Communicating Climate Risks
Insights Gained through the ACCCA Project

Effective adaptation planning requires communicating information about climate change in a credible and relevant manner that builds determination across society to address climate risks. The need for appropriate communication of climate risks is particularly great in the developing world where vulnerability to climate change and variability is extensive and adaptation planning is lagging, stemming from poor understanding and awareness of the long-term impacts and implications of climate change on livelihoods and development, low institutional capacities to relay information, and lack of access to resources to support adaptation planning.

ADVANCING CAPACITY TO SUPPORT CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION (ACCCA)

Despite the critical importance of appropriate climate risk communication, most climate change information is presented in forms that are not readily usable by policy makers, vulnerable groups, and other stakeholders. Climate information does not always reflect decision making needs and priorities of stakeholders and is often presented at spatial and temporal scales that are too large to be of practical importance.

The recently completed ACCCA project was designed to address the need for developing appropriate risk communication strategies capable of supporting multi-sectoral, multi-stakeholder decision making for adaptation through pilot actions that:

- Identified and prioritized climate risks and other pertinent decisions faced by vulnerable groups;

- Synthesized and communicated information about climate risks in terms that were directly relevant to stakeholder concerns and decision-making needs; and

- Developed, tested and disseminated risk communication materials designed to assist decision-making about adaptation.

Tunisia/Niger - Drought vulnerability of pastoral and agropastorial communities in the Sahel

Mali - Sustainable water management in drought-prone areas

Burkina Faso - Building capacities to adapt to climate variability, extreme climatic events & climate change in urban & peri-urban areas

Ghana - *1*· Food security in rural communities
2· Capacity development and adaptation for human health vulnerabilities

Nigeria - Sustainable livelihoods of communities in coastal flood-prone areas

Ethiopia - Improving climate risk decision-making capacity of smallholder farmers in drought prone areas

Kenya - *1*· Adaptive capacity to water scarcity in dryland areas
2· Community-based adaptation to malaria
3· Improving decision-making processes through climate change scenario generation in the Kano Plains

Tanzania - Adaptation strategies & challenges in the Lake Victoria ecosystem

Malawi - Community-based adaptation for drought and flood risks

South Africa - Adaptation options for increased water scarcity risks to impoverished Mshayazafe settlements in Durban

Pilot Action Projects in Africa

KEY INSIGHTS ON CLIMATE RISK COMMUNICATION:

> Understanding the local decision making context for climate risk management and the baseline status of climate-related knowledge is essential for determining information needs and tailoring communication strategies. Difficulties were encountered in relaying technical and scientific information in an easy-to-understand manner because of the complexities of the subject and the tendency for the nature of the scientific information to become transformed during translation. However, the creative use of drama, songs, and storyboards aided the learning process and helped to diminish the inherent difficulties of relaying complex information.

> Social learning between project implementers and stakeholders, based on early and active stakeholder engagement, such as through participatory development and testing of risk communication material, is key to producing information that is relevant to stakeholders and that can empower them to act.

> An active dialogue between local communities and policy makers can enhance the ability of policy makers to integrate considerations of site-specific climate risks into planning processes.

Pilot Action Projects in Asia
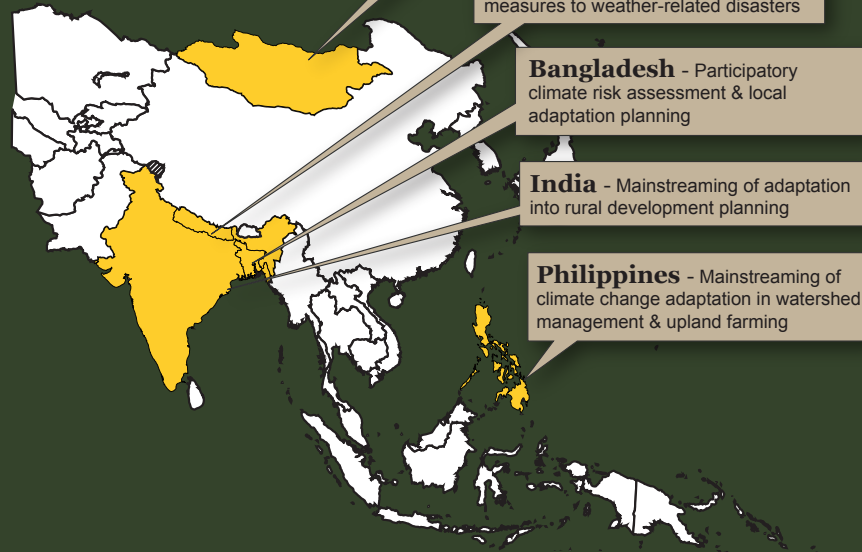
Mongolia - Adaptation strategies for pastoralist communities and rangelands

