaborating towards a shared goal of climate resilience.

The project's significance goes beyond the Carriacou community, aligning with Grenada's NAP, which includes a program on ecosystem resilience and sets the ambition to "replant and replace the lost mangrove populations island-wide" in Carriacou and Petite Martinique. It aims to scale up international finance and technical support for ecosystem-based, local level adaptation.

As Grenada develops the next iteration of its NAP in 2024 and 2025, the country will be able to put forward approaches to fund such priorities programmatically, and further advance the institutional linkages between sub-national and local-level adaptation with national processes.

BEKWAI'S LOCAL ADAPTATION PLAN

The local assembly of Bekwai, a district of the Ashanti region of southern Ghana known for its cocoa production, prepared the municipality's first-ever climate change adaptation plan in 2024.[84]

Many of the residents of Bekwai are subsistence farmers, with no irrigation systems and a heavy reliance on rainfall. This renders them very vulnerable to climate variability and change,

including rising temperatures, long dry spells, and intense precipitation events which cause flooding, often in turn causing severe damage to private and public property, including access roads, and disruption to farming activities.

Ghana's decentralized system of governance means that national-level development plans and policies are implemented by local governments. The government of Ghana has also placed a strong emphasis on CBA in its approach to the NAP process, making it a guiding principle in its 2018 NAP Framework.[85] Ghana's NAP process builds on existing local-level action on adaptation, which is "*led by diverse entities such as academia, CSOs, local governments, private sector, donor partners and many others. The different initiatives are manifested in the number of local climate adaptation actions in diverse sectors recorded across the country*".[86]

In practical terms, this means the national government provides information and resources to sub-national governments to plan and implement adaptation. For example, the national government undertook a series of local climate risk assessments (CRAs) to scientifically map out local vulnerabilities to climate change. The Bekwai Municipal Assembly used its district's CRA to prepare the municipality's first-ever climate change adaptation plan.

Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency organized peer-to-peer learning workshops, a critical tool for local actors to learn from each other, for district representatives to share lessons and good practices for their adaptation plans. This peer learning process focused on building capacity for local level CRAs and explored how the data and information collected can be used as baselines for measuring progress.

Climate Finance For Local Actors

Significant financing is needed at each stage of the NAP process: for the planning process to articulate priorities, for implementation of those priorities, and for MEL to track progress and understand what is working. To address financing gaps, countries will need to access finance from multiple sources – domestic and international, public and private. The NAP process is an important vehicle for establishing financing mechanisms that can direct finance all the way to the sub-national and local levels.[87] There are promising emerging experiences in several countries in mobilizing resources for local-level adaptation.

Kenya: Five counties in Kenya – Garissa, Isiolo, Kitui, Makueni, and Wajir – have established County Climate Change Funds (CCCFs) to identify and fund adaptation priorities that are aligned with national priorities set out in Kenya's NAP. The CCCFs support county governments to mainstream adaptation into local planning and budget systems.[88] For example, the Wajir CCCF has invested in the water sector by funding improvements to water pans, drilling boreholes, and purchasing solar water pumps. This mechanism for devolving climate finance has become a model for a World Bank project, Financing Locally Led Climate Action (see **Chapter 3**).

Eswatini: The Eswatini Environment Fund (EEF) has developed a climate change adaptation window specifically for communities.[89] The EEF is managed by the Eswatini Environment Authority and makes targeted investments for activities led by environmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in communities, with a focus on engagement of youth and women. The Fund has financed a range of activities with an emphasis on ecosystem-based adaptation – specific measures have included wetlands management, land rehabilitation, and climate change education.

Kenya's County Climate Change Funds enhance the local water access by funding water system improvements, borehole drilling, and solar water pumps.

Tonga: A Tonga Climate Change Fund is being established by the government of Tonga to serve as "*a sustainable climate change financing mechanism … to respond to community adaptation priorities at a pace and rate suitable for the communities to ensure buy in with full integration into community development*". The Fund will finance climate change mitigation and adaptation activities and initiatives aligned with Tonga's NAP.[90]

These examples show the potential for NAP processes to accelerate financing for LLA through national and international sources of finance. Establishing domestic funds for adaptation can also come with challenges and risks, as they require strong capacity, including staff, to function effectively. Funding should also be patient and predictable for long-term success, and new mechanisms need to make links with existing institutions and government systems.[91]

COSTA RICA'S NAP SUPPORTS FARMERS

Costa Rica is currently implementing its first National Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2022-2026, which prioritizes action on climate-resilient agriculture and food security. The Reventazón river basin is critical for the country in this regard, as it provides 85% of the country's vegetables, 45% of national electricity generation, and a quarter of the drinking water consumed in Costa Rica's populous Greater Metropolitan Area. Agriculture is an important livelihood in the basin.

As the future of the river basin is jeopardized by increased droughts caused by climate change, national and sub-national governments have come together to implement a pilot

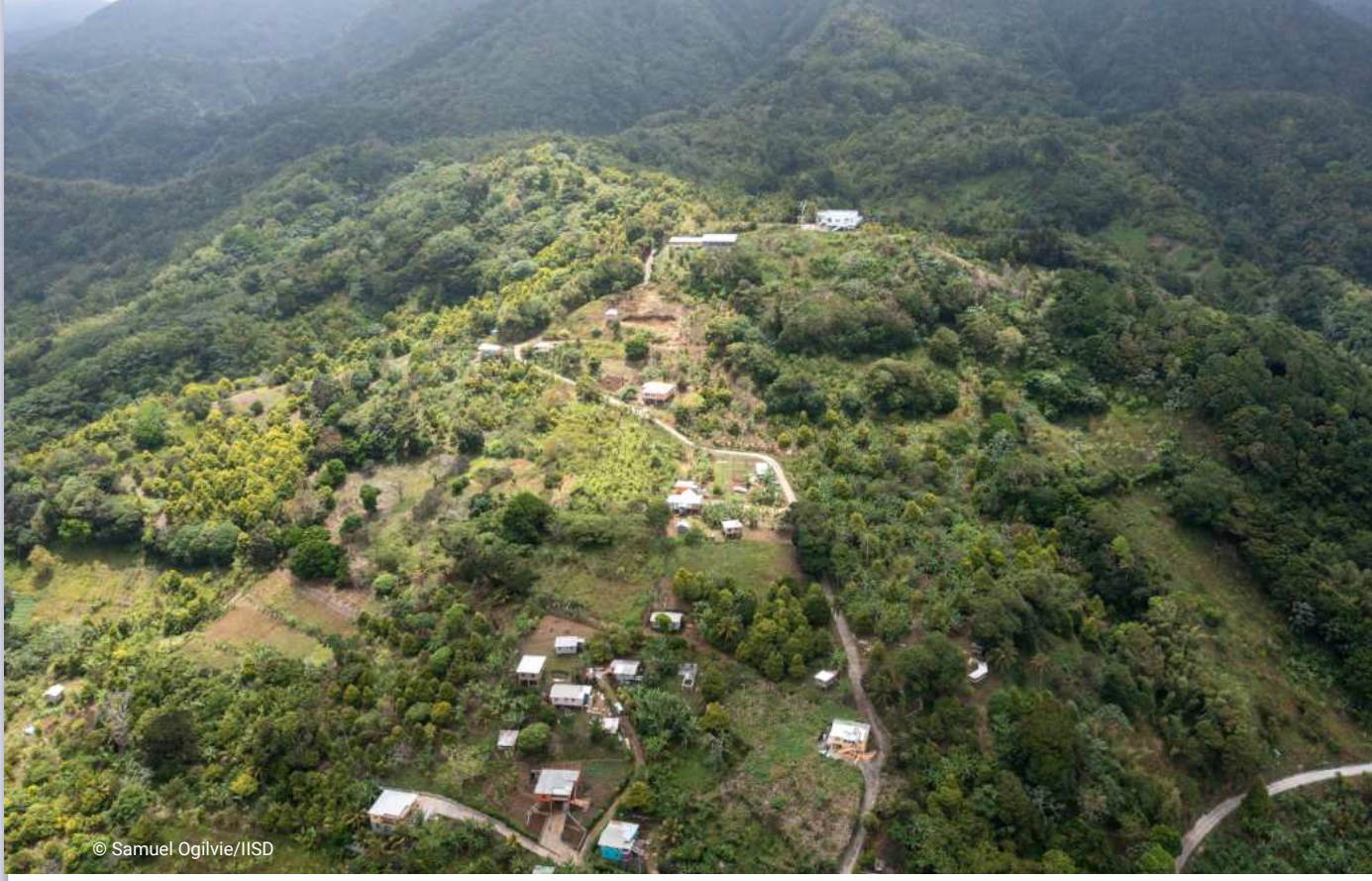
project to increase climate resilience in the basin, in line with the NAP's focus on "*adaptation in eco-competitive and productive systems*". The project is building water reservoirs on local farms in the river basin, to help local farmers irrigate their crops for more reliable harvests.

The national Climate Change Directorate of the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Commission for the Regulation and Management of the Reventazón River Basin, and the National Groundwater, Irrigation and Drainage Service came together to support farmers by building the reservoirs, with support from the NAP Global Network. "With the reservoir, we can cultivate 7,000 m^2, including potatoes, figs, beans, and avocado, guaranteeing a livelihood for my family and other people" says José Gómez, a farmer in the river basin.

The pilot's success is part of a broader national effort, as articulated by the NAP, to increase investment in adaptation. Momentum is growing, with approximately US$ 3.5 million announced in 2024, helping increase investment for local adaptation in line with national priorities.

> **With the reservoir, we can cultivate 7,000 m^2, including potatoes, figs, beans, and avocado, guaranteeing a livelihood for my family and other people**
>
> José Gómez, a farmer in the river basin

Community efforts to protect to protect mangrove population in Carriacou, Grenada.



Institutionalizing LLA through NAPs can empower local communities to become more climate resilient.

Conclusion

The examples in this chapter show how NAP processes can harness the power of LLA, and how local practitioners can tap into the authority and resources of the NAP system.

National governments should leverage, recognize, and support LLA efforts already underway, and recognize sub-national actors as leaders in adaptation, while formulating, funding, and implementing NAPs. LLA practitioners, meanwhile, should seek ways to leverage and engage in the NAP processes, bringing their valuable expertise and lived experiences.

A strong focus on institutionalizing LLA through the NAP processes can strengthen scaled up and coordinated action on adaptation, enabling programmatic whole-of country, whole-of-government approaches instead of ad hoc sector- and project-based approaches. It can provide a strong foundation for national action on adaptation, grounded in the reality of its most vulnerable citizens.

CHAPTER 8

INCENTIVIZING LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION IN INDONESIA

HIGHLIGHTS

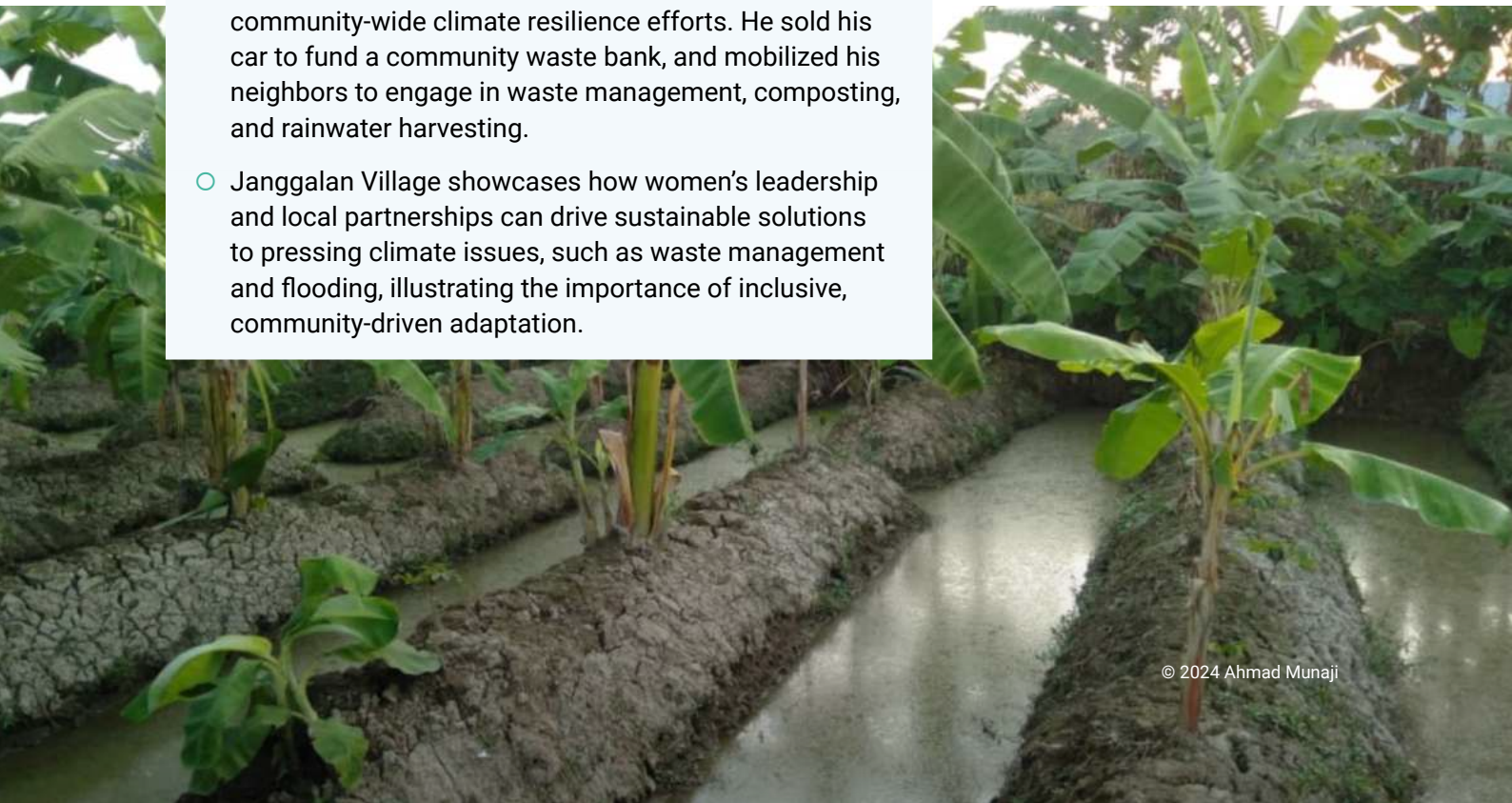
- In Indonesia, a nationwide government program – Program Kampung Iklim (Climate Village Program), or ProKlim – is incubating a country-wide LLA movement by incentivizing communities to take action on climate change.
- ProKlim provides a framework for community-led action on climate change, and recognizes and awards outstanding efforts.
- Community representatives are encouraged to register with the program to develop and implement community climate action plans. ProKlim has already inspired over 10,000 'Climate Villages'.
- Community flood management efforts in RW3 Jakarta combined urban gardening and infiltration wells, showing how urban communities can develop tailored strategies to mitigate flooding and enhance food security.
- Ahmad Munaji's leadership in RW7 illustrates the power of personal commitment and local leadership in driving community-wide climate resilience efforts. He sold his car to fund a community waste bank, and mobilized his neighbors to engage in waste management, composting, and rainwater harvesting.
- Janggalan Village showcases how women's leadership and local partnerships can drive sustainable solutions to pressing climate issues, such as waste management and flooding, illustrating the importance of inclusive, community-driven adaptation.

