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About Joto Afrika

Joto Afrika is a series of printed briefings and online resources about adapting to climate change in sub-Saharan Africa. The series help people understand the issues, constraints and opportunities that poor people face in adapting to climate change and escaping poverty.



Cowpea seed producer from Na Allah community, Azagor commune in Niger © Fiona Percy, 2011

Integrating Community Based Adaptation into local government planning

Editorial

Governments across Africa are committed to ensure that adaptation to climate change is included in relevant national policies and plans. They are developing and resourcing national adaptation plans, but there is growing recognition that all government plans – development, risk reduction and sector based – are affected by climate change impacts, particularly at the local level.

Adaptation is therefore not an issue to be addressed in isolation in specific programmes, but must be integrated into mainstream planning processes and development implementation. Development and sector plans and budgets need to be based on actions that will result in climate resilient development, whether or not finance specific to adaptation has been accessed. There is growing recognition of the need to focus on resilience over the long term in the face of increasingly frequent, uncertain and extreme weather and climate related events as well as changing development opportunities and challenges. Interconnections between local, national and global levels are increasingly complex and dynamic. Actions that are decided locally are informed by local conditions and are better able to respond to the locally felt impacts of climate change. While convinced of the need, many governments are facing challenges on how, practically, to integrate adaptation to climate change into local planning.

This *Joto Afrika* presents some initial successes in Ghana, Niger and Kenya. They stress the importance of accessing, understanding and responding flexibly to two key areas of information in order to succeed in achieving climate resilient development and resultant benefits on a continuous basis over the long term. Firstly, understanding the vulnerabilities, capacities and development priorities and aspirations of people and secondly, accessing and interpreting climate information from past trends and future forecasts into accessible and usable messages relevant to the local conditions. The articles are drawn from experiences of the Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP), implemented by CARE International since 2010. ALP supports the practical

development of approaches for community based adaptation, based on direct testing and experience with communities and also with government, civil society and other actors at local to national levels. A key lesson has been that adaptation is about decision making processes as much as technical interventions. To be adapted and climate resilient, interventions must be decided through an informed planning process together with the people whose lives are affected by climate change. Hence participatory planning processes at community and local government level are critical. Articles from Niger and Ghana show how such processes are being integrated and coordinated with the mainstream planning systems up to national level.

Seasonal weather varies from year to year while the long term impacts of climate change will occur ten years and more into the future. These are very different timescales from government planning and project cycles, which are challenged to find ways to respond. There is need for coordination, or better still, integration between development planning and early warning, disaster risk reduction systems and emergency response planning. An example is given from Niger – also showing the challenges to existing practices for a truly integrated and locally determined system which delivers resilient development.

Participatory scenario planning using seasonal forecasts in Kenya demonstrates how multi-stakeholder planning forums can add value and flexibility to local government plans. Beyond Africa, the 7th International conference on community based adaptation (CBA7) in 2013 demonstrated a strong demand for strengthening adaptive capacity as well as government transparency and accountability as criteria for success. Across all the articles, the common message emerging is a strong call for additional financial resources to be allocated to adaptation to be able to turn plans into action and thence into resilient futures for those most vulnerable to climate change.

Fiona Percy

Adaptation Learning Programme Regional Programme Coordinator, CARE International
fiona@careclimatechange.org



Local development planning integrating adaptation in Ghana

Women's group farm in Kugri, Ghana © Fiona Percy, 2011.

Integration of adaptation to climate change into local planning processes provides a formalised channel for ensuring that community priorities and plans aim for resilient development, and gives local government the mandate to adapt their plans and budgets to local conditions and climate impacts.

Ghana's decentralisation policies provide for strengthened local governance and citizens' participation in local decision making and development processes. All 216 District Assemblies (DAs) implement four year District Medium Term Development Plans (DMTDP), intended to reflect the development needs and aspirations of their constituent communities. The National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) governs the process with a set of planning guidelines which ensure that plans conform to the national development framework and key thematic areas, support the participation and representation of concerned actors and create uniformity in the planning process across all districts in Ghana. Data collectors are recruited and trained to collect inputs and prioritise the communities' needs and aspirations. A public hearing is conducted to present the draft of the DMTDP to the citizens for final comments and inputs.

