ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION IN MULTI-STAKEHOLDER LANDSCAPES

Utrecht, the Netherlands
7th December 2017

INTRODUCTION

This report details the proceedings of the seminar "Adapting to climate change: Community-based adaptation in multi-stakeholder landscapes", held in Utrecht on 7th December 2017. This conference was co-organised by LANDac - the Netherlands Land Academy - and Utrecht University' and NWO's research programme "Towards more inclusive, cooperative and participative climate change interventions in Kenya, Ghana and Burkina Faso".

SUMMARY

The central theme of the seminar was to better understand bottom-up, participatory, community-based approaches to adapting to climate change. These are commonly presented as a requirement for successful interventions - but communities themselves are often implied as abstracted, isolated, homogenous and static units, through which resilience is automatically strengthened. In reality of course, they are in fact sites of internal conflict and changing patterns of cooperation. They exist in complex, multi-stakeholder landscapes where competing claims to natural resources are intertwined in fragile and sometimes violent relations between different livelihoods, ethnicities, gender, generation and political affiliations, with, in many instances, very different definitions of sustainability.

There is very little critical reflection on what we can really learn from local communities and their indigenous or local knowledge systems. What roles do local communities play in global climate change adaptation? Are bottom-up approaches really community-centred, or even effective? Can climate adaptation projects exacerbate conflicts?

This conference featured discussions about the role of communities in adaptation, as well as the position of other stakeholders (such as private or state actors) who often compete with involved communities over access to scarce natural resources, such as land. Land has traditionally been a local asset whereas it is now increasingly considered a public asset. This often means that adaptation interventions (the climate adaptation project itself) can be the cause of new problems - notably the exclusion of certain groups ostensibly for the sake of others. Discussion was guided by the question: how to make adaptation interventions more participatory, inclusive and conflict-sensitive?

KEY NOTE: ARUN AGRAWAL

In his keynote address, Professor Arun Agrawal from the University of Michigan in the United States made links between *social protection* and climate adaptation: both seek to reduce poverty and vulnerability, while increasing resilience to external shocks. Agrawal is particularly interested in the overlap between the two, and the extent to which they can reinforce one another.

There is a danger that climate change will undermine development gains (which are, fundamentally, the aims of social protection program), Agrawal reminded us: many households who have escaped poverty in recent years could fall back into poverty due to climate risk. This highlights the logic of making the linkages between social protection and climate adaptation - and Agrawal also pointed out that, with far more money than would ever be available for adaptation already being spent on social protection, it would make economic sense to think about how social protection can be strengthened to support climate resilience goals.

So how to do this? Agrawal used examples from a study (conducted together with IIED) of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which is a social protection program implemented by the Indian government. In many cases, the study found that social protection already strengthens absorptive resilience (the ability of households to deal with infrequent and low magnitude risks) through mechanisms such as guaranteed wages and the provision of public infrastructure. For social protection to truly help deal with adaptive resilience (the ability of households to change and improve their coping strategies in response to risks) would require institutional strengthening and significant investment in fundamentally new livelihood opportunities.

Agrawal's key message was that, in order to make sure adaptation to climate change does not become socially harmful, interventions should be combined with other development instruments that together bring gains whilst also protecting those who are at risk of losing out. At the same time, greater emphasis should be put on "everyday adaptation" - the strategies that households employ every day in order to deal with climatic changes - rather than simply directing money and resources into localised "adaptation" projects which at best improve conditions at minute geographical scale, and at worst create or exacerbate conflicts between local users.

CHALLENGES

Sebastiaan Soeters leads the TICCI (Towards more inclusive, participatory and conflict-sensitive climate change interventions) project from Utrecht University. The project aims to enhance the adaptive capacity to climate change of small-scale farmers and pastoralists in the arid and semi-arid regions of Burkina Faso, Ghana and Kenya. After four years of research, Soeters highlights four major challenges in community-based adaptation:

- How can we continue to promote bottom-up adaptation approaches whilst also recognizing that communities themselves are heterogeneous, complex constructions, within which could exist conflict and inequity?
- How do we work with communities in landscapes where multiple communities are present, sedentary and mobile, who compete for access to natural resources?
- What guarantees that what communities do and how they change the way they use natural resources for strengthening short term resilience, is sustainable? Is there evidence that supports the notion that communities make sustainable decisions regarding the use of natural resources?
- How can we take community-based approaches to climate change adaptation to scale?