Devolving decision making

Investing in local capacities

Flexible programming and learning

IN THIS CHAPTER



> **We have no land of our own, so we plant in pots, wherever we can find a patch of idle land.**
>
> Sri Rejeki, leader of a local community climate resilience program.

Replanting to increase water retention in Kudus, Central Java.

THE MOBILE COMMUNITY GARDEN OF WERGU KULON

The air buzzes with energy at a communal vegetable garden in the urban commune of Wergu Kulon, in central Java. The community is in the midst of the back-breaking work of moving their carefully tended vegetable garden from one patch of land to another. "We have no land of our own, so we plant in pots, wherever we can find a patch of idle land," explains Sri Rejeki, leader of a local community climate resilience program. With permission to use the previous plot withdrawn, pots growing red spinach, eggplants, chilies, tomatoes, and fruits – along with the fish in a communal pond – must be moved to a new plot, offered for the purpose by another community member.

This community climate resilience program, which also supports a waste bank where community members are paid to deposit recyclable waste, is part of Indonesia's Program Kampung Iklim (Climate Village Program), or ProKlim. The community garden is an important source of food security for the 3,000 residents of the commune, while the waste bank generates an additional income for its 70 contributors.

ProKlim was launched by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of the Government of Indonesia in 2016. While it was reconceptualized as the Program Komunitas untuk Iklim (Community Program for Climate) in 2023, to go beyond the village level and embrace community-level activities, it kept the title of ProKlim. The main objectives of the program are, among other things, to:

- Encourage community action while recognizing the need for local action on climate change, and to foster community independence.
- Strengthen the capacity of local governments to implement adaptation and mitigation activities.
- Establish partnerships across relevant ministries and agencies, and among stakeholders at all levels.
- Encourage leadership at the community level, to ensure the sustainability of climate action.
- Encourage peer-to-peer learning on best practices within and between different geographical locations.
- Bridge the finance gap between national and local, and encourage the optimal use of existing funding sources.[92]

The Wergu Kulon community take a break after tending their garden and fish in Kudus, Central Java.

Indonesia's President Joko Widodo says ProKlim aims to mobilize the entire community to address the climate challenge, with the eventual goal of covering 20,000 villages (there are 83,971 administrative villages in Indonesia, both rural and urban). Siti Nurbaya, the Minister of Environment and Forestry, refers to ProKlim as a "national movement for community-based climate change control".

The program recognizes that adaptation and mitigation success at the national level rely on local level action by capacitated local governments and communities, supported by national polices to develop local plans and access funding from diverse sources.

Indonesia's four-tiered administrative system is divided into provinces, which are further sub-divided into a second tier of regencies (kabupaten), cities (kota), and metropolitan areas. The third tier consists of districts (kecamatan), followed in the fourth tier by rural villages (desa) and urban villages (kelurahan).

At the national level, ProKlim is supported by a secretariat and a steering committee with experts and officials of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry; a technical team to support implementation and assessment; and a verification team, tasked with conducting verifications. ProKlim coordinators are appointed at the provincial, kabupaten, kota and kecamatan levels. A "Climate Village" is described as an administrative area, rural or urban, either at the community (neighborhood or hamlet) level or at the level of desas or kelurahan, where efforts have been underway to adapt or mitigate to climate change for at least two years.

Activities under ProKlim can include:

- Identification of climate change vulnerabilities and risks.
- Identification of sources of greenhouse gas emissions and removals.
- Development and enhancement of community capacity and community institutions to support the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Development of community-based local-level climate change adaptation and mitigation action plans.
- Implementation of community-based local level climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- Increased capacity to access funding resources and technologies in climate villages.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Representatives of an area can register their application to be a part of ProKlim through an application submitted through a **National Registry System for Climate Change Control**. Adaptation activities under ProKlim are encouraged to address drought, flood and landslide control; improved food security; handling or anticipating sea level rise, tidal surges, seawater intrusion, abrasion, erosion, and high waves; and climate-related disease control. Mitigation activities include activities related to solid and liquid waste management; renewable energy and energy conservation; emissions reduction from agricultural activities; and increasing or maintaining forest and vegetation cover including through the suppression of forest fires.

Organic waste processing facility, Djarum Foundation in Kudus, Central Java.

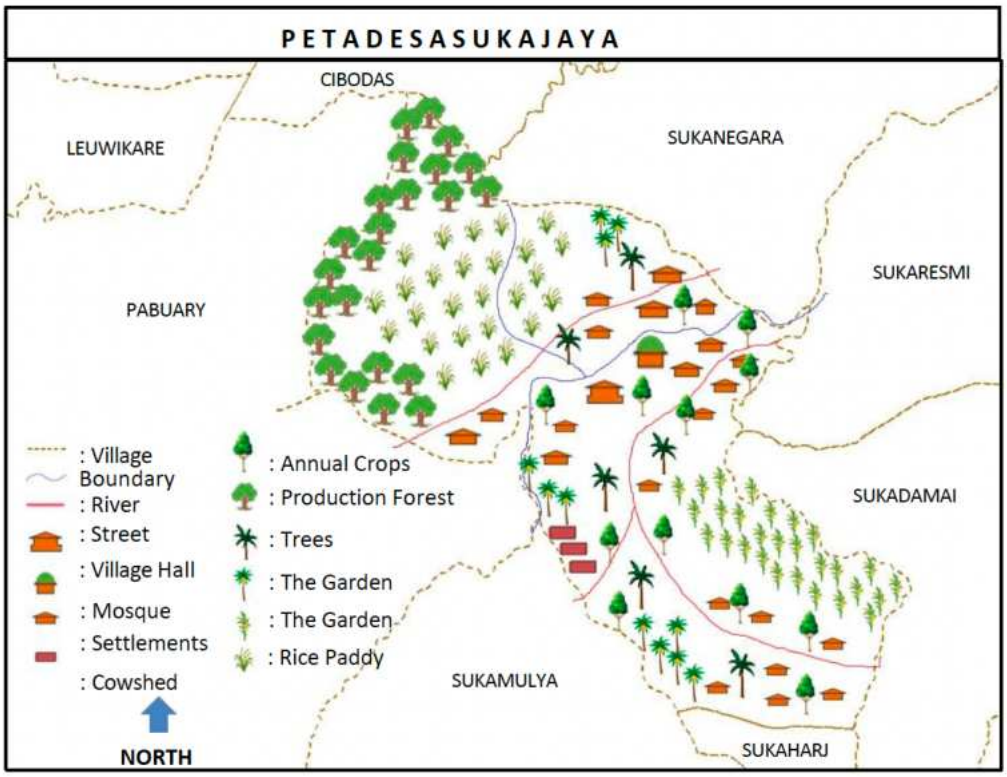
Preparation By Working Groups

The village heads or the heads of the sub-districts that apply to ProKlim authorize the creation of working groups to prepare for planning for the Climate Villages. The members of the working group are drawn from existing community groups working on activities such as farming and water management; customary law community groups; religious community groups; and youth organizations. The working groups then conduct a mapping and profiling exercise to gather data and information on climate change vulnerabilities and risks, and

greenhouse gas emission sources. The following technique is recommended for this mapping and profiling exercise:

1. **Determine the topics or issues to be discussed in social mapping.** The determination of topics can be done through group discussions at the local level, attended by multiple parties. Discussions on climate change adaptation and mitigation actions need to be supported by field data and facts on extreme climate events, climate-related disasters, and the impact of disasters on community income.
2. **Identify participants for social mapping.** Participants should be carefully selected, representing parties related to the topic under discussion. If the topic is about increasing farmers' resilience to the impacts of climate change for farming, for instance, then the participants of social mapping can come from representatives of hamlets in the village, and consist of rice farmers, non-field farmers, farmer groups, extension workers, farm women, and facilitators.
3. **Conduct meetings with community representatives.** Local communities are more aware of the situation on the ground, such as the condition of water sources, irrigation channels, land location, landowners, community leaders, farmer group activities, needs of various parties, constraints faced, intensity of climate-related disasters, and climate change adaptation and mitigation actions that have been implemented.
4. **Develop a Climate Village profile map and prioritize needs.** This can be done from the most important or most urgent and necessary, to the less urgent. The results of the mapping can be analyzed according to the focus of the most urgent issues to be resolved in terms of sustainability (physical, social, economic), and can be formulated as input for developing policies, programs, and activities for relevant parties.

Figure 1: Example of Climate Village Mapping Results



The mapping exercise is aimed at identifying current and future vulnerabilities and risks of climate change. As a result of the exercise, the community is expected to understand the impacts of climate change on their own lives through, for instance, floods, landslides, droughts, crop failures, and climate-related disease outbreaks; and what needs to be done to minimize the risks faced. Particularly vulnerable areas are identified, based on both the highest risk of experiencing extreme climate-related events and disasters, and adaptive capacity to deal with these climate risks (based on data indicators related to socioeconomic status, infrastructure, and ecosystems). The Ministry of Environment and Forestry also has a **Vulnerability Index Data Information System** to guide this process, which classifies vulnerability levels into five categories (not vulnerable, moderately vulnerable, moderately vulnerable, vulnerable, and highly vulnerable).

Developing Climate Action Plans

The initial preparation process by the working group is followed by a planning process, which also includes a focus on community capacity building and institutionalization. The results of the preparation phase are presented to the community again, to summarize types and levels of existing climate threats, vulnerabilities, risks, and their own adaptation and mitigation capacity. The communities then develop goals and objectives for the climate action plans that clearly speak to their needs. The objectives should be specific, clear, realistic, rational and measurable, and consider the time available for implementation. They could include objectives such as the following:

- Community members understand climate change and its causes.
- Community members have the knowledge and skills to save themselves from the threat of climate-related disasters.
- Community members have the knowledge and skills to improve their quality of life and socioeconomic conditions.
- Community members have food barns to guarantee food availability during climate-related disasters and emergencies.

Greenery covers neighborhood alleys in Jakarta.

- Community members have shared savings that can be used for recovery or rebuilding processes in the event of a climate-related disaster.

An action plan with a detailed work program is then formulated by the community, listing clear objectives, activities, indicators, responsibilities, partners, and timeline. The integration of these plans into Village Development Plans is encouraged.

Implementation Of Action Plans

The planning process is followed by implementation of activities in partnership with local governments, following a prioritization exercise based on agreed criteria. The criteria could include, for instance, consideration of activities that must be carried out immediately to avoid adverse impacts; activities that do not require large investments; or the resources needed to carry out the activities are already available. Provisions are also made to train the community for implementation, to enhance their capacity to access technical, natural, social, and financial resources.

Shallow infiltration wells in Jakarta.

Community fish pond being relocated to a new site in Kudus, Central Java.

Recyclable waste dropboxes are used for weekly sorting by the community in Jakarta.

Funding To Implement Action Plans

Local government and communities are expected to source their own funding to implement activities under ProKlim, with support from the working groups, from the following sources:

- Funds from the central and local governments.
- Village Development Funds.
- Special Allocation Funds, allocated by government to certain regions to fund special activities.
- Corporate social responsibility.
- Community development funds from various ministries and institutions, private companies, social institutions, and other sources.

Villages that perform well qualify for special awards, based on performance (see next section).

Monitoring And Evaluation

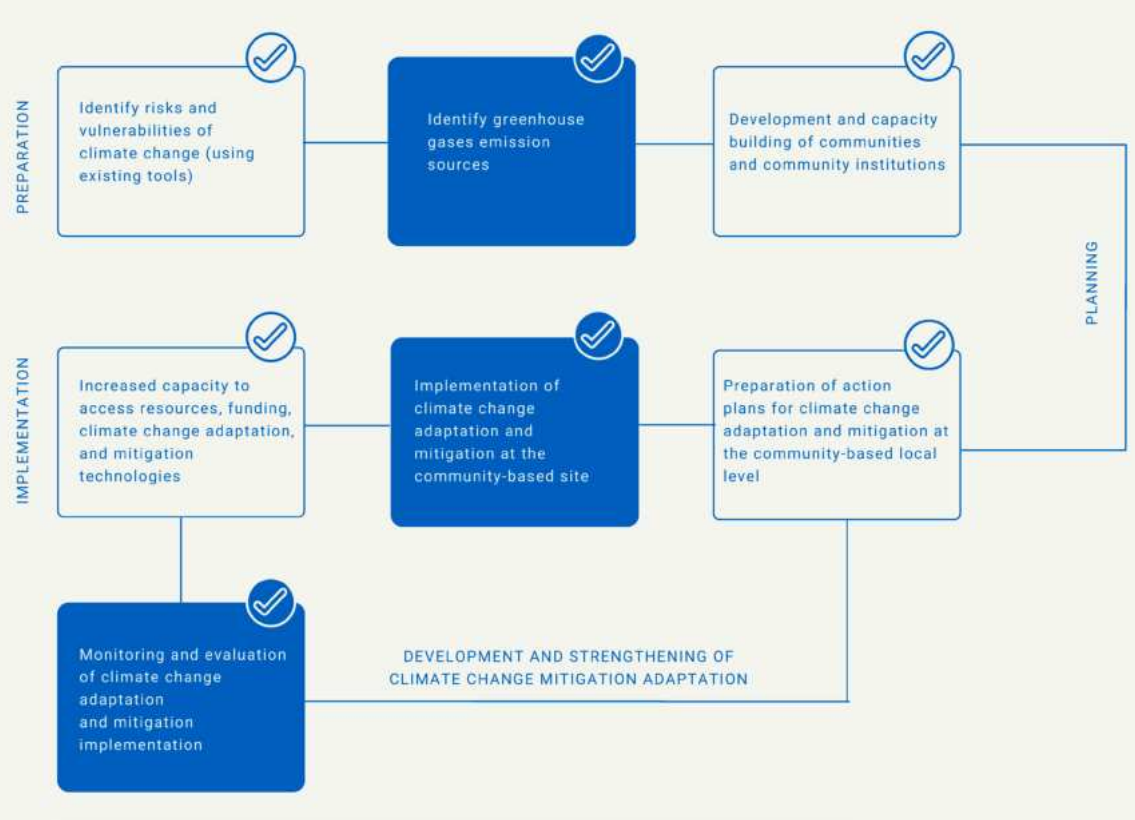
Activities are monitored based on their relevance and strength of implementation, and the results are used to inform improvements in ProKlim. Regular monitoring and evaluations are carried out by the ProKlim coordinators. The Technical and Verification Teams are involved in conducting field verifications periodically, based on

indicators that include the level of usefulness and prioritization; the timeframe within which activities were implemented; the status or condition of implementation; and the effectiveness of the activities in solving local climate-related problems.