ALP Ghana has worked with two DA's in Northern Ghana to develop a model for integrating community based adaptation into the development planning process. Their success led to the idea of formalising climate change adaptation concerns into the planning process, which required action through a number of channels. Firstly, the NDPC reviewed the national development planning guidelines for 2014-17 in relation to addressing the impacts of climate change. Through a process of dialogue and technical support, the revised draft guidelines now recognise climate change as an important cross cutting issue and recommend DAs to conduct participatory climate vulnerability and capacity analysis for preparation of the DMTDP 2014-17. Capacity building to DAs and NDPC should take into account the additional technical and financial resources needed to demonstrate climate resilience. Activities should be prioritized based on whether they increase resilience generally and specifically to expected climate change impacts – for example through developing Community Adaptation Action Plans (CAAPs) which are now recommended reference documents for District Assemblies.

Secondly, ALP worked with Ghana's Environmental Protection Agency to influence the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to include climate change adaptation as a criteria element in the Functional Organisational Assessment Tool (FOAT). This national level tool is used to assess a district's level of achievements against key development indicators and criteria which then determine budget allocations from the District Development Fund. Incorporating climate change in the FOAT is a motivation for districts to take climate impacts and adaptation seriously in their plans.

A third channel was the introduction of Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) to District Assemblies and Ministry of Food and Agriculture, with training and practical application in the districts. The PSPs promote linkages with DAs, meteorological services, communities and local service providers to collectively take seasonal forecasts into account in planning and decision making in relation to seasonal agriculture activities and planning toward disaster risk reduction and preparedness. Garu Tempane district has included PSPs in their annual action plan with a budgetary allocation for 2014 and expressed commitment to integrate PSP in their DMTDP 2014-17. The PSPs also strengthen linkages between the District Assemblies and technical government institutions, for example for testing agriculture technologies which are likely to be climate resilient.

Emerging lessons

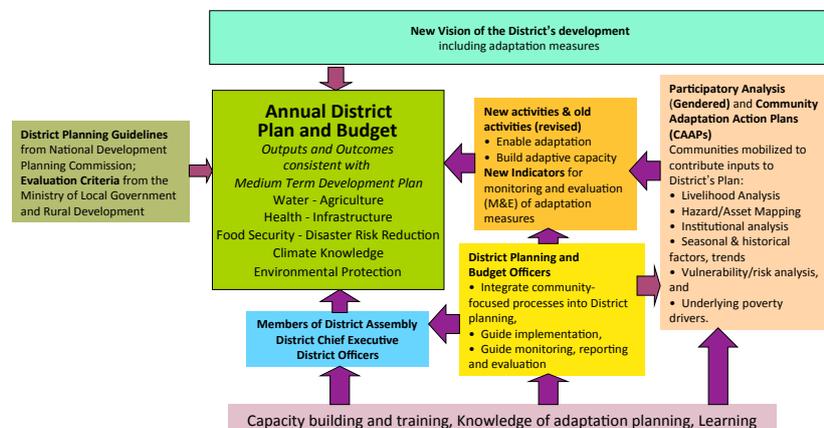
Progress has been made in integrating CBA into formal development planning processes. Key success factors include:

- champion districts demonstrating integration in practice
- documentation of the process including indicators to facilitate tracking of adaptation impact
- knowledge of the mainstream systems governing decision making
- regular dialogue and engagement to gain support from national government policy and planning directives
- provision of capacity building and training to ensure the necessary skills, tools and know-how for DAs to effectively assess vulnerabilities, respond to community aspirations, develop and budget for appropriate adaptation strategies and monitoring.