THE LANDSCAPE APPROACH

Throughout the day, discussions returned again and again to "the landscape approach" as a way to both address climate change and enhance community resilience - of all those who are part of the landscape. It is a holistic, integrated, cross-sectoral approach which aims to optimise synergies between different components of a landscape, whilst at the same time minimising trade offs.

The landscape approach - also known as integrated landscape management - is not entirely new, but rather is experiencing a

resurgence in popularity, with a seemingly updated interpretation. As Stanley Kimaren of ILEPA pointed out, landscapes have traditionally been considered as "ecological zones devoid of social networks" - what is perhaps new in today's understanding of a landscape approach is that the people are as much a part of the landscapes wihtin which they exist as are the trees, animals and ecosystems. Cora van Oosten of CDI Wageningen emphasised this, using the example of the border area between Djibouti and Ethiopia where local pastoralists migrate between town and country depending on the climatic conditions, harnessing the adaptive capacity of the landscape. This is an example of the socioeconomic engaging with the ecological; the flexibility of the communities in the face of landscape change is in itself an adaptation technique, said van Oosten.

At the same time, Rene Verburg highlighted the importance of the ecological services that landscapes provide, such as carbon storage, soil conservation and water management, which can be harnessed for climate adaptation and mitigation. Though ideas of exactly what constitutes a landscape approach differed, everyone was agreed that horizontal integration was necessary.

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

After the morning session, participants joined short breakout sessions where smaller and more specific group discussions took place.

A human right's based approach to resilience (ActionAid)
In this session, Harjeet Singh presented a resilience framework developed by ActionAid that helps design programmes to build the capacities of communities. It has been developed to help understand the vulnerabilities of communities to different risks, and the opportunities that can be derived from this.

It's not a game: Communities dealing with climate risks at different scales (CARE International)
The upstream-downstream game, is a low-tech game that can be played with community members, or landscape representatives, to facilitate dialogue on the effects of land use practices in a watershed. Within minutes of the game, it becomes clear that upstream logging has effects on downstream floods and droughts, which sparks discussions around upstream reforestation, paying for ecosystem services and risk mechanisms for downstream farming. The session was well perceived, as it clearly showed how this could be an effective tool for dialogue within and across communities to create a better understanding of landscape level dynamics.

From communities to landscapes: Rethinking climate change adaptation for conflict sensitivity in African drylands (TICCI)
Discussions in this session discussed the extent to which climate adaptation interventions may have unintended impacts beyond the temporal and/or spatial parameters of the project. The presentations demonstrated that adaptation interventions aimed at addressing the negative impacts of climate change in African drylands, work to change the configurations of the distribution of access to, and control over, scarce natural resources, both between and within communities.

Supporting community-based adaptation: An overview of methodological approaches and advancements (ITC Twente)
This session focused on how different types of information can be used to aid decision-making in the context of climate change adaptation, in particular in relation to ensuring that vulnerable groups are represented and accounted for in decision-making, and designing adaptation strategies which enjoy wide stakeholder support. Discussions were had on the uses for modelling and data in designing adaptation strategies, and on the transferability of results - can methodologies be replicated, and if so, how?

Playing CARE's Upstream-Downstream Game

Challenges and opportunities for land governance in the context of climate change (Utrecht University)
This session dealt with challenges and opportunities for land governance in the context of climate change. Presentations and discussions explored the gap between the Paris Agreement and the SDGs, as well as the role and involvement of CSOs and communities, and climate variability in the Sahel.

KEY NOTE: JUN BORRAS

At the end of the day, participants came together in a closing plenary session to hear Professor Jun Borras of the International Institute of Social Studies in the Netherlands call for a deeper, broader and more systematic embedding of land-based climate change mitigation and adaptation politics within a social justice perspective. When we talk about adapting to climate change, Borras said, there is a lot of focus on increasing productivity and resilience, and reducing emissions. There is less attention paid to equity and social relations - or to the idea of justice.