Each proposed Climate Village is assessed on the basis of baseline socio-economic data, local climate related conditions, adaptation and mitigation activities, and the presence of community groups and support to sustain activities. There are 10,113 Climate Villages, as of July 2024. They are classified into four groups:

- ProKlim Pratama (with a score of 50%, based on the above assessment criteria)
- ProKlim Madya (score between 51-80%)
- ProKlim Utama (score above 81%)

Figure 2: ProKlim process



After a Climate Village has proven its effectiveness in implementing adaptation and mitigation activities, strengthening communities, and fostering a minimum of 10 other locations that are then registered as Climate Villages (to incentivize peer-to-peer support and learning), they qualify for an additional ProKlim Lestari nomination. Climate Villages that qualify as Lestari and Utama in a year are awarded Rp 8,500,000 (approximately US$ 546). In 2024, 34 Climate Villages newly qualified for Lestari, 471 for Utama, 922 for Madhya, and 410 for Pratama.

The **National Registry System for Climate Change Control** becomes a source for data collection on climate change through a bottom-up approach, providing data on causes of vulnerability, climate impacts, and progress in addressing climate resilience.

Appreciation Awards

Local governments that perform very well are eligible for a ProKlim Development Appreciation award. Criterion to qualify include the following:

- A policy or regulation on pro-climate development has been issued in the region in the past two years.
- ProKlim activities such as socialization, training, comparative studies, visits, and clinics, etc. have been developed in the past two years by the local government.
- Locations under the local government's jurisdiction have received the ProKlim Utama or ProKlim Lestari categories in the last three years.
- A climate-resilient development plan has been developed for the next five years, with a minimum budget allocation of Rp 500 million (approximately US$ 31,714) for provincial areas and Rp 200 million (US$ 12,685) for city governments, and incorporated in a roadmap, design, or master plan.
- There have been collaborations and networks with at least:
  - three agencies or institutions for provincial governments and at least two agencies or institutions for district or city governments.
  - five companies for provincial governments and at least two companies for city governments.
  - five universities or non-governmental organizations for provincial governments and at least two companies for city governments.

Community members weigh waste at the waste bank.

© Nabiha Shahab

Adian Sudiana shows the Proklim project in his neighborhood in Jakarta.

THE CONSTANTLY ADAPTING COMMUNITY OF CEMPAKA PUTIH

For the residents of RW3, a bustling, densely populated neighborhood in East Cempaka Putih, Jakarta, climate change is a daily reality that manifests in heat and flooding. Some years are worse than others. In 1996 and 2006, for instance, Adian Sudiana, a resident, recalls that the flooding lasted for days with water up to a meter high, including inside their homes. "I was born here, I know this location," says Sudiana. "The rainy season, the dry season, it's no longer predictable like in the 1980s. It gets worse every year as the temperature rises."

RW3 has been part of ProKlim since 2014, acting on flooding, waste management, and food security. To reduce the risk of flooding, the local government built a concrete barrier along the river and deepened the riverbed to prevent overflow. This displaced a community fruit and vegetable garden by the riverbank, but residents were quick to restore the greenery. "We started planting again in 2016, and now, it's starting to look like a forest along the riverbank," Sudiana says. "We've planted protective plants, fruit trees, and even vegetables using hydroponics." Community gardens have also been created in the unlikeliest of places within the settlement where space is limited, using whatever is at hand, including plastic bottles. "There is one alley that feels like a forest in the middle of a residential area," Sudiana says with pride.

Infiltration wells were built with support from the municipal government in 2020 to soak up excess surface water, and help significantly reduce flood risk during Jakarta's frequent heavy rains. "We've installed wells, some as deep as 40 meters, to manage rainwater. Now, water doesn't stay long, and the riverbank flooding reduced dramatically," Sudiana explains.

Also to tackle flooding and the lack of waste management facilities, RW3 started sorting waste in 2006. This has not been easy to implement – while many residents participate,

others still litter or fail to separate their trash. In 2021, the community started black soldier fly farming to process organic waste. “We’ve reduced the amount of waste going to Bantar Gebang, the main landfill, by 400 kg each day from our neighborhood alone,” says Sudiana.

Despite their efforts, the community faces other climate-related challenges, such as seawater intrusion into their groundwater resources. Residents are forced to rely on municipal supply, and to adapt their gardening practices – for instance, by planting bamboo, which helps retain water and reduces the amount of water needed to plant other crops around it.

“Public awareness is still growing, and it’s not always easy,” Sudiana admits. “But through ProKlim, we’re proving that local communities can make a real difference in fighting climate change.”

Businesses, financial institutions, universities, research and development institutions, community organizations, and development partners can qualify for a ProKlim Supporting Appreciation Award for a similar set of criteria, including, for instance, compliance with environmental regulations and policies to support climate change efforts for businesses; and the provision of consistent coaching, mentoring, or other support to strengthen implementation of ProKlim for at least two years for other organizations.

Other forms of recognition include a ProKlim Participation Charter, awarded to sites that fulfill the criteria for ProKlim Pratama and ProKlim Madya; ProKlim certificates to sites that fulfill the criteria of ProKlim Utama and ProKlim Lestari; and a ProKlim Trophy for ProKlim Utama and ProKlim Lestari sites.

PROKLIM LESTARI

The Kayuapu Kulon hamlet in Gondang Manis village, within the Kudus Regency in the Central Java Province, received the prestigious ProKlim Lestari title in 2024 for its exemplary adaptation efforts. It is the only ProKlim location in the Kudus Regency, which has 69 Climate Villages, to be recognized at this level. The hamlet has built infiltration wells and biopores (smaller versions of infiltration wells which the communities can build themselves, to drain excess surface water), harvested rainwater, and conserved and protected springs. Community member have also been trained in technologies to promote urban farming and efficient land use practices.

THE ENVIRONMENT CADRE OF JANGGALAN VILLAGE

ProKlim has given Purnawirawan a reason to wake up each morning. He lives in Janggalan Village and is the coordinator of the program for Kudus Regency. “I am always excited to get up and start cleaning the area around me. We must set an example if we want our ideas to gain more followers,” he explains. He says he has found his calling in creating a better environment for his neighborhood.

Key climate threats to Janggalan Village include flooding and the associated issues of waste management and vector borne diseases such as dengue and diminishing water sources. The community has sought to address the issue of flooding and diminishing water sources by installing 33 biopores and planting trees to reduce flooding, recharge aquifers, and replenish natural springs. They have also constructed 26 infiltration wells to collect and store rainwater for household use.

Due to low awareness levels within the community, many people throw garbage into drains where it exacerbates flooding. To address this issue, the community is collaborating with Muhammadiyah Kudus University to turn organic waste into compost. Women are being trained to compost organic waste. Others are being made aware of opportunities to sell plastic bottles, paper, and other recyclable materials.

Recognizing the need for continued environmental education, the village has revived an environment cadre program, training new volunteers to spread knowledge and awareness.

THE PERSONAL SACRIFICE OF AHMAD MUNAJI

Ahmad Munaji is the head of ProKlim in RW7, a densely populated area with 2,200 residents in Gondang Manis Village, in Kudus Regency. He has worked for the local disaster management office for over a decade, but his real work for the community begins each day after his official duties end.

Recognizing that waste management was a critical issue for his neighborhood, Munaji sold his car in 2015 for Rp 8 million (approximately US$ 644), to fund a waste bank. He trained his neighbors, particularly local women, to clean their surroundings and properly collect

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Ahmad Munaji with his ProKlim Lestari award in Kudus, Central Java.

recyclable waste. The village formally joined the ProKlim program in 2018, which saw the initiative go from strength to strength. In 2019, the village received the ProKlim Utama award.

In 2021, Munaji himself was awarded the prestigious Kalpataru Award, a national recognition for individuals who significantly contribute to environmental conservation. The Rp 30 million (approximately US$ 2,166) that Munaji received for the award was promptly invested into expanding the waste bank.

RW7, inspired by Munaji's personal sacrifice, has excelled in finding solutions to local problems: biopores, artificial ponds, and rainwater harvesting facilities for water management; organic waste composting for waste management; and climate-smart agriculture through the use of devices that monitor soil health and for more efficient irrigation. In 2024, RW7 received the highest honor of ProKlim Lestari. What started as one man's personal sacrifice had grown into a thriving, sustainable community movement, demonstrating the power of grassroots action in the fight against climate change.

Key Messages

The government of Indonesia has sought to incentivize local action through the ProKlim program, sparking local efforts to address climate vulnerability. Despite the lack of ready funding to implement plans, communities and local governments are responding with ingenuity and innovation, taking setbacks in their stride and coming together to find the resources to implement their plans.

The women of Wergu Kulon and the residents of RW3 demonstrate the power of sharing problems as a community to overcome setbacks such as displacement of community gardens. Ahmad Munaji and Purnawirawan demonstrate the motivation of empowered citizens to address community threats and support community potential, even at the cost personal sacrifice.

To truly qualify as ProKlim Lestari, Climate Villages like Kayuapu Kulon Hamlet must not only ensure multistakeholder engagement within their own area, but also support 10 other areas to join the program. This leverages the power of peer-to-peer learning.

Across the Prokilm villages, communities recognize the importance of education and training for each member of the community, to deliver on the goals of the community as a whole. By training residents on waste management and environmental practices, Janggalan Village has created a network of informed individuals capable of implementing sustainable solutions. This approach addresses immediate concerns and empowers community members to take ownership of their local environment in the future.

CHAPTER 9

LLA THROUGH SOCIAL PROTECTION SCHEMES

HIGHLIGHTS

- Social protection schemes designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability can also become effective and efficient tools for adaptation, but only if they fully integrate the Principles for LLA.
- Some social protection systems are already evolving to embrace climate resilience as an essential objective for long-term economic resilience. Cash transfers and public works schemes can help communities cope with climate shocks, and protect assets and livelihoods.
- BRAC Uganda's Ultra-Poor Graduation Program has incorporated climate-smart practices to address climate threats faced by the program's target population.
- India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme trains Climate Saathis (companions) to use a Climate Resilience Information System and Planning Tool.
- Social protection and climate adaptation policies and actions often remain siloed. Governments should recognize the huge gains in joining these two objectives.

Devolving decision making

Addressing structural inequalities

Flexible programming and learning

IN THIS CHAPTER

NATALIA'S STORY

In 2016, internal conflict forced Natalia and her family to flee their homeland in South Sudan for the Rhino Refugee Settlement in Uganda. With nine grandchildren to care for, Natalia struggled to get a job in her new home and found herself entirely dependent on aid. As prolonged droughts hampered her attempts to grow food, Natalia turned to BRAC Uganda's Ultra-Poor Graduation Program (UPGP) for support.

UPGP is primarily a social protection program designed to provide livelihood support and capacity building to refugees like Natalia, focusing on asset transfers, financial literacy, life skills, and agricultural training. It aims to:

- Empower vulnerable families to establish sustainable livelihoods.
- Improve food security and nutrition through kitchen gardening and livestock rearing.
- Foster community integration through financial literacy and savings groups.

Over time, UPGP has incorporated a locally led adaptation (LLA) approach to respond to added climate challenges, building on its focus on community ownership, local knowledge, and skill-building. For instance, stress-tolerant seeds and climate-smart water management techniques are provided to participants who choose to farm in drought prone regions.

Natalia was one of 700 participants from the Rhino Refugee Settlement selected for UPGP support. She received extensive training in livestock rearing, financial literacy, and life skills. In 2023, she was provided with five rabbits, four goats, and six months of cash support. UPGP also trained her in conflict resolution, maternal health, and family planning and nutrition, equipping her with the tools to improve her economic and social wellbeing.

Natalia's proactive engagement with UPGP allowed her to expand her livestock holdings and join a Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) with 25 other refugees, where she learned financial management and savings strategies. She started a small business, buying and selling livestock, and established a kitchen garden to improve her family's nutrition. UPGP had a profound impact on Natalia and her family, helping them transition from dependence on aid to self-reliance:

- **Improved economic resilience:** Natalia's income has grown through livestock rearing and a small business selling farm animals in the local market. Over time, she expanded her farm from four goats and five rabbits to 11 goats, 17 rabbits, and 20 chickens. She now earns a stable income, which has allowed her to invest in her grandchildren's education and other family needs.
- **Enhanced food security and nutrition:** After receiving training on kitchen gardening and water, sanitation, and hygiene practices, Natalia established a garden that provides her family with fresh vegetables, improving their nutritional intake. She successfully harvested tomatoes, which she sold to purchase essential food items like cassava flour.
- **Empowerment and community integration:** Natalia's participation in the VSLA and her engagement in "play lab parent sessions" have strengthened her social network within the refugee community. She has become a role model for other women, sharing her knowledge and skills with her daughters and neighbors. Her family is now more integrated into the community, and her grandchildren receive early childhood education and meals at the play lab.

UPGP's approach devolves decision making by allowing participants to choose their livelihood activities.

- **Building local capacity:** The life skills and financial literacy training Natalia received have allowed her to plan for her family's future. She now saves regularly and manages her income effectively, with a vision to use her assets to secure her grandchildren's education and stability.
- **Climate-related risks:** Prolonged dry spells and poor soil quality posed significant challenges for refugees attempting to cultivate crops in the settlement. The introduction of climate-smart practices and stress-tolerant seeds helped address this issue but required ongoing support.
- **Social and economic integration:** As a refugee, Natalia faced initial difficulties in integrating into the local economy. However, the financial literacy training and the VSLA provided her with the support needed to establish her business and integrate more fully into the community.

Natalia's journey from a refugee dependent on aid to a thriving businessperson illustrates the transformative potential of integrating LLA approaches into social protection schemes. UPGP's approach devolves decision making by allowing participants to choose their livelihood activities (such as livestock rearing) based on local knowledge and conditions; addresses structural inequalities, tackling both gender-based and economic inequalities by targeting women in vulnerable households and empowering them to participate in decision-making and community-building efforts; and invests in local skills and capabilities, such as livestock rearing and financial management, creating long-term resilience.

UPGP empowered Natalia to secure a sustainable livelihood, improve her family's nutrition, and contribute to her community's development. Through patience, perseverance, and the right support, Natalia has not only built a better life for her family but also inspired others to do the same.

Social Protection Mechanisms And Climate Resilience

As climate change threatens to drive an additional 100 million people into extreme poverty by 2023, reversing years of development gains, it has become more and more urgent to embed LLA approaches into social protection schemes like UPGP, which are designed to stop this spiral into poverty.[93]

Social protection refers to a range of policies and programs designed to reduce poverty and vulnerability by ensuring access to basic services, income support, and opportunities for asset-building. Historically, social protection mechanisms like cash transfers, insurance schemes, and public works have been used to address poverty, unemployment, and income insecurity.