Changing attitudes and building capacity can be a slow process needing determination, good evidence and practical examples, and working at all levels from districts to national policy. It is clear that mainstreaming climate change adaptation in national development guidelines and local development planning will not happen overnight but will result from a process of understanding the urgency of adaptation, acknowledging the value of integration and having the capacity and resources to carry it out in practice.

Nikolaj Boutrup Møller
nboutrup@care.dk

Model for integrating community based adaptation into district plans and budgets in Ghana



CARE Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP) - Ghana



Practical approaches to integrating CBA in local planning in Ghana

Community visioning exercise in Tariganga © ALP Ghana, 2012.

Integrating community based adaptation activities into local and district level plans is regarded as one of the most effective ways to support the most vulnerable communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change. But practical approaches for integration reflecting realities and priorities of the communities on the ground have always been a challenge.

Since 2010, ALP Ghana has supported eight communities in the districts of Garu Tempene and East Mamprusi in Northern Ghana to develop Community Adaptation Action Plans (CAAPs) which include adaptation strategies, strengthening their adaptive capacity to become resilient to current and future climatic hazards. Groups in the communities identified the climatic risks, hazards and vulnerabilities they face as well as their existing capacity to adapt. They further created community visions for development and then assessed their feasibility, barriers and opportunities presented by possible impacts of climate change. The process led to identification of practical adaptation opportunities and priorities by men and women. The outcome of the process was production of the CAAPs, plans which are owned and implemented by the communities themselves and supported by community monitors and representatives of local government.

Community monitors presented copies of the CAAPs to the District Coordinating Director, who signed them to signify reception and endorsement on behalf of the District Assembly. The monitors highlighted the communities' future visions and their planned activities which aimed at reducing their vulnerability to climate change and improving their adaptive capacity and resilience. Many of the activities implemented by households in the community are supported by technical and value chain services or micro-finance, without need for external funding. Some however, call for community or higher level action and support. These activities can be incorporated into the district development plans and budgets.

Emerging lessons

Whilst recognition of the CAAPs by the district government is critical for integration into district level plans, systems for up-scaling CAAPs across districts need to be identified. For example, through community monitors having capacity for developing CAAPs in all communities, or through selecting

representative communities whose plans can form the basis of Area Council prioritising, or participate more actively in lower level planning. Criteria are needed for prioritising actions to be supported from limited District budgets including ensuring these are climate resilient and of a 'public good' nature. Garu-Tempene District Planning Officer, Andani Iddrisu, argues that the CAAP concept ensures ownership, transparency and enhances participation of the community members. However, lack of implementation may weaken the participation and the motivation of the community members. There is a need to find a way for action and implementation of the communities' plans.

Communities are encouraged to find their own means and not to expect or depend on government resources. Group saving and loans schemes are proving a powerful means of providing low levels of finance for daily needs and bring about a major increase in social capital and community organisation, particularly among women. Community members can gain skills to seek out and lobby for finance for their specific projects, from micro-finance, non-government projects, private sector schemes and others.

The Ghana experience demonstrates that local government plans can and should respond to community determined priorities for activities and strategies that are adapted and resilient to climate change. It also shows there are real limitations for local government budgets to support all community priorities and systems are needed to manage expectations and focus on actions that will benefit large numbers of people. A clear lesson is that communities themselves (and their local authorities) benefit greatly from their own planning process, which can be empowering and productive when it promotes their own ownership and responsibility for action. Reducing expectations for external financial support and building capacity for different channels of 'self-funding' are essential. However, significant external resources and a system for their effective channelling are essential to enable adaptation and resilience long term. Mainstreaming adaptation into the formal planning and budgeting process and making links to international adaptation finance are routes to achieving this.

Nikolaj Boutrup Møller
nboutrup@care.dk

"The Ghana experience demonstrates that local government plans can and should respond to community determined priorities for activities and strategies that are adapted and resilient to climate change."