Nepal - Application of adaptation to measures to weather-related disasters

Bangladesh - Participatory climate risk assessment & local adaptation planning

India - Mainstreaming of adaptation into rural development planning

Philippines - Mainstreaming of climate change adaptation in watershed management & upland farming

> Interaction and learning-by-doing are essential for fostering stakeholder comprehension of key concepts, encouraging dialogue, and overcoming complexities in bridging science, policy-making, and practice. However, interactive processes require that diverse approaches be developed that reach multiple stakeholder groups with diverse backgrounds, educational levels, planning timelines, and priorities with respect to climate-influenced decision making.

> Developing clear and relevant climate risk communication messages requires collating large and often complex sets of information and knowledge from diverse sources.

EXAMPLES OF RISK COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES DEVELOPED THROUGH ACCCA

The risk communication strategies produced positive effects on several levels: community concerns were given voice through the multi-stakeholder dialogues with policymakers; the trainings and dialogues contributed to a growing realization among policymakers of the implications of climate change on sustainable development; and the participatory approach to developing and testing risk communication material enhanced local ownership over the learning process. The figures below indicate the types of communications tools used and their scale, whether local, national or international.

Brochure/Bulletin
Mongolia, India, Bangladesh, Philippines, Nigeria, Mali

Poster
India, Ghana, Nigeria, Nepal, Bangladesh

Project Magazine, Newspaper Articles
Philippines, Nigeria

TV & Radio Broadcasts
Philippines, Mongolia, India, Ghana, Tanzania, Nigeria

Powerpoint Presentation
Mongolia, Mali

Peer Reviewed Article
Kenya, Malawi, Philippines

Role-play, Drama & Music
Mali, India, Kenya, Ghana, Malawi

Group Discussions
Mongolia, Nepal, Bangladesh, Philippines, Ghana, Tanzania

Training of Trainers
Ghana, Kenya, Malawi

Videos
Malawi, Philippines, Mongolia, Kenya

Policy Briefs
Mongolia, Kenya

Stakeholder Audience:
International
National
Local

FEATURED ACCCA PILOT ACTIONS

MALI
**Identifying and Implementing
Responsive Water Management Actions**

Livelihood sustainability in Mali's savannah zone is vulnerable to disruptions from high seasonal and interannual rainfall variability and frequent drought, and will face increasing pressure from warmer temperatures and potential shifts in rainfall timing and distribution with climate change.

This pilot action explored links between climate risks, vulnerability and adaptation in the Sankarani and Baoulé river basins in southern Mali. The main purpose of the project was to help the members of three pilot communities to identify and implement promising water management innovations.

Scientific information about climate change was 'translated' into an understandable and accessible format using audiovisuals, theatre and music in local languages. The communication strategy expressed the communities' concerns, and raised awareness on the potential impacts of climate change in the region. In addition to the musical, a video showing proposed adaptation options was developed, and presented to the communities and national policy makers to stimulate a discussion on trade-offs.