In the context of climate change, social protection systems are evolving to not only protect against economic shocks but also to enhance climate resilience. Programs such as cash transfers or public works schemes can help communities smooth out consumption during climate shocks, protecting assets and livelihoods. For example, Kenya's Hunger Safety Net Program allowed beneficiaries to maintain their standard of living during the 2008-2011 droughts, while those not enrolled saw their spending decrease by 10%. Similarly, Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Program helped 62% of participants avoid selling assets during climate-related shocks.[94]

These programs prevent households from resorting to negative coping mechanisms like reducing food consumption, selling productive assets, or pulling children out of school — measures that can have long-term detrimental effects on human capital and perpetuate intergenerational poverty.

Particularly when they are aligned with the LLA principles, social protection schemes can support community-led initiatives that promote inclusivity and resilience. For instance, India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) supports local leadership in deciding priorities for investment, while building climate resilience by employing rural communities in water conservation projects.

CLIMATE SAATHIS LEAD THE WAY IN INDIA

India's MGNREGS is one of the world's largest social protection programs. It aims to strengthen livelihood security by providing 100 days of guaranteed paid employment to poor rural households each year. The activities carried out under the program, focused on livelihoods and creating durable assets (such as roads, canals, ponds, and wells) in rural areas, by their very nature contribute to climate resilience.

In the face of increasingly severe climate challenges such as erratic rainfall and prolonged droughts in recent years, climate resilience has become a more deliberate focus for MGNREGS. These changes have resulted in crop failures, food insecurity, and migration to urban centers. Women and marginalized groups, such as the Scheduled Tribes (STs)[95] and Scheduled Castes (SCs),[96] are particularly vulnerable due to entrenched social inequalities and limited access to resources and decision-making platforms.

Rukmani Bai, a Climate Saathi, explains how to use the CRISP-M tool to local women.

In the dry state of Madhya Pradesh, the International Institute for Environment and Development worked with local governments to integrate a Climate Resilience Information System and Planning Tool (CRISP-M) across several districts to empower communities to manage climate risks through access to localized climate data, enhanced participation in decision-making processes, and a strong focus on gender inclusion and transparency. The CRISP-M tool:

- Provides real-time climate data to support informed decision-making at the village level.
- Promotes gender equality by actively involving women in natural resource management.
- Ensures marginalized groups, such as SCs and STs, are fully included in climate adaptation processes.
- Enhances transparency and accountability in the implementation of MGNREGS projects.

To implement the tool, women were trained as Climate Saathis (companions) to act as facilitators between local communities and government bodies. CRISP-M combines modern Geographic Information System (GIS) technology with local knowledge to support communities in identifying climate risks; planning and implementing water conservation measures; and monitoring progress.

The Climate Saathis are pivotal in educating and mobilizing local communities, particularly marginalized groups and women. For example, Saraswati Uikkey, a Climate Saathi from the Gond tribe, helped mobilize women across multiple villages, encouraging them to participate in Gram Sabha (village assembly) meetings and advocate for water resource management projects. Similarly, Suresh Kumar, a farmer from a marginalized tribal community, used CRISP-M data to secure water harvesting structures for his farmland, ensuring his family's food security despite erratic rainfall.

The participatory approach ensured continuous community feedback, allowing the CRISP-M tool and strategies to be adapted to the evolving needs of the communities. The use of the tool through the MGNREGS framework has had a transformative impact on rural communities in Madhya Pradesh, particularly for women and marginalized groups. Key outcomes include:

- **Enhanced climate resilience**: Farmers now have access to real-time climate data, allowing them to plan for droughts and water scarcity, protect their crops, and increase agricultural productivity. For instance, Santram, a marginalized farmer, used CRISP-M to advocate for a well on his land, which significantly improved his crop yield and reduced his reliance on exploitative labor practices. Similarly, Suresh Kumar now manages his farmland more effectively with the help of water harvesting structures, reducing the risk of crop failure.
- **Gender empowerment**: CRISP-M has opened new pathways for women to participate in decision-making processes. Women like Rukmani Bai, who previously faced significant barriers to accessing resources, now use the tool to advocate for water management projects. Rukmani's leadership in village Gram Sabha meetings has ensured that women's voices are heard in planning resource allocation. This has inspired other women to engage in climate action, shifting the community's perception of women's roles in governance.
- **Empowerment of marginalized groups**: CRISP-M has given marginalized communities the tools they need to demand their rights. With the support of Climate Saathis, these groups have learned to present their needs more effectively in local governance forums. For example, Saraswati Uikkey empowered other women in her community to actively participate in decision-making processes and access wage employment through MGNREGS.
- **Increased transparency and accountability**: CRISP-M's ability to crowdsource data and track the progress of projects has greatly improved transparency in the implementation of MGNREGS. Dinesh Kumar, a farmer and Climate Saathi, has used the tool to monitor government projects, ensuring that resources reach the most vulnerable members of the community. His efforts have exposed corruption in the allocation of work and wages, helping to build trust between communities and local governments.

The initiative has also strengthened collaboration between local communities and government institutions, improving trust and governance. Local leaders like Bhagwan Singh have used CRISP-M to ensure water conservation projects are implemented fairly and efficiently. The success of CRISP-M and its integration with MGNREGS offers several valuable lessons for locally led adaptation and social protection:

- **Devolving decision-making**: By decentralizing decision-making and empowering local communities to identify and prioritize their own needs, CRISP-M ensures that adaptation efforts are context-specific and inclusive. This aligns with the Principles for LLA, which emphasize the importance of community ownership in climate resilience.
- **Addressing structural inequalities**: The initiative has successfully addressed gender and social inequalities by actively involving women and marginalized groups in decision-making processes. By providing the tools and platforms for these groups to advocate for their rights, CRISP-M has contributed to reducing structural barriers.
- **Building local capacity**: The involvement of Climate Saathis in educating and mobilizing communities has been a key factor in the success of CRISP-M. The initiative demonstrates the importance of investing in local leadership and capacity building to ensure sustainable and scalable adaptation outcomes.

The integration of the Principles for LLA in the implementation of MGNREGS using CRISP-M showcases the transformative potential in promoting gender equality, empowering marginalized communities, and fostering transparency in governance. By combining traditional knowledge with cutting-edge technology, and mobilizing local leaders, CRISP-M provides a scalable model for inclusive and sustainable climate adaptation. Through its participatory approach, the initiative has helped build trust, improve local governance, and create lasting resilience in rural Madhya Pradesh.

Benefits And Challenges Of Integration

Integrating social protection mechanisms with climate adaptation strategies provides a pathway to building adaptive and transformative resilience. Social protection can absorb the immediate risks of climate shocks by maintaining household consumption and incomes. Over time, it can facilitate long-term adaptation by allowing communities to invest in livelihood diversification, asset accumulation, and infrastructure improvements that mitigate future risks.[97]

However, there are several challenges in integrating social protection and climate resilience. One key challenge is the lack of coordination between social protection and climate adaptation policies, as many countries maintain separate strategies for each. Additionally, climate impacts are often unpredictable and can exceed the scope of traditional social protection systems. In such cases, flexibility and anticipatory response mechanisms — such as early warning systems that trigger cash transfers before a disaster occurs — are crucial to ensuring that social protection systems can respond effectively.[98]

Villagers work together to use data from CRISP-M to manage groundwater in their village.

E-vouchers for use with local vendors supported the immediate needs and the local economy when Vanuatu suffered the double whammy of the COVID-19 pandemic and Cyclone Harold in 2022.

Another challenge is ensuring equitable access to social protection benefits. In many contexts, marginalized communities, including women, Indigenous groups, and people with disabilities, face barriers to accessing social protection programs.[99] By incorporating the Principles for LLA, social protection systems can be more inclusive and community-driven, ensuring that the most vulnerable populations are not left behind.

ADAPTIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION IN VANUATU

Vanuatu suffered a double whammy in April 2020. The world was in lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic when category 5 Cyclone Harold hit the island, affecting 159,000 people, damaging 17,000 homes, and leaving 87,000 people without shelter.[100] The province of Sanma was particularly hard-hit, with extensive damage to housing, agriculture, and critical infrastructure. Relief efforts were delayed due to the pandemic, exacerbating the situation for vulnerable communities. Although Vanuatu experiences an average of 2.6 cyclones each year, inadequate informal and government-led support systems force many households to adopt negative coping mechanisms, further increasing their vulnerability.

In response to the dual crisis, Oxfam piloted **UnBlocked Cash**, an e-voucher-based cash transfer program.[101]

In collaboration with other NGOs, including World Vision, Red Cross, and Save the Children, Oxfam first conducted an initial assessment to identify the most affected areas. Vulnerable households in these areas were then identified through community meetings and door-to-door visits to ensure inclusivity and transparency, including households with widows, single mothers, the elderly, or those living with disabilities. Local leaders and NGOs were instrumental in ensuring all eligible beneficiaries were registered to receive support from the program.

E-vouchers, secured by blockchain technology, were then distributed to registered beneficiaries. These e-vouchers could be used at local vendors registered by the program, supporting both the immediate needs of households and the local economy. Community workshops helped beneficiaries understand how to use these digital tools, while the training of local vendors ensured a smooth implementation. The inclusion of local vendors was vital to both support the local economy and provide necessary goods to the affected households.

Monitoring and evaluation was continuous, with feedback mechanisms in place to address issues such as the availability of goods. Beneficiary feedback led to real-time adjustments in the program, ensuring that the most vulnerable were supported throughout the process. Approximately US$ 631 was provided to each of the 2,530 eligible households through the e-vouchers. The program was funded by Australia, New Zealand, and the International Organization for Migration.

Several challenges were faced during implementation. Four critical preconditions – beneficiary identification, political acceptance, operational mechanisms, and functioning markets – were not always present in the most vulnerable areas, complicating program execution. Logistical difficulties in reaching remote communities and registering households also posed challenges. Additionally, inconsistent availability of goods at vendors limited the effectiveness of the e-vouchers in certain areas.

Despite this, the cash transfer program significantly improved the resilience and wellbeing of affected communities. More than 57% of households used the cash transfers to repair their homes, while 27% invested in restoring agricultural land, essential for livelihoods. Food security improved, with a 29% reduction in households running out of food during the program period. Additionally, 47% of households used the funds for medical treatment, improving access to essential healthcare. Local businesses in the region also benefited, with many vendors experiencing increased sales.

While the program provided immediate relief, long-term resilience remained a concern, as many beneficiaries still faced food insecurity. A more strategic policy approach is required to build enduring resilience beyond post-disaster recovery. Integrating local knowledge and community leaders proved vital, but future initiatives need to focus on establishing formal social protection systems to complement informal safety nets and better prepare communities for future climate risks. The model has since been recognized by the national government as an effective form of adaptive social protection and contributed to the development of the National Social Protection Policy under the Ministry of Justice and Social Welfare.

Lessons Learned And The Way Forward

The case studies from India, Uganda, and Vanuatu demonstrate that integrating the Principles for LLA with social protection systems offers an efficient and effective approach to enhancing climate resilience. Each case exemplifies how locally driven decision-making, combined with tailored social protection mechanisms, can address the specific vulnerabilities of marginalized and climate-affected communities.

The CRISP-M initiative in Madhya Pradesh, India, illustrates how technology, when combined with community knowledge, can support rural communities in managing climate risks. The integration of the MGNREGS not only ensures immediate wage security but also promotes sustainable resource management, empowering marginalized groups to participate in decision-making and governance. This initiative highlights the role of technology in improving transparency and empowering the most vulnerable.

Similarly, the UPGP in Uganda shows how customized livelihood support and financial literacy can help refugees and vulnerable populations transition from aid dependency to economic self-reliance. By emphasizing local ownership and addressing structural inequalities, the program empowers participants like Natalia to build resilient livelihoods, adapt to environmental challenges, and strengthen community integration.

In Vanuatu, UnBlocked Cash leveraged blockchain e-vouchers to provide immediate relief to cyclone-affected communities, while also supporting local economies. This approach demonstrates the importance of combining anticipatory action with long-term resilience strategies, ensuring that vulnerable households are better prepared for future climate shocks.

Collectively, these case studies highlight the importance of devolving decision-making to the local level, aligning social protection with the Principles for LLA to promote inclusive, context-specific solutions. Policymakers, funders, and practitioners must prioritize integrating social protection mechanisms with LLA approaches to ensure that communities can not only survive climate shocks but also thrive in the face of ongoing climate change. Moving forward, it will be crucial to:

- Scale up investments in local capacity building and technological innovation to enhance community participation in decision-making.
- Ensure equitable access to social protection benefits, particularly for women, Indigenous groups, and marginalized communities.
- Develop flexible funding mechanisms that can respond quickly to climate impacts while promoting long-term resilience through asset-building and sustainable livelihoods.

By learning from these case studies, future programs can create more effective and inclusive models for enhancing climate resilience through locally led social protection systems.

CHAPTER 10

WHY A LOCALLY LED APPROACH IS ESSENTIAL FOR LOSS AND DAMAGE FINANCE

HIGHLIGHTS

- There are concerns regarding the extent to which communities that are hardest hit by climate impacts will be able to access funds from the new Fund for responding to Loss and Damage in a timely manner.
- Non-government stakeholders highlight the importance of ensuring that Fund for responding to Loss and Damage adheres to principles of justice, not only banking, and allocates funds on the basis of needs rather than the quality of proposals.
- There have been calls for the Fund to strongly embrace the Principles for LLA, so individuals and communities can articulate needs on their own terms, and a greater appetite for risks and for learning from mistakes.
- Existing national institutions and mechanisms that are purpose-built to reach poor and vulnerable populations, such as social protection and welfare schemes, can provide efficient vehicles for channeling loss and damage finance to those most in need.
- Developing country governments should commit to locally led decision making on the use of loss and damage finance for greater efficiency in meeting the urgent needs of affected and marginalized communities.
- Monitoring and reporting processes should be simplified and aimed at community learning to improve rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction responses over time, rather than simple bottom-to-top accounting on the use of funds.

Devolving decision making

Addressing structural inequalities

Patient, predictable, accessible funding

Investing in local capacities

IN THIS CHAPTER


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Climate change is eroding Indigenous knowledge and cultural practice.

> **Loss and damage due to climate impacts will continue to increase in the coming years because of historical emissions, the overall lack of mitigation ambition, and low global investments in adaptation to avert loss and damage in the first place.**

RECOVERY ON THE RIVER RUO

When Cyclone Freddy, one of the most severe cyclones on record, battered Malawi in March 2023, Gladys Austin, a 39-year-old mother of six, lost her home, her family's livelihoods, and her food stores. Freddy submerged her village, Makwalo, destroying the sandbars on the River Ruo where Austin and her husband fished, as well as the field where they grew maize, beans, and tomatoes. With livestock also washed away, Austin's family suffered losses worth around US$ 3,000.[102] They had no choice but to move to Namiyala refugee camp, about six miles away, along with more than 10,000 other displaced people.

In a typical climate displacement story, the refugees might be stuck at the camp for years. Happily, however, Austin and her family were back in Makwalo a year later, living in a new brick home.

The family were among the first 2,700 households in the world to receive compensation for climate-related loss and damage. They received cash transfers of US$ 750 over three months to help rebuild their lives from the US non-profit GiveDirectly, and support from a relocation project overseen by the Malawi Department of Disaster Management Affairs.