CBA Brief: Community based Adaptation: An empowering approach for climate resilient development and risk reduction
<http://bit.ly/1jXwxBc>



Communique from the West Africa Learning event on CBA:
<http://bit.ly/1enIWcb>

ACCRA new report on Flexible and Forward-Looking Decision Making (FFDM)
<http://bit.ly/1gY91P0>

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Participatory Scenario Planning informs County planning in Kenya

Water extraction from Borana singing wells Kenya © Tim Njiru/CVS, 2013

Climate change concepts and related issues are increasingly better understood in Kenya. However, many people are unsure or have a limited interpretation of what adaptation looks like in practice and this has affected the quality of adaptation initiatives in the country.

CARE Kenya, through its climate change adaptation projects is encouraging policy and decision makers to broaden their view of adaptation to climate change and to use climate information in planning and decision making. In partnership with local communities and civil society organisations, a two pronged approach combines capacity building and advocacy on integrating Community Based Adaptation (CBA) approaches into planning systems at the county and national levels.

The Participatory Scenario Planning (PSP) approach is a practical example of how local governments can integrate climate information and adaptation decision making into their plans with relatively low resources. PSP involves a multi-stakeholder platform to collectively interpret seasonal climate forecasts from the meteorological services and traditional forecasters at local level. It facilitates flexible, weather-based planning, enabling different actors to adapt to seasonal variations in climate, while at the same time building evidence and capacity for longer term adaptation planning.

Garissa County in Kenya has implemented PSPs since October 2011. County planning, including government sectors, is now informed by improved and more usable climate information. Seasonal adaptation planning is done in a participatory and inclusive manner, increasing coordination among groups of people that wouldn't

normally sit together to plan, for example among government departments and between government, civil society groups and community members. The user friendly localised advisories that are disseminated after the PSP workshops enable communities to make informed decisions which have increased incomes and reduced risks to crops, animals, assets and human lives.

Up-scaling PSPs as a mainstream planning approach

In Kenya, each of the 47 counties has been assigned a County Director of Meteorological Services (CDMS), providing the opportunity for downscaled and localised climate information. In 2013 the CDMS were trained in effective climate communication skills. This has enabled them to better acknowledge and appreciate the existing knowledge and the information needs of sectors and livelihood groups. They are now able to better communicate meaningful and usable forecast information including its level of uncertainty and probability, while appreciating the importance of dialogue and collective interpretation of the information.

A range of development practitioners and service providers including all 47 County Natural Resources Management Officers from the Agriculture Sector Development Support Programme (ASDSP) in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries have been trained in PSPs in 2013 and 2014. The 2014 March to May rainfall season has seen PSPs planned and conducted with Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya Meteorological Services and local civil society in each County with financial support from ASDSP, ALP and others.

Emerging lessons

Experience in Kenya has shown that if adaptation is presented as an improvement integrated into ongoing governance and planning systems as opposed to a new and separate initiative, then it is more widely accepted. Decision makers also appreciate having tangible examples of successful approaches, which they can easily incorporate in their work. PSPs add a new seasonal time dimension to planning related to climate impacts.

Multi-stakeholder dialogue and coordination, inclusive of community representatives has many benefits. It enables discussion and innovation on all aspects of development and addresses the dynamic and localised nature of climate change impacts by bringing

together knowledge and resources of all actors towards a collective solution and new relationships. Advisories produced are adapted to local conditions, allowing farmers, pastoralists and small scale business to make decisions more likely to increase their productivity and incomes.

PSPs allow time for interpretation of climate forecasts, including understanding their probability and level of uncertainty. This helps 'end users' to weigh up the likely scenarios and make their own decisions. It builds trust in the forecasts and confidence to do their own risk analysis, assess the resources available to them and to make well informed choices.

