

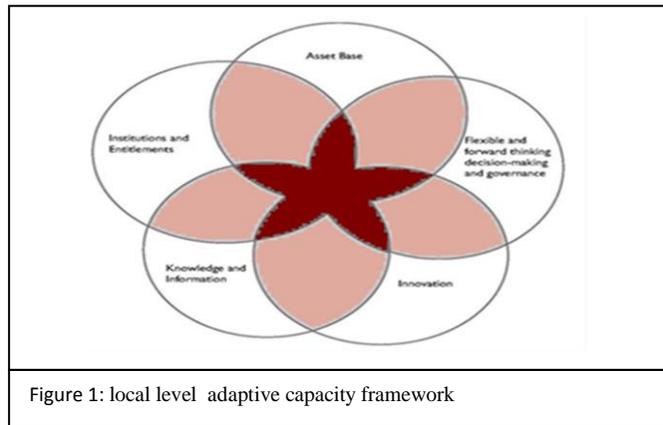
UNISDR Scientific and Technical Advisory Group Case Studies - 2015 What should adaptation interventions learn from DRR and development interventions? Case study from Ethiopia

The problem

The global politics on climate change has moved from a sole focus on mitigation towards the inclusion of adaptation as well (Giddens 2009). However, there is a tendency to look at adaptation as a finance and technology problem (Klein 2010), while in reality it is a social problem as well (Hulme 2008; Smit B 2001). As a future oriented social problem, uncertainty about the future makes characterization of best practices in adaptation and outcomes of current adaptation actions unknown (Füssel and Klein 2006). Hence, learning from current vulnerability and interventions with relevance for adaptation is essential. In this regard, DRR and development intervention could provide multiple lessons for adaptation from their relatively longer experience in the field (Cannon and Müller-Mahn 2010).

The science

Under the African Climate Change Resilience Alliance Project, the project authors chose three interventions on social protection, disaster risk reduction and livelihood protection implemented by partner non-governmental organizations in order to identify lessons for adaptation. The authors used the local level adaptive capacity framework (See Figure 1) developed by Jones, Ludi, and Levine (2010) to understand current vulnerability of beneficiary rural communities to climate risks and the relevance of the interventions in building their adaptive capacity and lessons that could be learned for future adaptation interventions. The framework hypothesizes that adaptive capacity is a function of well-built asset bases, continuous innovation, access to knowledge and information, flexible and forward thinking decision making and institutional setup and governance. The assessment was carried out using a qualitative approach with a multi-disciplinary research teams from Haramaya University in 2011 in three regions of Ethiopia. The final output was a summary report with a title "Preparing for the future? Understanding the Influence of Development Interventions on Adaptive Capacity at Local Level in Ethiopia Africa Climate Change Resilience Alliance (ACCRA) Ethiopia Synthesis Report", which could be accessed from: http://community.eldis.org/.5a35bbfb/Ethiopia_Synthesis_Report.pdf.



The application to policy and practice

The following four points summarize the important lessons for adaptation policy and practice from existing development and disaster risk reduction interventions.

1. **The importance of scale and scope of interventions:** Subsistence communities are vulnerable to multiple stresses with sources from multiple scales. Hence, adaptation interventions need to aim for holistic approach and intervention at multiple scales.
2. **The importance of information and knowledge for evidence-based decision-making:** Information and knowledge relevant for problem solving is highly fragmented, which necessitates synthesis and delivery through locally accessible channel.
3. **The importance of supporting people's agency:** The study shows that there are numerous local initiatives which could transform rural communities but missed to attract decision makers' attention at different levels. Hence, the prime challenge of adaptation interventions would be to locate and support local agency and initiatives.
4. **The importance of continuous process of learning and innovation:** The research also shows that even development and DRR intervention have never been without problems, they required continuous learning and innovation within the intervening organizations and the beneficiary communities, which adaptation needs to note of.

Did it make a difference?

The research team had no chance to follow up with the utilization of the research findings. However, the African Climate Change Resilience Alliance project has been using the findings to influence policy and practice at different levels. Examples include, the Ethiopian Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector and Environmental Protection Authority released policy briefs highlighting the findings of the research, text on CCA and DRM integration was included in the Government of Ethiopia's Disaster Risk Management Strategic Programme and Investment Framework, a training course, which drew on the research findings and which supported local level DRM and CCA planning was developed with the Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector. World Food Programme (WFP) funding allowed this to be rolled out across a number of the country's vulnerable districts. More on how the research outputs have been used could be found in the project website at: <http://community.eldis.org/accra/>

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