Climate-related loss and damage refers to the negative impacts of climate variability and climate change that people have not been able to cope with or adapt to.[103] These impacts encompass economic losses (such as damage to infrastructure and crops) and non-economic losses (such as loss of life, or harm to cultural heritage


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Communities who experience the climate-related loss and damage receive minimal support from the international community.

CHAPTER 10

Super Typhoon Yolanda destroyed 1.1 million houses, 33 million coconut trees (a major source of livelihoods), and pushed 2.3 million people into poverty when it struck the Philippines in November 2013.

and biodiversity). Loss and damage can occur because of slow onset climatic events (such as coastal erosion or salinization of water sources) and extreme weather events (such as cyclones).

In the Paris Agreement, countries agreed to undertake collective efforts to keep global average temperatures below 2°C and to do their utmost to limit the increase in global average to temperatures to 1.5°C. But even at the current temperature increase of 1.17°C, people like Austin and nations like Malawi face considerable loss and damage. Extreme weather, climate, and water-related events caused over two million deaths and US$ 4.3 trillion in economic losses between 1970 and 2021, according to the World Meteorological Organization.[104]

The global average temperature rise is now predicted to exceed 1.5°C even with the highest mitigation ambition, due to constraints in rolling out green technologies and implementing climate policies.[105] Loss and damage due to climate impacts will continue to increase in the coming years because of historical emissions, the overall lack of mitigation ambition, and low global investments in adaptation to avert loss and damage in the first place. Even if the world rapidly decarbonizes, historical and current emissions trends will result in significant unavoidable climate impacts over the next two decades, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.[106]

Currently, communities and countries who suffer the loss and damage have very limited support from the international community to recover. Various bilateral and multilateral sources contribute towards disaster response and recovery, but the amounts are insignificant in comparison to needs. While funding requirements for UN humanitarian appeals related to extreme weather events are now eight times higher than 20 years ago, nearly half of them remain unmet.[107] Also, countries affected by disasters often face delays in accessing

post-disaster finance due to complex, bureaucratic processes to access the funds,[108] which challenge their own limited technical and financial capacities.[109]

This could be set to change in future. Countries are designing a **Fund for responding to Loss and Damage** (FRLD) – a new fund hosted by the Philippines – to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change to respond to climate-related loss and damage.

Designing A Fit-for-Purpose Fund

The FRLD was established to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in responding to economic and non-economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change, including extreme weather events and slow-onset events, especially in the context of ongoing and ex-post (including rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction) action. It will provide finance for addressing a variety of climate challenges such as climate-related emergencies, sea level rise, displacement, relocation, migration, insufficient climate information and data, and the need for climate-resilient reconstruction and recovery.

While the Fund is being operationalized by the new Board with input from a wide range of stakeholders, including representatives from vulnerable countries, civil society, and international organizations, there are concerns regarding the extent to which communities that are hardest hit by climate impacts will be able to access the funds in a timely manner.

Non-government stakeholders participating in the design of FRLD highlight the importance of ensuring that it is designed based on principles of justice, rather than of banking, to ensure that the countries most affected by climate change receive adequate support. They highlight that the ever-growing need for adaptation and the threat of loss and damage emphasizes the need for compensatory, restitutive, and corrective forms of justice, and call on FRLD to:

- Ensure the funds are truly new and additional to other forms of climate or development finance, and sufficient.
- Prioritize grants or concessional finance over loans.
- Ensure easy and quick access to the funds.
- Base allocation of funds on needs rather than the quality of proposals.
- Ensure that local actors have purview over the use of the funds.[110]

The experience with other climate funds so far has been that communities – and even national governments – lack the resources and capacity needed to access global funds. Access to the FRLD could be equally restricted, as countries still argue about the eligibility criteria, what should constitute loss and damage, and who qualifies as "particularly vulnerable". How each of these definitional issues are resolved could well determine the accessibility of the Fund, and the amount of effort countries will have to put in to access its resources. Moreover, need is likely to outstrip demand again, making the process extremely competitive – only US$ 700 million has been pledged for FRLD so far, covering less than 0.2% of the need.[111]

Additionally, although the Board of FRLD has 12 members from developed countries and 14 from developing countries, higher-income nations tend to have considerable influence on decision-making in international funds due to their economic influence and trade relations.

This imbalance often limits the voices of smaller nations that are more vulnerable to climate change impacts to lessen the capacity burden of being able to access funding.

Multiple ways for the FRLD to make the funds more accessible have been proposed, including ensuring that accreditation processes do not become a barrier for those most in need; disbursing small grants to limit bureaucracy; making climate-related natural disasters a trigger for the release of funds; and avoiding reductionist approaches that call for complex justifications for "climate rationales" and "additionality" while ignoring social drivers of climate vulnerability like poverty and social exclusion.[112]

Instead, there have been calls for the Fund to strongly embrace the **Principes for Locally Led Adaptation** (LLA) to enable individuals and communities entitled to the funds to articulate their needs on their own terms, while also embracing a greater appetite for risks and for learning from mistakes. With success reliant on its ability to channel finance to those most in need, the Fund would do well to heed the Principles, to ensure that the FRLD modalities:

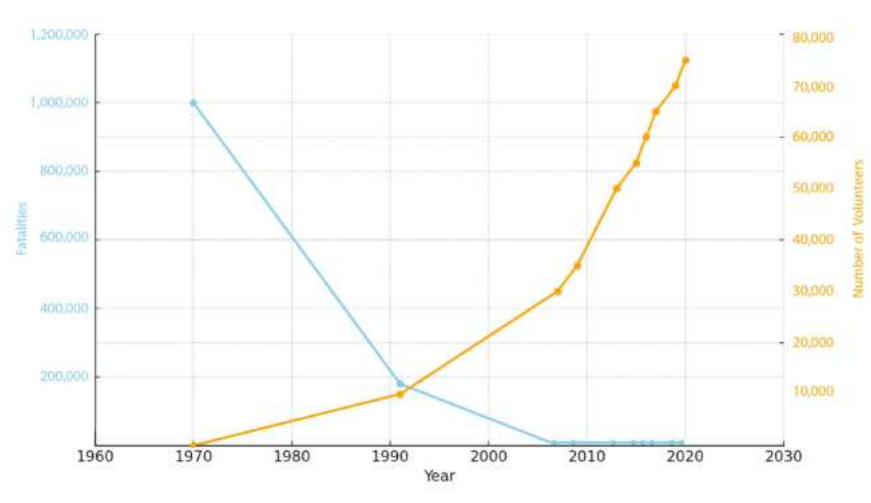
1. Devolve decision making to the lowest appropriate level, on who receives loss and damage funding, and how it is used.
2. Ensure that rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction efforts are not only focused on physical infrastructure and property, but also on recognizing and addressing the structural inequalities that render women, youth, children, disabled people, displaced people, Indigenous peoples, and marginalized ethnic groups more vulnerable. Non-economic loss and damage, for instance related to traditional knowledge and cultural heritage, should also be addressed.
3. Provide flexible, patient, and predictable funding that can be accessed quickly and easily. Unless poor communities receive timely and adequate support in the immediate aftermath of a climate disaster to remedy the loss of livelihood, food security, health, and education assets, they risk slipping back further into poverty, and it could take families generations to recover.
4. Invest in local capabilities to build back stronger and better, and to avoid loss and damage in the future.
5. Build a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty to inform decisions on the use of loss and damage funds through a combination of local, traditional, Indigenous, generational, and scientific knowledge that can enable resilience under a range of future climate scenarios.
6. Enable adaptive management to address the inherent uncertainty in climate change in efforts to address loss and damage, especially through robust monitoring and learning systems, flexible finance, and flexible programming.
7. Ensure transparency and accountability by making processes of accessing loss and damage funds and rebuilding more transparent and accountable downward to local stakeholders (including ensuring the accountability of the Fund, for instance, to local communities who suffer loss and damage).
8. Promote collaboration across sectors, initiatives and levels to ensure that different initiatives and different sources of funding for loss and damage (humanitarian assistance, development, disaster risk reduction, green recovery funds, etc.) support each other, and avoid duplication to enhance efficiencies and good practices.

THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

Bangladesh's Cyclone Preparedness Program (CPP) is a testament to the power of local communities in reducing loss and damage due to climate-related disasters.

The CPP was established after Tropical Cyclone Bhola devastated the country in 1970, killing nearly half a million people. Designed with a commitment to community-based disaster management, the CPP is led and run largely by a corps of thousands of community volunteers spread out over 3,801 village units. Each village unit consists of 20 community volunteers, with 10 female and 10 male residents. The core functions of the volunteers consist of early-warning dissemination following government advisories to evacuate before a tropical cyclone, using megaphones, loudspeakers, and hand-held sirens. The volunteers assist vulnerable residents (including people with disabilities, frail elderly, expectant mothers, and children) to evacuate to cyclone shelters. This model of community led preparedness, combined with investments in infrastructure including cyclone shelters, has helped Bangladesh reduce mortality rates drastically over the years (see graph).[113]

During Cylone Bhola, women victims outnumbered men 14 to 1. By ensuring that 50% of the volunteers are women, CPP has helped address the greater vulnerability of lower-income women to disasters. The participation of women has led to outcomes such as improved outreach, greater use of shelters, and reduced fatalities.



A community-led disaster management response system has helped Bangladesh reduce fatalities due to disasters.

Community-led disaster management response systems are becoming more common. In Kijuguta, western Uganda, for instance, community members trained in disaster risk reduction have formed a village savings and loans association that provides financial support to its members during floods. In Brazil, a federal law in 2012 established the National Civil Defense System, linking national government agencies with communities in areas that face high risks. Local civil defense centers were formed by groups of residents who received training in disaster prevention and emergency response.

Although calls for the localization of humanitarian responses intensified in the run up to the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit, national and local organizations received just 1.2% of humanitarian funding in 2021 and 2022. Even though national and local organizations were at the forefront of delivering the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022, just 2% of the humanitarian response budget went to them, with the majority (77%) going to UN agencies.[114]

Existing Vehicles To Deliver Loss And Damage Finance To The Vulnerable

National institutions and mechanisms that are purpose-built to reach poor and vulnerable populations have been honed over the years through iterative learning, and have proven their effectiveness can provide efficient vehicles for channeling loss and damage finance to those most in need.

Integrating loss and damage finance into national social protection programs (in addition to adaptation – see **Chapter 9**) can help limit the immediate socioeconomic impacts of climate disasters, while supporting long-term resilience. Ex-ante, social protection can help communities to adapt better by reducing their vulnerability. Ex-post, social protection can help them cope with and recover from climate shocks, and minimize long-term damage by compensating them for the loss and damage they suffer.

The FRLD can ensure better and faster responses with more sustainable impact through existing social protection programs, as beneficiaries will be likely covered beyond the immediate aftermath of a disaster. This is an advantage that social protection has over risk transfer mechanisms such as community-based insurance schemes, which provide financial support post-disaster, but often fail to address the deeper vulnerabilities of at-risk populations. Social protection programs offer a broader safety net by providing consistent income support.

Cash for work and public works programs can play a critical role in addressing loss and damage by providing immediate income support to affected communities, while simultaneously reducing the likelihood and severity of climate-related losses by investing in resilience building to future climate shocks through activities such as reforestation, flood control, and infrastructure rehabilitation.

Cash transfers can support families in overcoming the immediate impacts of disasters without too much impact on the longer term. Social protection programs that are flexible enough to cover migrants – called portable schemes – can ensure that even displaced populations have access to the support they need to reduce their vulnerability to climate-induced risks.

Although the current coverage of social protection is low in low-income climate vulnerable countries, with only 9.7% of the population covered, countries have committed to strengthening systems under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[115] SDG 1.3 calls on countries to "*implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable*". By channeling support through these systems, FRLD can help strengthen these systems and support countries to achieve SDG 1.3, while strengthening their overall resilience to climate shocks.

CASH-FOR-WORK IN THE PHILIPPINES

Rodrigo Navarrosa, a farmer on the island of Samar in the Philippines, was getting ready to harvest his crop of rice, vegetables, and coconuts when Typhoon Haiyan hit in November 2013.

With seven children to feed, Navarrosa, along with several other families from his community, turned to a cash-for-work (CFW) program by Plan International. They were employed for 15 days per month for two months (30 days total) in reconstruction work, clearing debris, including from a river which they relied on for irrigation, and repairing public building such as schools and hospitals. They were paid 260 pesos (about US$ 6) a day, a minimum wage set by the national government.[116] The program was a lifeline for the affected families.

For Navarrosa and the other affected families, the CFW program was a lifeline. "I am happy not only because I can earn some cash but also because I can make a contribution to the community," he says. The program also provides participants with new skills, such as masonry and carpentry, which will benefit long-term recovery efforts.

Programs like CFW are a vital part of the Philippines' disaster response, ensuring that communities can rebuild, recover, and face the future with renewed resilience.

PUBLIC WORKS PROGRAM IN BANGLADESH

The food, fuel, and financial crisis of 2007-2008 was made infinitely worse for the poor in Bangladesh by two devastating cyclones – Sidr in 2007 and Aila in 2009. Poor households cut back on food consumption and took children out of school. Such coping mechanisms by the poor have serious longer-term implications on nutrition, health, and education, and increase the vulnerability of households to future shocks.[117]

In response, the Government of Bangladesh, through the Department of Disaster Management (DDM), introduced a public works program called the 100 Day Employment Generation Program (EGP). Building on the experience of past public works programs, EGP laid emphasis on pro-poor targeting, minimizing leakage, high accountability, and improved transparency. Poverty maps were used to target those most in need, and multiple officials were required to sign daily attendance and payment sheets. Grievance mechanisms were set up to establish accountability.

Despite these measures, the first iteration of EGP faced challenges. It had limited coverage, with only 5% of the poorest households per district covered. The selection process, which was meant to be entrusted to the communities, was obscure and did not involve participatory processes, resulting in nepotism. Multiple layers of compliance verifications incurred significant administrative costs, affecting the logistics and supervision of the work. The grievance mechanisms were hardly used for various reasons, including lack of awareness of their existence.

The next iteration of the program, Employment Generation for the Hardcore Poor (EGHP), was launched in 2009, incorporating lessons from EGP. EGHP initially had a narrower focus on 16 highly vulnerable districts and a quota for women. With support from the World Bank, EGHP

became the nationwide Employment Generation Program for the Poorest (EGPP), incorporating further improvements, including digitization of beneficiary lists; wage payments via bank accounts; installation of information boards at project sites for improved disclosure; independent assessments of the program; and capacity building for DDM staff, to improve targeting and benefit payments.

Projects are identified by Project Implementation Committees, which include community members. The projects include embankment construction, water resource management, and afforestation — activities that enhance community resilience to flooding, cyclones, and other climate-related hazards. Once a project has been identified, a signboard with the details of the project is required to be installed at the project site. The most popular tools of information dissemination include repetitive public announcements through a van that goes around the union (called 'mic-ing'), word-of-mouth through ward members and village guards, and information boards at worksites.