Emma Bowa

ALP Kenya Country Manager
emmabowa@care.or.ke

Key messages for influencing national and local planning policy

- Given the localised nature of climate impacts, decision making should take place at the lowest level possible to ensure relevant and effective responses.
- Inclusion of vulnerable groups and a gender sensitive approach are essential to ensure that plans respond to different vulnerabilities and priorities.
- Climate information is useful to inform and allow for seasonal flexibility in, livelihoods, development and disaster risk reduction (DRR) planning and decision making.
- Long term, continuous adaptation planning processes (as opposed to one off adaptation plans) will help to ensure that adaptation results in climate resilient development over time.
- Additional external resources should be mobilised at national and local level to ensure integration of adaptation into mainstream plans. These are not limited to finance, they include human resources, capacity building and research to inform and improve the quality of implementation

Learning Route

ALP's Emma Bowa's blog on the East African policy makers Learning Route: <http://bit.ly/1hyN8WD>

Learning Route video
<http://bit.ly/1gzrcik>

Useful links

CCAFS Learning Route Blog from CCAFS Catherine Mungai:
<http://bit.ly/PX2r5v>

CBA 7 focuses on mainstreaming into planning



Over 250 participants from various backgrounds and organisations came together in Bangladesh in April 2013 at the 7th International CBA Conference hosted by International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) to discuss issues of mainstreaming Community Based Adaptation (CBA) into international, national and local planning and processes.

CARE's ALP programme and the Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance (ACCRA) convened a session focused on mainstreaming CBA into local government development plans and processes. The approximately 100 worldwide participants who attended shared their experiences, challenges and successes from different parts of the world, including local government staff from Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, Ethiopia, Mozambique and South Africa among others. The discussions generated a set of lessons, which were further related to how they strengthen local adaptive capacity, in terms of improving assets, institutions, knowledge, innovations and decision making processes.

Session outcomes

- Poor systems of implementation are a result of weak knowledge of and capacity for CBA, and inequality and exclusion at community level.
- Access to needed assets and resources is the most common barrier for adaptation.
- Legislation for and implementation of decentralised decision making should be strengthened to ensure local government has the skills, knowledge and finances needed for effective and equitable resource allocation and monitoring.
- Empowerment and meaningful participation of vulnerable groups, with sharing and learning at all levels and across sectors should be encouraged, ensuring upward and downward accountability.
- It is important to address unequal power dynamics in communities in terms of ownership, accountability, discrimination against women and exclusion of vulnerable groups.

Mainstreaming CBA vs Business as usual?

The impacts of climate change itself imply a number of changes to business as usual planning. The features emerging include:

- Local governments require a good understanding of the longer-term benefits of CBA, including what can be achieved with limited and local resources. They need capacity and tools for practical measures to integrate CBA - from climate risk and vulnerability assessments to screening plans and priorities against current and future climate projections, to measuring outcomes. They also need to take into account and respond at all levels to the climate vulnerabilities and adaptation strategies identified by different vulnerable groups.
- Uncertainty and the localised nature of climate change impacts require continued processes of mutual learning between government, communities and other actors. Planning requires integration of different stakeholders' knowledge and experience across all sectors.
- Climate change creates new criteria for priority setting and planning - short term, seasonal and much longer time horizons than the usual 1 to 5 year government cycles.
- Local development plans should be based on both meteorological and local forecasts and observations.
- Strengthening community based organisations will help to ensure inclusion, local ownership and likelihood of successful adaptation.
- Development of planning systems coordinated with disaster risk reduction and early warning will enable greater flexibility and coherent services to communities, with greater chance of securing livelihoods even when extreme climate events occur.

Adaptive capacity

Strengthening adaptive capacity is essential to effective integration of CBA into planning. Assets and information are vital for effective development planning. Climate specific trends and forecasts ensure plans are climate resilient, while information on community vulnerabilities, capacities and

priorities ensures they are community based. Local innovation rather than pre-determined solutions are important for responding to local differences and uncertainties of climate change. Improving decision making through the use of climate information will be essential in the face of changing uncertainties at different timescales. Strong institutions, linkages and governance enable transparency, accountability, inclusion and the multi-actor engagement needed for working collectively across sectors and levels.