Musical performance in Mali, lyrics in local language

Indian audience watching musical

Malawi, Mongolia and India featured pilot projects on back side. →

MALAWI
Audiovisual Tools for Community-based Adaptation: Bridging the Malawi Red Cross and Meteorological Services

Malawi experiences severe droughts and floods and is thus highly vulnerable to an increase in such extreme events with climate change. Recent advances in science and technology have brought about remarkable progress in the ability to develop seasonal and interannual forecasts that can help vulnerable groups better prepare for extreme events. Yet, because of inequities in the flow and use of information, the most vulnerable sectors of the population rarely benefit from the ability to anticipate future conditions. This project sought to strengthen capacity for adaptation of smallholder farmers in rural Malawi through the development, testing and dissemination of audiovisual tools that aimed to facilitate a transfer of local adaptation experiences and knowledge between vulnerable communities.

A partnership was created between the Malawi Red Cross, MetMalawi, the Malawi Institute of Management's Audiovisual Unit and International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis to involve local communities and Red Cross volunteers in the production of a video that incorporated local perspectives on communication of climate risks. In the process, members of local communities were trained in video production, the video was screened in several villages, and learning about climate risks was evaluated through questionnaires in target communities. Local-scale adaptation strategies were identified through this effort, and included crop diversification, development of irrigation sources, storms drains and use of elephant grass to reduce runoff impacts from heavy rainfall events, improved food storage methods, and flood alerts.

Malawi participatory video shown at neighboring community

MONGOLIA
Policy Framework for Adaptation Strategies for the Mongolian Rangelands

Fragmentation of cultural landscapes that have historically supported traditional nomadic pastoral systems in the arid and semi-arid areas of Mongolia has reduced the ability of pastoral groups to manage climate risks, thus increasing their vulnerability to potential climate change.

This project sought to identify and develop local adaptation strategies for climate change on fragile rangelands and pastoral systems through encouraging participatory dialogue between scientists, herders, policymakers and local land officers. The target groups were herder communities from forest steppe, mountain steppe, steppe and desert steppe ecosystems, local land and government officers, young scientists and students, and government officials.

Participatory workshops, video making, and a brochure on "Adaptation Policy of Mongolian Dryland Rangelands to Climate Change" were key elements of the risk communication effort.

Participatory workshop with herders in Mongolia

Indian musical with risk communication poster in back

The videos featured adaptive rangeland and water management practices such as fencing of vulnerable riparian ecosystems, wetlands and water sources, hay making, and setting up legal communities. Ecological and pastoral land use problems, and social learning activities such as participatory workshops at community level were also documented in the video.

INDIA
Promoting Integration of Adaptation Strategies into Developmental Policies

Agriculture is the main source of livelihoods in the Bundelkhand region of central India. The region faces a number of constraints related to erratic rainfall, low soil fertility, soil erosion, limited irrigation facilities and degraded forests that adversely affect the region's agricultural productivity. Projected changes in rainfall and warming from climate change are likely to further aggravate these constraints.

This project targeted district-level planning agencies, rural communities, and local research institutions. The project assessed vulnerability of the agricultural and water sectors to current and potential climate change in the region; developed, tested, and validated risk communication materials through a multidisciplinary stakeholder engagement process; and identified and prioritized pragmatic adaptation actions using consultative methods.

Brochures were produced in both English and Hindi to communicate potential impacts of climate change and potential adaptation responses. In addition, a communications programme was developed that included a community gathering in which a poster describing climate change risks and possible adaptation options was presented, along with folk music containing lyrics pertaining to climate change and an interactive local theatre on the need for coordinated effort to address climate change. The chief narrator in the play involved the community audience in discussing solutions with experts and the village leaders. Community Radio sent its reporters to community gatherings to convert the public discussions on climate adaptation into radio programmes for broadcast.

ACCCA

The ACCCA Project was Managed by:

- **UNITAR** - The United Nations Institute for Training & Research, Climate Change Programme (CCP)
- **START** - the global change SysTem for Analysis Research & Training Secretariat, and its 4 regional centers in Bangkok, Beijing, Cape Town, and Dakar
- **SEI** - Stockholm Environment Institute
- **ENDA-TM** - Environnement et Développement du Tiers Monde

The ACCCA Project was Funded by:

- The European Commission—EuropeAid Cooperation Office (AIDCO)
- The UK Department of Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- The ETC Foundation, the Netherlands