Over time, the EGPP grew into one of Bangladesh's largest programs to reduce poverty and enhance disaster resilience of vulnerable households, with budget allocations for the program increasing year on year, and over a million beneficiaries. Reviews suggest that the program has a material benefit for participants and efficiently targets those in need. One study found that participating households earn US$ 68 more per year than non-participating households on average and are less exposed to food insecurity. The program is also reported to have had a significant impact on women's economic empowerment, with women working as many days as men, and evidence suggesting female participants have more freedom to make spending decisions and speak out in public meetings than non-participants.[118]

Floods can exacerbate the shortage of drinking water, and increase the work burden on women.

CASH TRANSFERS IN PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, biometrics are helping to ensure that support reaches targeted beneficiaries. After Azra Bibi, from Qambary in Swabi, lost her mud home to the devastating 2022 flood, the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) helped her and her family to rebuild their lives. "I got a message from BISP to come and collect flood relief money from their center. I borrowed some money to reach the BISP Center where they checked my CNIC (computerized national identity card) and got my biometric. After all the clearances, they gave me the flood relief money of Rs. 25,000," she explains. "With this money, we will fulfill our basic needs as we don't have the groceries at home."[119]

With a third of the country submerged by the floods and 33 million people affected, the Government of Pakistan used the BISP to disburse flood relief through unconditional cash transfers. Among the world's best social security programs in terms of targeting and coverage, BISP provides cash assistance to 5.8 million families with a quarterly stipend of US$ 35.[120]

The unconditional cash transfers go to households whose eligibility is based on poverty scores and vulnerability assessments. BISP has demonstrated positive impacts on consumption expenditure, food consumption, child nutrition, asset retention, the mobility of women, investments in health and education, and household savings.[121] It enables households to build resilience by investing in diversifying income sources and improving housing. It also fosters social inclusion by targeting marginalized groups.

> BISP has proven instrumental in reaching vulnerable communities, especially during the 2022 floods which left millions in need. BISP's existing framework and distribution network as part of our social safety net is well-positioned to receive international financial support through the new Fund for responding to Loss and Damage, to help us rapidly expand BISP's capacity to provide targeted assistance in the wake of climate disasters. This would not only support vulnerable populations in Pakistan but also demonstrate how existing social protection measures in many developing countries can be used as an effective tool in global efforts to address loss and damage effectively.
>
> Ali Tauqeer Shah, Pakistan
> Alternate Board member, FRLD

PARTNERS NOT WAGE TAKERS IN INDIA

A key lesson for the FRLD from national efforts to implement social protection programs is the importance of allowing local agency in decision making on the use of funds.

The world's largest social protection program, India's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS – see also **Chapter 9**) was launched in 2005. A cash for work program, it guarantees at least 100 days of paid employment each year to every rural household, for unskilled manual labor. The nature and choice of work carried through this labor is to be decided in consultation with the citizens in open village assemblies and ratified by village governments.

India's cash for work program guarantees 100 days of paid employment each year to every rural household, for unskilled manual labor.

However, this was not always the case in the early days of implementation, when activities were decided arbitrarily by local bureaucrats and were disjointed, with no clear path towards a longer-term vision. Community members were reduced to wage-takers instead of genuine partners towards a common and long-term goal. Changes have been implemented over time to focus activities on long-term asset creation, and to put communities and local governments in the driving seat. States with strong local governments and community involvement are still the best performing, particularly in using the opportunity for longer term change, and for overall impacts on poverty and vulnerability reduction. The capacity of the state to inform and mobilize citizens also plays a key role in generating demand.[122]

While the use of social protection programs can help the FRLD reach the most vulnerable, investments in community outreach and awareness campaigns will still be necessary along with a focus on promoting local leadership and engagement of the most vulnerable in decisions on how the funds should be used, capacity building and training to improve financial literacy, project management skills, and monitoring. Local non-government and civil society organizations will have a key role to play in, awareness creation and capacity building.

National governments, meanwhile, should identify strategies by which they can increase the coverage and reach of their social protection programs, and address challenges to make them more effective, transparent, and accountable delivery vehicles for loss and damage finance.

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NELD includes the loss of sense of place, especially in cultures where tie to land is so important, and the accompanying social and psychological impacts.

LOCALLY LED APPROACHES FOR NON-ECONOMIC LOSS AND DAMAGE

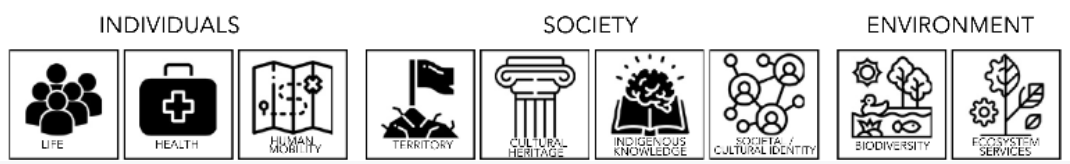
The marginalized Indigenous community of Kol from Chitrakoot, India, live in forest fringe areas without legal land title. They depend on subsistence agriculture on leased land for food and livelihood, and on their traditional knowledge of medicinal plants for medical treatment, for both humans and livestock. However, many of these plants are now disappearing as water sources dwindle in the region. This is eroding Indigenous knowledge and cultural practice, referred to as "non-economic loss and damage" (NELD), while at the same time impacting the community's access to medical treatment.

NELD due to climate change manifests directly and indirectly. Direct loss occurs when, for instance, cultural or religious heritage is lost due to an extreme event, or the loss of livelihoods or personal property causes mental health impacts. Indirect NELD can occur when, for example, the loss of food and water sources over time (or the migration of male members of the family) due to climate-related stresses increases the work burden for women, or exposes them to greater risks of child marriage, sexual harassment, or violent assault.

A first step to address NELD is to **document** losses – for historical record, and to allow affected people to pursue legal avenues. Documenting NELD requires a thorough understanding of local culture and practices. The high context-dependency, combined with the fact that NELD are highly subjective, means that the research and documentation process must be locally led.

The second step will require NELD to be **measured**. The UNFCCC proposes four different ways to measure NELD: economic valuation, multi-criteria decision analysis, risk indices, and qualitative and semi-quantitative assessments. These approaches require the quantification of loss, but NELD is inherently challenging to measure and quantify. The value attached to them is highly subjective and incommensurable, varying among cultures or even individuals. The application of globally or even nationally standardized measuring tools will be challenging, calling once again for strong local leadership.

The third step of **attributing loss to anthropogenic climate change** poses a further challenge, as loss can have multiple drivers. The nine UNFCCC categories of NELD (see Figure) highlight key themes in the almost infinite number of possible NELD. Empirical case studies on NELD are necessary to further refine the kinds of NELD people are experiencing, their causes, and the ways they can be addressed in a manner that is socially, culturally, economically, and politically acceptable.



UNFCCC non-economic loss categories.

Finally, **addressing** NELD comes with its own set of challenges, although communities experiencing NELD are forced to find ways to deal with them with their own limited resources, often with negative impacts on their wellbeing. Responses can include recognition and repair of damage, financial compensation, enabling access or safe visits to abandoned sites, supporting land rights, supporting active remembrance (for instance, through public ceremonies, museums, and schools), counselling, and issuing official apologies. While the acknowledgement of loss is an important first step, it must be paired with concrete action (adaptation measures) to avoid future loss and damage, and to hold significance. Local perspectives should be prioritized during addressing loss and damage, and to avoid causing further harm.

Key Messages

The FRLD faces multiple challenges in delivering on its mandate of helping vulnerable countries respond to economic and non-economic loss and damage associated with the adverse effects of climate change. Like climate finance in general, these issues relate to the quantity and quality of funding.

The Fund must first ensure adequate finance for loss and damage, as a chronic shortage of funds will affect the ability of FRLD to meet the needs of the affected communities effectively and make the process for accessing what limited funding is available more competitive. In addition to developed countries fulfilling existing and new pledges to meet the growing needs of affected communities, innovative sources of finance, such as levies on fossil fuel extraction and energy intensive sectors like international aviation and shipping, should be tapped as additional sources of finance for loss and damage.

Direct budget support should be the preferred modality for delivering loss and damage finance to ensure country ownership, with intermediaries involved only in cases of low national capacity or conflict. Resources should also be allocated from the Fund to build the capacity of government agencies to manage loss and damage finance effectively, including through institutionalized devolved approaches to reach affected communities effectively, technical expertise, improvements in financial management systems, and the promotion of transparency and accountability in the use of the funds.

Evacuation of flood victims during the 2022 floods in Pakistan. An estimated 33 million people were affected, and estimated damages and economic losses totaled more than US$ 30 billion.

Developing country governments should commit to locally led decision making on the use of loss and damage finance to ensure that affected and marginalized communities lead in the design, implementation, and monitoring of loss and damage projects for greater efficiency in meeting their urgent needs. Existing social protection schemes with proven effectiveness in reaching poor, vulnerable, and marginalized communities can offer efficient and effective systems for the delivery of loss and damage finance. Such schemes can be more effective than risk transfer mechanisms such as community-based insurance schemes, which provide limited financial support post-disaster and often fail to address deeper vulnerabilities faced by at-risk populations.

Developing country governments should also integrate loss and damage considerations into national development and climate plans and policies to ensure that loss and damage finance is strategically allocated to the most pressing needs to effectively mitigate losses.

To enable local leadership and support local access to loss and damage finance, the FRLD should support outreach, awareness building, and capacity building initiatives for local communities, and for community-based and non-government organizations. Monitoring and reporting processes should be simplified, and aimed at community learning to improve rehabilitation, recovery, and reconstruction responses over time, rather than simple bottom-to-top accounting on the use of funds.

In conclusion, strengthening access to loss and damage finance requires a collaborative, locally led approach that prioritizes the needs of the most affected and involvement of civil society at all levels.

CHAPTER 11

PARTNERSHIPS FOR RESILIENT ECOSYSTEMS

HIGHLIGHTS

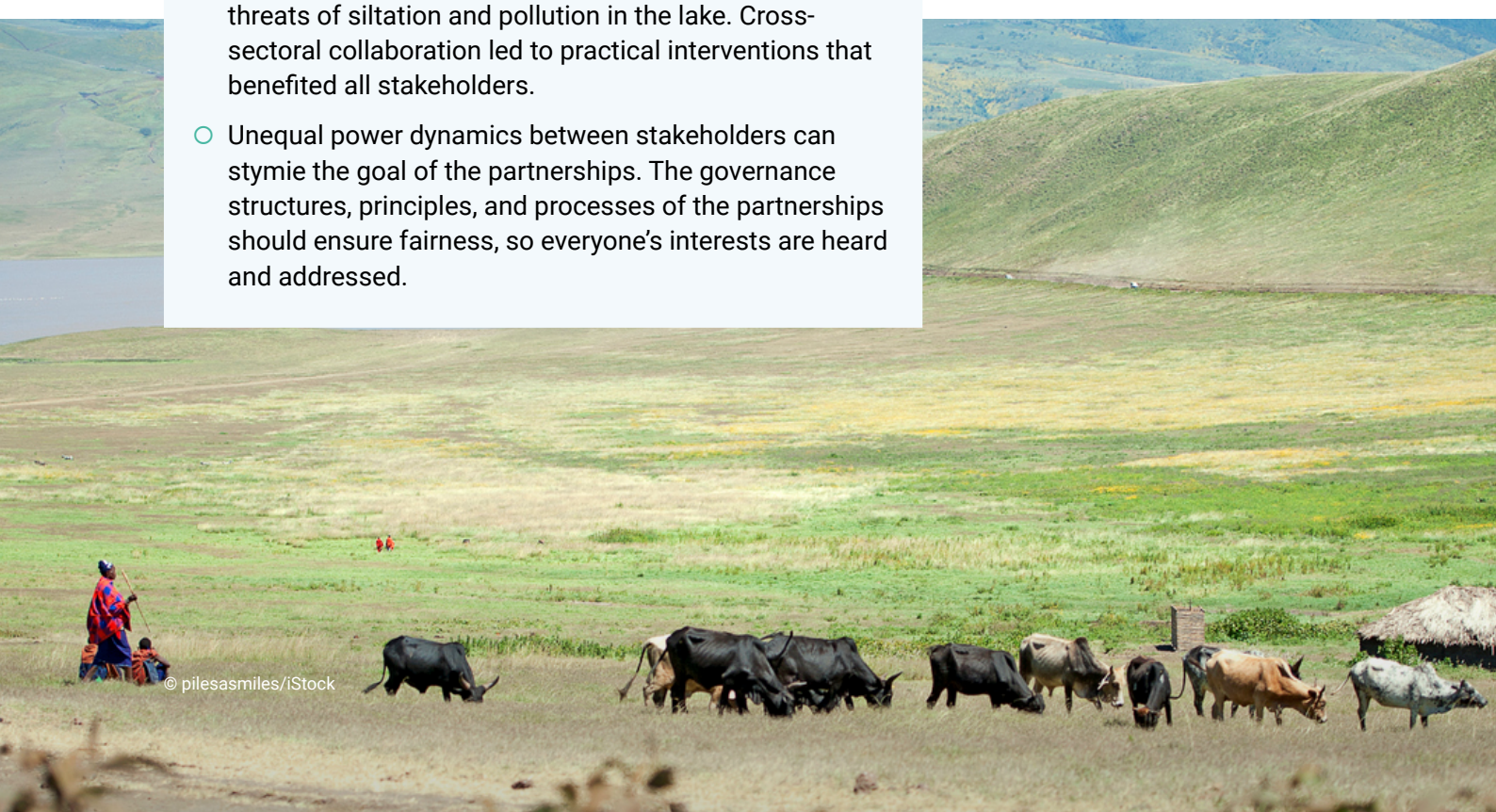
- As competition for a shrinking natural resource base threatened by climate change intensifies, platforms where users and stakeholders – public and private, community and government – have equal voice and agency to decide issues of access and sustainable management become even more critical.
- The Natural Resources Stewardship Programme (NatuReS) supports stakeholders to collaborate with each other for the sustainable use of natural resources, and for inclusive and resilient economic growth.
- Increasing water scarcity in the Pangani Basin escalated conflicts between upstream and downstream users. The Sustainable Water Management partnership brought together water users and other stakeholders to plan and implement interventions together, and to eventually significantly reduce resource-driven conflicts.
- The Protecting Lake Hawassa Partnership in Ethiopia brought together representatives of government, private companies, and local communities to address the dual threats of siltation and pollution in the lake. Cross-sectoral collaboration led to practical interventions that benefited all stakeholders.
- Unequal power dynamics between stakeholders can stymie the goal of the partnerships. The governance structures, principles, and processes of the partnerships should ensure fairness, so everyone's interests are heard and addressed.

Devolving decision making

Building understanding

Collaborative action

IN THIS CHAPTER



The reduced river flow makes it difficult to ensure that the last furrow downstream gets its share of water. It is difficult for us to manage water allocation during this time because some of the furrows do not have control gates or metering equipment.