Mainstreaming of CBA has significant implications for development planning cycles and the autonomy of local governments to be able to make timely responses to climate change impacts as they occur. Strengthening the basic principles of good governance at the local level, together with a focus on adaptive capacity would provide the necessary foundation but is not sufficient. For successful mainstreaming of CBA into planning, sufficient investment must be committed over a longer time frame and allocated in ways that allow for well informed and flexible decision making at the lowest possible level. If this can be achieved, the most climate vulnerable people will become better able to realise secure and more resilient livelihoods.

Adapted by Fiona Percy and Nicola Ward from Reid, H., C. Coirolo, K. Christensen, A. Fenton, E. Roberts, C. Stott, A. Stubbings and H. Wright (eds) (2013) *Community Based Adaptation: Mainstreaming CBA into National and Local Planning. Conference Proceedings. 7th International Conference, 18-25 April 2013, Dhaka, Bangladesh. IIED/BCAS, London/ Dhaka.*

**Fiona@careclimatechange.org
nward@careclimatechange.org**

Useful links

<http://www.iied.org/cba7-7th-conference-community-based-adaptation-climate-change>



Vulnerability monitoring system in Niger

Community monitor of Baadaré (Soly Tagris Commune) presenting CAAP © Harouna Hama, July 2013

Niger has been affected by increasing frequency of droughts which have resulted in food crises. The most recent occurrences were in 2005, 2009 and 2011. As the climate changes, hazards like floods and strong winds are posing additional challenges to communities' lives and livelihoods. Early warnings to inform disaster risk reduction and emergency response plans are becoming more important for enabling greater resilience and maintaining food security.

Community systems for Early Warning and Emergency Response (EWS, named SCAP-RU in Niger), have been developed to enable more accurate and timely responses to disasters. Often supported by NGO programmes in Niger, the EWS aims to increase the capacity, role and responsibility of communities in anticipating and managing hazards and disasters as they occur. The EWS engages communities in collecting information in four key livelihood areas: food security, health and nutrition (human and livestock), environment and natural resources, and social relations. A fifth area has been added to record information on the climate situation. This includes weather monitoring using rain gauges installed in 20 communities, managed by the community vulnerability monitors in Dakoro Department, Maradi Region, Niger.

Each community selects a committee of people responsible for monitoring. They use localised standard indicators with four levels of alert (normal, warning, alarm and emergency) which they determine depending on the severity of the information received and the effectiveness of current coping strategies. The community decides in advance on appropriate responses and the most effective ways of implementing the responses for each alert level.

Institutional linkages

Key factors that determine the effectiveness of community responses to the alerts they generate are ensuring the institutional linkages and relations between community, district, regional and national levels are functioning well and building of trust between community and formal systems.

At the national level, the early warning system within the national plan for prevention and management of food crises regularly produces and disseminates information collected by a sub-regional committee for prevention and management of food crises. The sub-regional committee ensures the overall institutional framework that links the local to the national level, mobilizes resources and national stakeholders, and monitors early warning and emergency response activities.

Vulnerability monitoring observatories were established at local government level to record community information received, provide advisory support and share external information to the committees. In case the capacity to respond is insufficient, the issue is taken up at regional and national levels through the national plan for prevention and management of crises. This system is enabling more localised and better informed decision making for responses that are within the capacity of community and commune level. It also enables a functional link between the community EWS and the national level, enabling the uptake and incorporation of community generated information in developing local disaster risk reduction measures.

Results

Integration of community EWS into the sub-regional committee for prevention and management of food crises recognizes the responsibility and key role of local institutions

in prevention and management of disaster risks. Interaction between the two levels is creating a stronger relation between community knowledge and observation of livelihood conditions, and is leading to recognition of the value of recording change in the five indicators, including the influence of climate change and its localised impacts on all aspects of life. This strengthens the capacity of local actors to reduce risk and have better control over their lives even as the climate continues to vary. The linkage also means that relevant external knowledge can be introduced by regional and national level institutions, enabling more exchange of knowledge and expertise at the local level that support emergency response.