Borras emphasized that problems such as climate change, as well as displacement, environmental degradation and the destruction of local livelihoods are all inter-related and inter-connected: the solution to such problems, then, must also be holistic (as also called for by proponents of the landscape approach). To illustrate this, Borras reminded the audience that even if we focus on a successful local adaptation project, the gains from this could be cancelled out by nearby logging, or agribusiness, or mining - in order to really make changes that will help humanity adapt to climate change, we need to think big, to harness the power of interconnections between natural resources, between livelihoods, between people. Otherwise, we will end up celebrating scattered victories while the entire system that has generated - and, arguably, perpetuates - climate change and social injustice remains in place.

Climate adaptation can thus not be separated from discussions on agrarian justice - understanding who accesses, owns and controls the natural resources that are under threat - or that are being protected - by climate adaptation projects is the first step, but more than that, an adequate response to the issues of land distribution and climate change would require redistribution, recognition and restitution. In closing, discussion on whether or not this was possible. "Social reform is difficult", he said "but not impossible - and when such deep reforms finally unfolded, they were always unexpected."

THE WAY FORWARD

This conference aimed to make a contribution to understanding the links between community participation in development, and specifically climate change adaptation - what is the impact of - and on - local power relations, and inter- and intra-community conflict and cooperation? And to what extent do "traditional" climate change interventions enhance people's adaptive capacity?

Climate change itself is by no means a new phenomenon. Many communities have lived with fluctuating climate for years and have learned to adapt to this - for such solutions we need only look to the local level. As “experts”, we often find it difficult to let go of control and recognise that the very people we are trying to help are frequently able and willing - with or without support - to help themselves. This is a matter of trust - of recognising the capabilities of local knowledge and institutions, rather than acting as “experts” and imposing top-down technocratic fixes. At the same time, in designing adaptation interventions, we must be aware of the heterogeneity of communities. Bottom-up, participatory, community-based approaches are commonly presented as a requirement for successful interventions, yet the "communities" themselves are increasingly implied as abstracted, isolated, homogenous and static units, through which resilience is automatically strengthened. In reality, we know very well that communities are also sites of internal conflict and changing patterns of cooperation.

The complexity of climate change, "the community" and conflict as separate entities is already immeasurable; at the nexus of these, designing truly conflict-sensitive adaptation and mitigation mechanisms will be no easy task, and will require extensive collaboration between sectors, across disciplines and beyond national borders.