Kisaka Mkingi, secretary, Weru Weru River Committee

THE WATER USERS OF THE PANGANI BASIN

The Kikuletwa catchment, on the idyllic slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount Meru in northern Tanzania, provides water to the Pangani Basin, the country's breadbasket. The catchment is home to three million inhabitants and diverse wildlife, all dependent on its fertile soil and clean water to survive.

A major change is now underway, with more frequent floods and droughts damaging the fragile ecosystem. This adds to the existing pressures of a rising population, economic growth, and environmental degradation. Competition for natural resources, increasingly scarce, is on the rise. The result is frequent conflict – particularly over water.

Local farmers in the catchment have practiced furrow irrigation for over two centuries, digging small, parallel channels to transport water for crops, which are grown on ridges between the furrows. There are over 3,400 water users on record in the Basin, with or without formal permits, although the actual number is likely to be much higher. As water flows have decreased over recent years, farmers downstream have been denied water. They have been known to march upstream, demanding the closure of upper furrows to allow water to flow downstream. "We are farmers, our livelihoods depend on water," explains Ernest Pallangyo, a downstream smallholder farmer and one of the marchers. "Without it, we can't survive."

"The dry season is particularly challenging," says Kisaka Mkingi, secretary, Weru Weru River Committee. "The reduced river flow makes it difficult to ensure that the last furrow downstream gets its share of water. It is difficult for us to manage water allocation during this time because some of the furrows do not have control gates or metering equipment."

Large farms are also impacted. "Sometimes we don't get water and there is a great need to rehabilitate the furrows, which have multiple users," says Gabriel Steven, a manager with Dekker Chrysanten, one of the world's largest breeders and propagators of chrysanthemums. "We felt collective action was necessary to address these challenges."

The slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro provide water to the Pangani Basin.

The situation is expected to worsen in future, especially without mitigation measures, as the demand for water is expected to almost double by 2060.[123] Numerous studies have been conducted on preserving the hydrology of the catchment.

They have pointed to the need for improved data on stream flow and meteorology, measures to conserve water, rehabilitation of traditional furrows, installation of control gates, and the enforcement of laws that forbid deforestation and farming in certain areas.

A key challenge to the implementation of these measures has been the lack of platforms for water users and managers to come together to solve problems.

This was the challenge that the Natural Resources Stewardship Programme (NatuReS), funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), set out to resolve. NatuReS supports stakeholders (private, public, and civil society) to collaborate with each other for the sustainable use of natural resources, and for inclusive and resilient economic growth.

Following a series of local dialogues, NatuReS supported water stakeholders in the Kikuletwa catchment to launch the Partnership for Sustainable Water Management (SUWAMA) in 2017. SUWAMA included the Pangani Basin Water Board and stakeholders from all sectors related to irrigation and access to safe drinking water down to the village level.

NatuReS supported the discussions in the partnerships by providing a detailed analysis, which identified all key actors and the risks to water and other natural resources; organizing meetings to convince stakeholders that the risks were common

Masaai women collect water from a muddy stream.

and had to be addressed jointly by all stakeholders; and structuring the partnership into the different work streams for more focused discussions.

Capacity building was organized to support stakeholders in fulfilling their roles and responsibilities. Joint field missions were supported for stakeholders to understand the scale of the problem.

Early discussions between the stakeholders, with GIZ playing the role of an "honest broker" (see Box 1), were focused on identifying shared risks stemming from environmental degradation in the basin. Partners recognized the need for education on good water management practices, including responsible water use and the prevention of water pollution. They also recognized that the exclusion of communities from water governance structures and decision-making in the basin resulted in reputational risks for the Pangani Basin Water Board (PBWB) and Water Users Associations, who were accused of not allocating water resources fairly among recipients. "It was necessary to involve community members at all levels and help them understand their role," says Juliana John, a member of the Usa River Water Users Association. "The partnership created a platform where large and small water users can discuss allocation."

BOX 1: THE HONEST BROKER

The NatuReS stewardship partnerships aim to create an open space for free and frank discussions among partners, where power asymmetries are balanced, and each partner can express their concerns freely. The role of a neutral "honest broker" is crucial in fostering trust and balancing power dynamics within stewardship partnerships. While an external actor without stakes in the game is probably best placed to play this role at the beginning, over time this role should transition to a stakeholder elected by the partners, as trust grows between partners along with their responsiveness to evolving risks.

The partnership should also find effective ways of ensuring that the voices of marginalized groups are heard in setting such as steering committee meetings; for instance, by designating effective spokespersons on their behalf.

Conflicts between private sector businesses and communities, which often resulted in the vandalism of water infrastructure, were recognized, as was the threat to the sustainability of businesses and job security for their employees. After identifying risks, the partners came together to identify solutions, which were captured in Partnership Action Plans (PAPs). The PAPs were focused on three goals:

- Increase sustainable economic development.
- Protect natural resources, particularly soil and water.
- Increase inclusive participation and reduce conflict around natural resources.

Five working groups were formed to achieve these goals:

- Water Resources for Planning and Governance.
- Water for Agriculture.
- Water for Human Consumption.
- Water for the Environment.
- Water for Industry.

Cross-sectoral collaboration was encouraged in these working groups, which met quarterly to develop solutions and take joint responsibility for managing water and other natural resources. All partners committed financial and in-kind contributions (time, money, and labor) to implement these solutions. Efforts to improve data availability and share information related to natural resources contributed to greater transparency, and reduced wastage.

The Water for Agriculture group confirmed that agriculture accounts for 80% of water use in the catchment, and that inefficient use was a key challenge and a primary source of conflict with downstream users. For instance, old and inefficient furrows used by large and smallholder water users were resulting in major water wastage – between 18% and 88% – in sub-catchments. Further water losses were incurred by farmers practicing flood irrigation, where the flow of water is controlled by gravity, which also impacted soil health and risked the spread of diseases and parasites.

Water conflicts have reduced because downstream users have access to more water after working together to rehabilitate the furrow infrastructure. Water sources that were earlier encroached are now also better protected through improved governance and cooperation between downstream and upstream users.

Abraham Yessaya, former Community Development Officer, PBWB

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Agriculture consumes 80% of catchment water, and inefficient use has become a major source of conflict for downstream users.

Through the partnership we feel there is opportunity of upscaling the tree planting we do because there are more resources that can be available from other stakeholders.

Abdulrahaman Meza, River Environmental Club

A series of decisions were taken by the stakeholders participating in the partnership to curb these losses, including by replacing old furrows with pipes. African Plantations Kilimanjaro (APK), a private company, agreed to invest US$ 1.2 million to convert furrows into a piped irrigation system to transport water from the river to farming areas without losses. Sprinkler and linear irrigation systems will replace inefficient flood irrigation on APK's coffee, beans, and maize farms, while also providing reliable water to neighboring smallholder farms.

The importance of ensuring equal access to water resources was recognized early in the partnership, when small-scale irrigators sometimes destroyed newly constructed intake structures built by private companies that received permits from public entities because they felt they had been excluded or ignored. Sabotage is a common response when access to natural resources is perceived as unfair, and in the absence of mechanisms for participatory decision-making.

The partnership is preparing a funding proposal to implement a similar approach within the Weru Weru sub-catchment. The investments are expected to reduce water losses significantly; leave more water for downstream users while securing an environmentally sustainable flow for the rivers; improve farm productivity; increase the area of agricultural land under irrigation; allow for year-round cultivation and crop rotation to secure soil health; and reduce the risk of the spread of plant disease.

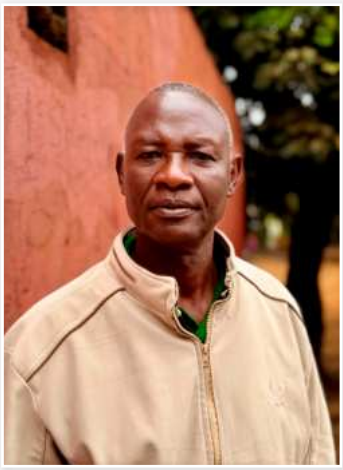
Farmers who participate in the partnership also benefit from training in sustainable and regenerative farming. These measures have already resulted in a significant reduction in the number of conflicts and complaints, facilitated by more effective means of communication on the ground (for instance through WhatsApp groups and in-person meetings). Clarity on the governance of water usage for equitable access, the roles and responsibilities of different actors, and the availability of reliable data to inform investments have played a key role.

"Water conflicts have reduced because downstream users have access to more water after working together to rehabilitate the furrow infrastructure," says Abraham Yessaya, former Community Development Officer, PBWB. "Water sources that were earlier encroached are now also better protected through improved governance and cooperation between downstream and upstream users."

Stewardship Partnerships

The NatuReS Model supports stewardship partnerships for stakeholders to work together to understand and mitigate threats to natural resources by pooling capacities and mandates. It is being implementation in Tanzania, Ethiopia, South Africa, and Zambia. Tools and approaches to implement such stewardship approaches are emerging around the world – including, for instance, the International Water Stewardship Standard developed by the Alliance for Water Stewardship, and the Water Resources Stewardship Framework developed by the GIZ International Water Stewardship Program.

NatuReS brought together the experience gained from these earlier initiatives and from experience in implementing more than 45 partnerships across the world in the Natural Resources Risk and Action Framework (NRAF), an approach for stewardship partnerships for natural resources (such as water, soil, land, ecosystems, and biodiversity). NRAF lays out a series of facilitated steps, skill development measures, and tailored tools for a partnership lifecycle.



Information sharing and collaboration has helped to reduce frictions between users, especially during the dry season.

Karim Kimaro, Weru Weru WUA secretary

Collaboration has helped us to understand our own use and the needs of other water users...We have engaged in discussions on how to increase water use efficiency in our furrow.

Sylvestor Machunda, Mount Meru Game Lodge

NREF guides practitioners in forming and executing high quality partnerships and delivering sustainable results to manage natural resources risks for businesses, communities, and governments. It guides stewardship practitioners through five steps of the process: preparing, assessing, committing, acting, and scaling or exiting.

During the first preparatory step, current climate impacts surface during discussions with stakeholders, on problems and vested interests. Future climate impacts are analysed during the second assessment phase, where contextual, socioeconomic, and environmental analyses are collected or produced. Climate change information (such as rainfall variability) is sought from partners and other entities, or research is conducted if information is missing, to provide sound data to partners to inform their discussions.

THE WATER USERS OF LAKE HAWASSA

Lake Hawassa, located in the Ethiopian Rift Valley, is known for its rich biodiversity. The lake plays a critical role in the economic development of the region. Farming and fishing are the largest sectors of employment, but tourism and industry are of growing importance. In recent years, rapid economic and demographic growth, coupled with changing climate conditions, are affecting the lake and its sub-catchment. The rate of soil erosion has risen in the past decade, largely due to deforestation and unsustainable farming practices. Pollution resulting from poor solid and liquid waste management is another challenge, as the waste from the city and its surroundings finds its way into the lake.

The city of Hawassa lies on the eastern shore of the lake, 275 km south of Addis Ababa. It plays a central role in the economic development of the Sidama and Oromia regions, sustaining a diversity of rural and urban livelihoods. In recent years, population growth has contributed to pressure on land, and forested areas have shrunk.[124] Efforts to address pollution and siltation in the lake, key threats for businesses and communities alike,

Soil erosion upstream and the consequences of siltation downstream pose significant risks to the Lake Hawassa catchment.

Pollution of the lake with liquid and solid waste has increased rapidly over the past few years.

have been hindered due to the lack of coordination mechanisms between stakeholders. Climate change is now adding to these pressures.

The government and other concerned groups (communities, non-government and civil society organizations, and private companies) have invested in significant efforts to tackle these challenges in recent decades. Research and projects on the ground have generated a strong body of knowledge and contributed to the iterative refining of practical solutions. The magnitude and complexity of the challenges is well understood by local researchers, local communities, and decision-makers. More and more stakeholders are willing to come together to jointly address the threats that they face. A series of platforms have emerged, for more strategic and coordinated action.

On such platform is Protecting Lake Hawassa (PLH), which was set up in 2017 by the Rift Lakes Valley Basin Authority, Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation, and GIZ. Bringing together the government, companies, communities, and civil society organizations to address a common cause, PLH is governed by a steering committee, and supported by a technical advisory group, a secretariat, and project task force teams. A Protecting Lake Hawassa Partnership supported by NatuReS was also formed in 2018, with the common goal of developing cross-sectoral solutions to reduce environmental and social risks stemming from the threats to Lake Hawassa, preserving its ecosystem services, and promoting sustainable development.

The structures placed to reduce erosion are showing good results. Flood is significantly reduced. In addition, I use the elephant grass planted to control floods to build the roof of my house. I'm benefiting in many ways.
Getahun Denamo, farmer, Hawassa Zuria Woreda

Now, after the conservation structures are installed and trees are planted, there have been so many improvements that I am benefiting from. Floods have stopped destroying our yield and I get a better harvest from my farm.

Brhanesh Ermias, Farmer, Hawassa Zuria Woreda

The Partnership identified siltation and pollution as the two main threats affecting the lake, and consequently the partners. Businesses faced operational risks due to the decline in the quantity and quality of water, reputational risks through conflicts with communities and public authorities, and regulatory risks if they did not adhere to environmental regulations. Public authorities faced the risk of failing in their mandate of public service delivery, and reduced revenue from business and tourism. Smallholder farmers and fisherfolk faced reduced yields, while public health was compromised by the lack of clean water. For the sake of common good, siltation and pollution in Lake Hawassa needed to be addressed urgently.

A steering committee, with representatives of all stakeholder groups, was formed for strategic decision-making and oversight. Members of the partnership identified afforestation and soil erosion control as key interventions to reduce siltation, and solid and liquid waste management to reduce pollution. Community and stakeholder engagement was established as a crosscutting intervention to raise awareness and to ensure inclusion. Each of these three interventions was overseen by task force teams, which were responsible for the design, implementation, and monitoring of responses. The task force teams meet quarterly and report back to the steering committee biannually. The secretariat was initially managed by the Rift Valley Lakes Basin Development Office and NatuReS, with the former eventually taking on this role.

Initial discussions among the partners revolved around their different technical and financial capacities. Each partner contributed significantly in cash and kind, including labor, time, technical support, and transport. For instance, the Hawassa Municipality assigned engineers from the Construction and Urban Development Office to provide technical support. Local communities contributed through labor for afforestation efforts. The private sector contributed finance (which is not frequent practice in Ethiopia).

The actions of the partnership resulted in changes in individual and organizational behavior, and in the relationship between stakeholders, which became increasingly collaborative and fueled by a willingness to bring solutions to address common risks. While such collaboration is rarely straightforward to

achieve and can be time intensive, multistakeholder dialogues proved to be a golden tool to drive this process. Stakeholders grew to know each other through the dialogues, and to understand each other's perspectives, leading to a constructive process of diagnosing and resolving issues, finding trade-offs, and reaching consensus. The dialogues also created an enabling environment for developing and enforcing new policies and regulations.