Recommendations

The information produced through the EWS system is valuable not only for deciding emergency responses, but as a core input into commune level planning. Rainfall information, climate forecasts and all the community level vulnerability information produced can be used in both the EWS system and the formal commune development planning processes. More emphasis will need to be placed on strengthening capacities for the wide range of stakeholders involved. But, if these two systems can be further integrated, the communes would be able to support integration across their development planning – ensuring actions are climate resilient – together with related and targeted risk reduction measures and finally emergency responses where these become necessary. In this way successful adaptation to climate change and greater long term resilience can be realised.

Awaiss Yahaya, ALP Niger Project Manager
yawaiss@co.care.org

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Reflection on CBA from decision makers

Women presenting CAAP © Harouna Hama, Sept. 2013.

ALP has brought local governance to the grass-roots in terms of decision making, sharing of information in addition to bringing stakeholders together in formulation of action plans.

D.M. Asare - Garu Tempene, District National Disaster Management Organization NADMO Officer, Ghana

Community Monitors are doing well, they are always knocking at our door and we are using them to facilitate the community adaptation action plans which we are planning on scaling up as part of the Mid-Term Development Plan. Before we did a bit of community consultation but it wasn't enough. Now the DAs are part of the preparation of the CAAP's, they have been trained on understanding the CAAPs. The District Commissioner sat in on the last day of PSP planning and asked to mainstream it across planning activities, so we have budgeted for this and plan to hold PSP again this year.

Andani Iddrisu - Garu Tempene, Planning Development Officer, Ghana

The most important thing about PSP is the value it has added to my work. Now I am able to use climate information to plan community trainings that are relevant to the probable impact scenarios. Before this I used to do needs based trainings with no consideration of how the climate would look like. When I consider the possible scenarios I am able to align trainings and field assessments based on these scenarios as well as factor the information in the plans. I am now more flexible in my planning since I know that each season is different.

Joel Okal - Sub County Livestock Production Officer – Ladgera, Kenya

Encouraging communities to use climate communications is important and this is possible if they are a part of the process of generating information and advisories, and not just receiving the end product. This has been well demonstrated by ALP's Community Based Adaptation approach.

Alex Alusa, Climate Change Advisor, Office of the Vice President, Kenya

The role of government in development and adaptation should be as partners and facilitators, through participatory and inclusive processes that allow for collective planning, as opposed to imposing prescriptive activities. In this regard, government investment should be based on community priorities and allow for community led and community owned processes and initiatives that contribute to their adaptive capacity

Kenneth Ruteere, County Director of Planning, Garissa County - Kenya

The process will help Azagor commune to conform to the new national policy on revising the commune development plans. Integration of local plans in the commune development plan allows the consideration of everyone's concerns on climate change and so I think that the most vulnerable people, who are involved in the process, will feel more comfortable in the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of identified and budgeted actions. We will execute the plan at commune level for the benefit of the people. We urge ALP to continue with the other communes in order for the CBA approach to be fully taken up by the whole of the Dakoro Department, for the benefit of the most vulnerable.

Monsieur Ountéini Congeoie, the Prefect of Dakoro Department, Niger

After just over three years we are hearing and seeing all the benefits which communities in Azagor are gaining from implementing adaptation actions. We are proud to say these benefits are a result of applying our local knowledge and expertise, not simply given to us from outside. Integration of community planning into our commune development plan has been timely and places our commune at the forefront, as pioneers across the country. Together with ALP Niger we have conducted a process which was one of the most participatory and inclusive. The community participation we saw throughout the process will mean they are better able to implement the actions and without requiring a high level of resources. We will make every effort, my colleagues and I to see these actions implemented despite the modest means at our disposal and hope to work together to achieve the expectations of the communities.

Alkassoum Djaddah, Mayor of Azagor Commune, Niger



Niger adopts vulnerability and risk analysis as a planning tool

ALP baseline analysis © Awais Yahaya, June 2010

Empowering communities to take action based on their own decision-making processes enhances their resilience to climate change impacts. Integrating the needs of vulnerable and marginalized communities in national adaptation strategies is significant for governments.