PROGRAMME

0830 – 0900	***Registration and arrival (coffee) – 55 people***	
0900 – 0915	**WELCOME AND OPENING** ***Kanunnikenzaal*** Chairs: Annelies Zoomers, Utrecht University and LANDac and Sebastiaan Soeters, Utrecht University	
0915 – 1015	**KEY NOTE: SOCIAL PROTECTION AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE** ***Kanunnikenzaal*** Arun Agrawal, University of Michigan **DISCUSSION AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**	
1015 – 1030	***Coffee – 55 people***	
1030 – 1145	**PANEL DISCUSSION** ***Kanunnikenzaal*** **KEY CONTRIBUTIONS – WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES FOR/OF COMMUNITY-BASED CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION?** Chair: Annelies Zoomers Sebastiaan Soeters, Utrecht University Cora van Oosten, Wageningen University Anne te Molder, CARE International Rene Verburg, Utrecht University	
1145 – 1200	***Coffee – 55 people***	
1200 – 1300	**ACTION AID: A HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO RESILIENCE** ***Kanunnikenzaal*** Chair: Harjeet Singh, ActionAid	**IT'S NOT A GAME: COMMUNITIES DEALING WITH CLIMATE RISKS AT DIFFERENT SCALES (CARE'S EXPERIENCE)** ***Sterrenkamer*** Chair: Anne te Molder, CARE International
1300 – 1345	***Lunch – 55 people***	
1345 – 1515	**FROM COMMUNITIES TO LANDSCAPES: RETHINKING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION FOR CONFLICT SENSITIVTY IN AFRICAN DRYLANDS** ***Kanunnikenzaal*** Chair: Sebastiaan Soeters, Utrecht University • **'Towards inclusive climate change interventions in African Drylands': Empirical learning from public and private sector adaptation practices in Northern Ghana, Burkina Faso and Kenya** Sebastiaan Soeters, Utrecht University • **Adaptation to adverse climate change effects: woody vegetation, source of hopes and conflicts in Burkina Faso** Babou Bationo, INERA • **Irrigation in Pastoral Landscapes: The case of Maji Moto Group Ranch** Patrick Twala and Stanley Riamit Kimaren, ILEPA • **Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Adaptation Interventions on Agro-Pastoral Dams: A case study in Northern Ghana** Ruben van Weesie, Utrecht University	**SUPPORTING COMMUNITY-BASED ADAPTATION: AN OVERVIEW OF METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES AND ADVANCEMENTS** ***Sterrenkamer*** Chair: Diana Reckien, University of Twente • **Adaptation to heat waves and heavy rainstorms in New York City: A survey determines perceived adaptation need and adaptation responsibility** Diana Reckien, University of Twente • **Integrating community-based knowledge and formal data-driven knowledge for decision-making in social-ecological systems** Sara Mehryar, and Diana Reckien, University of Twente • **Top down analysis for bottom up adaptation: filling knowledge gaps for data scarce environments of urban Sub-Saharan Africa** Eduardo Pérez-Molina, University of Twente • **A multi-level perspective on the role of social learning in climate change adaptation** Joanne Vinke-de Kruijf, University of Twente	**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR LAND GOVERNANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE** ***Belle van Zuylenzaal*** Chair: Mucahid Mustafa Bayrak, Utrecht University • **The Global Land Rush revisited – Current and future challenges in complex climate & land governance discourse** Suzanne Verhoog, VU University Amsterdam • **Green River – local people in charge, from the very beginning** Frank Heckman, Embassy of the Earth • **Multidecadal pattern** Timmo Gaasbeek, ZOA • **Drought policies by formalization of land and water rights combinations to deal with the consequences of climate change in the rural areas in China** Meine Pieter van Dijk, Erasmus University Netherlands
1515 – 1545	***Coffee – 55 people***	
1545 – 1600	**BOOK LAUNCH:** **PROPERTY RIGHTS AND CLIMATE CHANGE: LAND USE UNDER CHANGING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS** ***Kanunnikenzaal*** Fennie van Straalen and Thomas Hartmann, Utrecht University	
1600 – 1645	**KEY NOTE: THE CHALLENGE OF LOCATING LAND-BASED CLIMATE CHANGE MITIGATION AND ADAPTATION POLITICS WITHIN A SOCIAL JUSTICE PERSPECTIVE: TOWARDS A NOTION OF "AGRARIAN CLIMATE JUSTICE"** ***Kanunnikenzaal*** Jun Borras, International Institute of Social Sciences	
1645 – 1800	**CLOSING PANEL** ***Kanunnikenzaal*** **THE CHALLENGES OF INTEGRATING CLIMATE RESEARCH, PLANNING, AND ACTION ACROSS DIFFERENT LEVELS OF GOVERNANCE** Chairs: Sebastiaan Soeters, Utrecht University and Annelies Zoomers, Utrecht University and LANDac Joost Vervoort, Utrecht University Frits van der Wal, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Karsten Schulz, University of Trier Maarten van Aalst, Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre Arun Agrawal, University of Michigan	
1800 – 1830	***Drinks – 40 people***	
1830 – 2000	***Walking dinner – 30 people***	

ZAAL 024, UTRECHTS CENTRUM VOOR DE KUNSTEN

SIDE EVENT: SERIOUS GAMING WORKSHOP*

GAMING DELTA ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE: FUTURE SCENARIOS SERIOUS GAMING SESSION
Chair: Joost Vervoort, Utrecht University

**Prior registration required – register your interest by contacting landac.geo@uu.nl*

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