Since its inception, the partnership has improved water security for all stakeholders through integrated natural resources management at the sub-basin level, and participatory integrated water resource management in Ethiopia. It has resulted in collective actions and long-term planning, and supported communities in their efforts to reclaim degraded arable land, with over one thousand hectares reclaimed for agriculture.

Conclusion

The problems affecting the sustainability of natural resources are often complex and multileveled. Neither governments, businesses, nor civil society can address these challenges on their own. Shared interest for livelihoods, business, public service delivery or sustainability can offer common ground to protect these resources. Collaboration amongst different actors with a stake in the natural resource – the stakeholders – is essential to unlock the opportunities of this common ground, and to address root causes, especially equitable access.

While structured engagement between stakeholders can drive joint decision-making and implementation, efforts to coordinate such engagement are often stymied by the unequal power dynamics between stakeholders. The governance structures, principles, and processes followed in actioning these partnerships are very important to ensure that every stakeholder's issues and interests are captured and addressed. Enabling conditions for a partnership to succeed are:

- **Political will:** Concern of public authorities for the environmental situation and motivation to act.
- **Public awareness:** Concern of civil society for the environmental situation and motivation to act.
- **Civil society capacity:** Availability of knowledge and resources to engage. Capacities across

> **Both the environmental and social efforts of the partnership have been scaled through community and stakeholder engagement, which is key to collaborative basin work.**
>
> Vincent van Reenen, senior corporate responsibility specialist, Phillips-Van Heusen Corporation

Dr. Abraha Adugna.

> **Our Ministry wants to take the experience and lessons of the Protecting Lake Hawassa Partnership to protecting other lakes in Ethiopia. We learned that it is more effective to engage all stakeholders to protect and sustainably manage our water resources and we will follow a similar approach in the future.**
>
> Dr. Abraha Adugna, State Minister for Water and Energy

stakeholders and sectors vary. Communities and civil society may be disadvantaged if they don't possess all the information, knowledge, and resources they need to contribute effectively and represent their side. This needs to be addressed through the partnership.

- **Private sector interest:** A key private company, or companies, realizes the environmental threats, as well as the benefits of partnering with public and civil sector.

While the partnerships also try to institute deeper changes in governance and policies and processes, these tend to take more time. For instance, sand mining has been an issue in both the Pangani Basin and Lake Hawassa. An analysis of the socio-ecological impacts of sand mining by PBWB revealed that sand mining disrupts the river flow, but vulnerable groups are forced to turn to it because their livelihoods have been disrupted by the lack of access to land, water, or financial resources. Specific locations for sand mining were proposed as a solution, alongside options for alternative livelihoods. However, local government authorities in the basin see themselves mainly as regulators, whose role is to ensure compliance with the law rather than to be accountable to citizens for solving their problems. Staff are praised for collecting higher penalties and fines. Shifting accountability of public servants to work for, rather than against, citizens will take time.

In Hawassa, it has been challenging to include youth groups in the partnerships. However, when a group of young people started harvesting sand, once again with detrimental ecological impacts, the partnership intervened, and district officers supported the young people to establish alternate livelihoods that support the environment and climate resilience, like tree nurseries.

ANNEX

LLA MARKERS (Chapter 5)

Tracking Accountability and Localization in Adaptation Projects

MARKER	DONORS AND INTERMEDIARIES SHARE FIDUCIARY, OPERATIONAL, AND SECURITY RISKS WITH LOCAL PARTNERS
Providers included in the analysis	Complex donor requirements are key barriers for local organizations. A lot of time and resources are spent on processes like accreditation and due diligence. Often these processes are complex and very onerous for local organizations. When donors prioritize mitigating their own fiduciary, legal, and reputational risks over risks faced by local partners, they can impede effective LLA. More simplified and fit for purpose systems and consistent processes across donors will help the local organizations to navigate these requirements more easily.
Corresponding LLA principle	1, 3, 6, 7
Indicators	• Donors/intermediaries engage their relevant operational units (finance, operations, M&E, due diligence) in designing and implementing fit for purpose due diligence policies and processes proportionate to capabilities and capacity (size, number of staff, language requirements) of grant/ local organizations. • Donor/ intermediaries provide flexible budget for emergencies or contingencies on the ground for local staff or focal points. • Donors/intermediaries have provision of funds upfront. • Donors/intermediaries are open to accepting different/flexible risk mitigation measures. • Donors/intermediaries are transparent in communicating and providing information on rationale behind perceived risk. • Donors/intermediaries provide cost-recovery for local partners to engage in due diligence processes. • Donors harmonize/standardize due diligence with other donors to ease the burden of conducting due diligence assessments. • Donors/intermediaries are flexible in accepting other recent audits/due diligence assessments from other projects in recent years.
Means of verification	Interview with local partners; assessment by an entity lower down the finance delivery chain or self-assessment; document review of donor policies; risk assessment procedures and contracts; interview with relevant donor and intermediary risk mitigation departments; self-review in some cases.
Exclusion criterion or non-negotiables in enabling LLA	• Intermediaries adding their own set of restrictions on grantees to minimize risks on themselves. • Intermediaries act as enforcers of donor requirements to all grantees without a fit for purpose approach (i.e. tailored requirements based on size, capacity and capabilities of different organizations). • Donors/intermediaries unwilling to accommodate changes to risk mitigation measures with the intermediary.

MARKER	CALLS FOR PROPOSALS, CONTRACTING, TENDERING, AND PROJECT DESIGN ENABLES LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS TO PARTICIPATE ON EQUAL FOOTING WITH INGOS
Providers included in the analysis	The bureaucratic hurdles associated with accessing international funding are often set up in ways that mimic the institutional structures used by international organizations. This means they often have inherent advantages for accessing funding over local organizations. Moreover, because of their larger size, international organizations have contingency budgets, reserves, and human resource capacity to develop lengthy and complex funding proposals; such resources are usually absent for smaller, local organizations. More considerate design requirements and processes including longer timelines, providing funding for proposal development, easier application forms, in-person/virtual orientation on the call requirements and proposal template(s), providing audio-visual guideline to fill in the proposal template, keeping mandatory eligibility criteria to include a local organization as implementing partner and accepting applications in local languages or via interviews would reduce the disadvantages faced by local organizations.
Corresponding LLA principle	1, 2, 3, 6
Indicators	• Pre-award, donors/intermediaries provide financial and technical support to local partners to meet demands of partnering including support in other languages than English. • Donors/intermediaries prioritize funding to organizations that are embedded in and responsive to the needs of communities. • Donors/intermediaries accept applications in local languages. • Donors/intermediaries design calls for proposals to target applicants responsive to the needs of communities. • Donors/intermediaries design review criteria to target applicants responsive to the needs of communities. • Donor/intermediaries are flexible on the experience related eligibility criteria. • Donor/intermediaries do not put stringent review criteria on the financial capacity of the local organization(s).
Means of verification	Document review of calls for proposals from donors and intermediaries; interviews with local partners.
Exclusion criterion or non-negotiables in enabling LLA	Selection criterion excludes organizations responding to needs of communities.

MARKER	EASE OF REPORTING AND DOCUMENTATION FOR LOCAL PARTNERS
Providers included in the analysis	The bureaucratic hurdles associated with accessing international funding are often set up in ways that mimic the institutional structures used by international organizations. This means they often have inherent advantages for accessing funding over local organizations. Moreover, because of their larger size, international organizations have contingency budgets, reserves, and human resource capacity to develop lengthy and complex funding proposals; such resources are usually absent for smaller, local organizations. More considerate design requirements and processes including longer timelines, providing funding for proposal development, easier application forms, in-person/virtual orientation on the call requirements and proposal template (s), providing audio-visual guideline to fill in the proposal template, keeping mandatory eligibility criteria to include a local organization as implementing partner and accepting applications in local languages or via interviews would reduce the disadvantages faced by local organizations.
Corresponding LLA principle	6, 7
Indicators	• Donors/intermediaries accept reporting in local languages. • Donors/intermediaries provide short and simple reporting template along with guideline. • Donors/intermediaries have flexibility in the tools and processes considered to meet requirements, e.g. allowing oral or video reporting. • Donors/intermediaries avoid undue burden of proof to meet financial requirements. (e.g. digitalization of financial receipts, hiring new stuff to meet capabilities). • Donors/ intermediaries align format and structure of reporting with other donors and intermediary organizations to decrease the burden on local organizations. • Donors/intermediaries provide support to local organizations to walk through reporting requirements. • Donors/intermediaries clearly layout timelines and requirements of reporting requirements. • Donors/intermediaries have reporting timeframes that are at least one year apart from one another.
Means of verification	Interview with local partners, reporting requirement review; report review.
Exclusion criterion or non-negotiables in enabling LLA	Cumbersome and complex reporting process with unclear instructions which requires excessive information, consumes resources (time, budget).

MARKER	DONORS PROVIDE FLEXIBLE AND TRANSPARENT FINANCE TO LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS
Providers included in the analysis	Climate finance for local partners often comes with rigid conditionalities such as limits on overhead spending and timeframes. Funding conditions need to be flexible to accommodate local organization's capabilities and contexts. Providing quality finance to the lowest appropriate level is a core element of LLA.
Corresponding LLA principle	3
Indicators	• Donors/intermediaries provide adequate administrative support and/or core funding. • Donors/intermediaries provide orientation/guideline/capacity building sessions on the budget preparation, budget revision and budget utilization. • Donors/intermediaries enable flexible budgeting: No/few overhead limits and moving budgets between line items, ease of extending spending timeframes. • Donors/intermediaries have dedicated funding streams to meet adaptation needs and capacities in the way local partners see fit. • Donors process larger number of smaller awards for LLA either directly to local organizations, with targeted intermediaries or through dedicated financing windows. • Donors increase financing to the local level organization or partner year on year. • Donors/intermediaries provide flexibility in the conditions of the grant (budget, timelines, reporting) responsive to local partner's needs. • Donor/intermediaries are reasonably flexible on internal/external audit requirements.
Means of verification	Interview and feedback from local organizations; project documents and reports
Exclusion criterion or non-negotiables in enabling LLA	• The donor has overly restrictive approach to cost classification that prevents indirect costs from being classified as overheads. • The intermediary does not advance overheads to local or national partners.

MARKER	USING DEMAND DRIVEN CAPACITY STRENGTHENING APPROACHES
Providers included in the analysis	Improving the capabilities of local institutions to ensure they can manage adaptation initiatives, amplifying traditional wisdom to generate solutions, and investing into long term partnerships and capabilities are all important for improving the quality and fairness of actions. Particular attention should be paid to including under represented voices.
Corresponding LLA principle	2, 4
Indicators	• Donors/intermediaries allow local organizations to participate in assessment on capacity-strengthening priorities and needs, particularly of under represented groups. • Donors/intermediaries have project budgets dedicated to capacity-strengthening for local partners based on results of assessments. • Donors/intermediaries ensure capability strengthening runs through the entire duration of the project/program and continues beyond. • Donors/intermediaries provide funding and technical support responsive to local organization's demands.
Means of verification	Feedback from local partners on responsiveness and utility of capacity building; review of intermediaries training materials; local organization's needs assessments.
Exclusion criterion or non-negotiables in enabling LLA	One-off or donor-mandated capacity building.

MARKER	MEASURING PROGRAMMATIC SUCCESS USING LOCALLY-DEFINED METRICS AND SYSTEMS
Providers included in the analysis	Evaluation data is often collected to serve the donor, rather than to enable learning and accountability within the community. Measuring impact and success must be driven by community vision for LLA rather than superficial forms of measurement that aim to demonstrate impact for donors.
Corresponding LLA principle	2, 7
Indicators	• Donors/intermediaries ensure evaluations are tendered with a preference for local evaluation experts. • Donors/intermediaries are transparent on how they will change practices based on evaluations. • Donors/intermediaries accept evaluations conducted through existing structures (e.g. public hearings, citizen assemblies. Etc). • Donors/intermediaries incorporate/accept indicators for programme success selected and defined by local actors. • Donors/intermediaries are open to changing M&E indicators in discussion with local organizations. • Donors/intermediaries are open to accept both quantitative and qualitative indicators consulted, selected and defined by local actors.
Means of verification	Interview with local partners, review of donor/intermediary indicators.
Exclusion criterion or non-negotiables in enabling LLA	Non-negotiable donor key performance indicators.

MARKER	DONORS AND INTERMEDIARIES PROVIDE LOCAL PARTNERS ADEQUATE CAPACITY TO INTERPRET AND USE CLIMATE INFORMATION
Providers included in the analysis	Use of diverse, downscaled, and well-translated climate information is essential for LLA projects to help inform decision-making for adaptation. Often adaptation projects provide climate data, without any assessment of climate information needs or capacity to interpret this information. Adaptation-relevant decisions must be informed by information about climate change, leveraging both Indigenous knowledge and the best available climate science. Donors can encourage this by financing capacity building and needs assessments regarding climate information instead of only focusing on provision of information, and intermediaries can play a technical assistance role in supporting capacity building and using information for decision-making.
Corresponding LLA principle	4, 5
Indicators	• Donors/intermediaries dedicate budget to communicating climate information in a variety of formats. • Donors/intermediaries dedicate budget to assessing climate information needs of different actors at the local level. • Donors/intermediaries/local organization engage nearest regional/local universities/academic institutions to assess and communicate climate projection. • Donors/intermediaries dedicate budget to interpreting climate information to support decision making at the local level. • Donors/intermediaries offer orientation/capacity building sessions on the use of climate information/climate projections to design effective adaptation solutions. • Donors/intermediaries keep provision of integrating climate information (e.g. local/national climate scenarios) in the proposal format. • Donor/intermediaries provide scope/opportunities in the proposal template/applications to align local/national climate change policy/plans/strategies.
Means of verification	Interview with local partners, review of climate information materials, NAP, local plans and training material.
Exclusion criterion or non-negotiables in enabling LLA	Provision of climate information without support to interpret and use it is not sufficient.

MARKER	DONORS AND INTERMEDIARIES EMPOWER LOCAL PARTNERS OPPORTUNITIES TO COLLABORATE ON CLIMATE ACTION ACROSS SCALES (SECTORS, GEOGRAPHIES, AND GOVERNANCE HIERARCHIES).
Providers included in the analysis	Climate action for the local level must be connected across scales to be effective, as different types of investments must be made at different levels to adapt effectively to climate change. Enabling local partners to engage in coordination between sectors, geographies, and governance levels is vital for effective adaptation and core to the LLA principles.
Corresponding LLA principle	8
Indicators	• Donors/intermediaries coordinate programming (internally within donors and externally) to amplify climate action at the local level. • Donors/intermediaries facilitate local actors to collaborate via existing mechanisms. • Donors/Intermediaries dedicate budget for collaborating actions e.g. research (by regional/local level universities), advocacy sector specific local government organizations, private sectors and multi-stakeholders), learning sharing/knowledge disseminating dialogue/trilogue (scientists-policy makers-practitioners) and so on.
Means of verification	Review of donor programming documents.
Exclusion criterion or non-negotiables in enabling LLA	Duplication of projects, coordination mechanisms.

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