In 2011, Niger government, through the National Committee of Environment for Sustainable Development (CNEED) designed a new guide for formulating commune development plans that recognises climate change as a critical issue for the country. The guide seeks to take into account people's concerns on climate change and how to deal with it through the development of adaptation actions. The planning system recognizes the risks imposed by the climate on various livelihood sectors.

In implementing this planning approach, the Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP), working in Dakoro Department of Niger, supported Soly Tagris and Azagor communes to revise their commune development plans (PDC) taking the impacts of climate change into account. In Azagor, engagement in PDC revision was done to align their plan to the new national climate change policy. The PDC revision process involved all stakeholders in Dakoro Department and Azagor communes, including; technical services at department and community level, municipal leaders, representatives from traditional authorities, civil society

organizations and representatives from community based organizations. The revision also incorporated concerns which emerged during the development of Community Adaptation Action Plans (PACA in French: Plan d'Action Communautaire d'Adaptation). The PACA are the result of a Community Based Adaptation (CBA) planning approach, which involves participatory analysis of vulnerabilities and capacities, identification and screening of adaptation options and community agreement of priority adaptation actions.

The PDC revision process involved training actors on climate vulnerability and capacity analysis as a tool for integrating climate change in development planning. Training covered the CBA approach emphasising a participatory and inclusive process involving all genders and age groups (men, women and youth) based on diversity considering ethnicity, agro-ecological zones and geographical distribution at community level. An additional focus on gender differentiation aimed at taking into account different opinions and concerns regarding adaptation to climate variability and change. Information gathered during development of the PACAs was reported back to the Commune Council (which brings together municipal leaders who represent the communities), the Prefect of Dakoro department and traditional authorities. After validation, the information was integrated into the existing PDC for Azagor commune with budgets set aside for actions

emanating from the PACAs. The process of developing the PACAs has emphasised both individual and community ownership and responsibility for ongoing adaptation.

Emerging lessons

Integration of PACAs in the local development plan encourages greater ownership and strengthens people's resilience by making them the main drivers in their responses to adverse effects of climate change. Local decision making on an ongoing basis is essential, given increasing climate change impacts and uncertainty, especially for the most vulnerable. Integration supports coherent local development actions for greater adaptability and improved livelihoods. Institutionalisation of participatory local planning enables consideration of concerns from the most vulnerable and promotes good local governance.

However, communes lack sufficient capacity (human, financial and technical) for implementation of the integrated PDCs and the PACAs which weakens support for adaptation actions. Municipal leaders are however putting more emphasis on advocacy actions to mobilize resources from technical and financial partners to enable the execution of the revised PDCs.

Sanoussi Ababale, ALP Niger Local Governance and Advocacy Officer
amsanoussi@co.care.org

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Guest Editor

Fiona Percy; Regional ALP Program Coordinator
CARE International, Box 2039 - 00202, KNH, Nairobi
Tel +254 20 2807000 / 4348347, ext 141
Email fiona@careclimatechange.org

Editorial Team

Esther Lungahi-Chief Editor-ALIN
Anthony Mugo-ALIN
James Nguo-ALIN
Sylvia Ogendo-ALP
Nicola Ward-ALP
Banner photo: Harouna Hama-ALP
Design & Layout: Ecomedia Limited

Adaptation Learning Programme

CARE International,
Box 2039 - 00202, KNH, Nairobi, Kenya
Tel+254 20 2807000 or 4348347, ext 181
Email alp@careclimatechange.org
Website <http://www.careclimatechange.org/adaptation-initiatives/alp>

Joto Afrika

Arid Lands Information Network
P.O. BOX 10098-00100 G.P.O.
Nairobi, Kenya
Tel +254 20 2731557
Fax +254 20 2737813
SMS +254 717032322
Email jotoafrika@alin.net
Website www.alin.net
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