

CARE's Adaptation Learning Programme for Africa



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Nowhere on the planet are people more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change than in sub-Saharan Africa. The continent is already prone to erratic rainfall, droughts, floods and cyclones, and climate change will only exacerbate these ongoing challenges. At the same time, Africa is grappling with the burden of poverty, environmental degradation, inequitable land rights, heavy reliance on the natural resource base for livelihoods, and the HIV&AIDS epidemic - all of which limit the ability of people and institutions to adapt to climate change¹. Community-level research conducted by CARE in Africa indicates that climate change is already having significant impacts on food and income security, and that these impacts are particularly serious for women and other marginalized groups.

In response, CARE launched the Adaptation Learning Programme (ALP) for Africa in 2010. The programme is supported by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID), The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland and the Austrian Development Cooperation. Its overarching goal is to increase the capacity of vulnerable households in Sub-Saharan Africa to adapt to climate variability and change.

Towards this end, the ALP:

- **Develops and applies** innovative approaches to Community-Based Adaptation (CBA) to generate best practice models;
- **Empowers** local communities and civil society organisations to have a voice in decision-making on adaptation;
- **Promotes** best practice models for CBA among adaptation practitioners; and
- **Influences** national, regional and international adaptation policies and plans.

Working in partnership with local civil society and government institutions, the ALP is implemented in 40 communities across Ghana, Niger, Mozambique and Kenya. Learning from the programme will be shared with policymakers and adaptation practitioners across Africa and globally.

Gender equality and diversity constitute a particular focus for the ALP. Activities are targeted to ensure that benefits reach people in the most vulnerable socio-economic groups. These are identified through participatory analysis. The programme promotes the rights and responsibilities of men, women and others in adaptation activities. It empowers people in the most vulnerable socio-economic groups to take concrete action and to raise their voices in local, national and international planning and policy-making processes on adaptation.

¹ Background Paper on Impacts, Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change in Africa for the African Workshop on Adaptation. Implementation of Decision 1/CP.10 of the UNFCCC. Accra, Ghana, 21-23 September 2006. Commissioned by the UNFCCC Secretariat.

Programme Activities

Innovative approaches to Community-Based Adaptation

The post-2012 climate change agreement is likely to provide substantial new opportunities for supporting community-based adaptation. This is essential. However, many practical questions remain about how to implement fair and effective CBA.

The ALP builds on CARE's people-centred approach to adaptation, which combines successful strategies from our decades of development experience with scientific knowledge on climate change. The approach focuses on building adaptive capacity at the household and individual level by building resilience of livelihoods and reducing disaster risks, particularly for the most vulnerable groups. Advocacy and social mobilization to overcome the underlying causes of vulnerability are key elements of the strategy. The approach also recognises the importance of an enabling political and institutional environment for local action, and prioritises capacity development for local actors, as well as engagement in local and national governance to facilitate adaptation.

The ALP is applying and refining this approach to generate practical best practice models for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating CBA initiatives.

Empowering communities and civil society organisations in decision-making on adaptation

Many central governments in sub-Saharan Africa are transferring power and responsibilities to lower levels. As decentralization processes move forward, local plans and policies become increasingly important in creating an enabling environment for adaptation by vulnerable communities and people. A key lesson from past adaptation project experience is the importance of participation of communities in local governance. However, despite the potential of decentralization processes to provide opportunities for more inclusive planning, openings for participation are often limited, particularly for vulnerable socio-economic groups. Therefore, CARE partners with local stakeholders to facilitate a participatory and inclusive approach to local planning, in particular to ensure that the views of poor women and other marginalised people are incorporated into key decisions related to adaptation.



Promoting CBA best practices

The ALP countries must prepare for a range of changing climate hazards that include rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, and increasing droughts, floods and cyclones. The target communities in each country have a unique set of characteristics in terms of livelihoods strategies, access to resources and services, opportunities for diversification of livelihoods, and local governance processes and structures. The aim of the ALP is to demonstrate models of best practice for CBA that can be scaled up and replicated across a range of climate and socio-economic contexts. The programme will use learning networks and other innovative approaches to disseminate these models. A key outcome of the programme will be adoption of these best practices by civil society and government institutions across Africa and globally.

Influencing national, regional and international policies and programmes

The knowledge, capacity and networks generated by the ALP will help to identify the most efficient and effective ways to enable adaptation by the most vulnerable people. The programme and its partners will use these practical experiences to inform policy recommendations on adaptation funding mechanisms at international and national levels. In doing so, the ALP will contribute to creating an international framework for adaptation that supports CBA, and ultimately benefits the most vulnerable people. This will provide openings for other civil society organizations, local government institutions and communities to access the resources required to take action on adaptation.

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