



Based on a wide breadth of experiences with climate change impacts and adaptation strategies, practitioners from Africa, Asia, and Latin America discussed their local climate realities, identifying shared challenges and exploring what could be learned from one another to improve long-term considerations of climate change adaptation in arid and semi-arid lands in developing regions.

ADAPTATION IN SEMI-ARID AND ARID LANDS: LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

SUMMARY

The previous module covered a variety of topics, such as the use of small-scale technologies for adaptation, including their potential limits under increasing climatic variability; the diverse role of community institutions in enhancing adaptive capacity, including coordination, exchange of information, and training; the role of women in arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) to help increase the adaptive capacity of their families; and the question of whether or not the effectiveness of indigenous knowledge will suffer from climatic impacts, including how best to combine traditional with modern knowledge to increase effectiveness.

Despite the geographic diversity of the Learning Alliance participants, their discussions on climate change adaptation (CCA) exhibited similar perspectives and goals regarding best practices for policy design and implementation strategies to address existing and near-term impacts of climate change.





However, an important question remained with respect to adaptation: how to mainstream, finance and plan adaptation processes that incorporate no-regret strategies for today, while accommodating tools and processes that cater for the known and unknown of our future climate? This third and final module of the Learning Alliance focused on exploring these issues by drawing on Latin American examples and encouraging participants to share experiences from ASALs in their regions.

Introductory Materials

[Learning Alliance Module Outline](#), [Introductory Video](#), [Introductory Slideshow](#), [Getting Started Survey Results](#), [What the Learning Alliance Will Address](#), [Key Terms](#)

[Setting the Scene: Long-term Climate Change Adaptation Needs](#)

[How do Development Policies and Practices Address Long-Term Adaptation Concerns in Latin American Dryland Regions?](#)

[Long-term Adaptation Finance in Latin America: Fundo Clima](#)

[Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation in Latin American Drylands: Examples from Mexico and Brazil](#)

[Monitoring and Evaluating Climate Change Adaptation and Development in Latin America's Drylands \(Introductory Brief\)](#)

[VIDEO: Continued Needs for Climate Change Adaptation - Impressions from Bahia, Northeast Brazil](#)

ELLA Background Materials

[ELLA Guide: Improving Small Farmers' Adaptive Capacity in Semi-arid Regions](#)

[ELLA Brief: Water and Climate Change: Improving Access and Management in Semi-Arid Brazil](#)

[ELLA Brief: An Integrated Approach to Improving Adaptive Capacity: The Adapta Sertao Experience](#)

[ELLA Brief: Brazil's Public Policy Package for Successful Farmer Adaptation](#)

[ELLA Spotlight on Publications: Adaptation in Semi-Arid Regions](#)

[ELLA Spotlight on Arguments: Adaptation in Semi-Arid Regions](#)

[ELLA Spotlight on Organisations: Adaptation in Semi-Arid Regions.](#)



Key Discussion Questions:

Participants in Module 3 were guided by the following discussion topics, literature and questions:

- 1. Setting the Scene – Long-term Considerations:** What are the main issues that long-term CCA should address, and why? What, in your opinion are the main barriers for successful long-term adaptation, and how can they be overcome?
- 2. Mainstreaming Long-term CCA Strategies in Development Policies for ASALs:** Do you think that the Latin American case studies are good examples for development policies that strengthen adaptive capacity? Do you have examples of successful development policies that have increased adaptive capacity in your region or country? If yes, why and how have they performed? In terms of adaptive capacities, do you think they are equally developed in your region, or is one particular asset more prevalent than the others? What lessons do you think the Mexican and Brazilian examples provide? Please give us your critical assessment. Are there examples from your region where mainstreaming adaptation is underway?
- 3. Monitoring and Evaluating Climate Change in ASALs:** Do you know of interesting examples of M&E for climate change adaptation in ASALs? What are the main barriers and enabling factors for implementing M&E for climate change adaptation in ASALs?

Key Conclusions:

Online discussions pointed to the following key conclusions related to long-term climate change adaptation in ASALs in Africa, Asia and Latin America:

Setting the Scene – Long-term Considerations

- Broadly, the main issues for successful long-term CCA are clear political will at all levels of governance, direct involvement of local communities, sustained funding mechanisms that prioritise cross-sectoral interventions and solutions, and funding that is connected to private businesses that support the application of new CCA technologies
- However, long-term CCA considerations must offer an overarching framework that links and coordinates the multitude of complex climate-related subtopics with those of economics and development, so as to function coherently and effectively across all levels of governance
- To provide such a framework, participants called for the development of comprehensive climate action plans that have a scope of work reflecting the challenges, available resources, and socio-political will of each country. The role of science to catalyse the willingness to act (e.g. mitigation and adaptation policies) and organise (e.g. community-based strategies) was mentioned repeatedly across regions. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation was emphasised as critical to the tracking of programme progresses, playing a pivotal role in efficacy and reform (when needed)



- There was a call for climate-proofed infrastructure, access to scientific information for decision makers, and a lively civil society – with the latter acting as a key stakeholder in planning for a climate-ready future. Other participants pointed to very specific topics, such as the Green Climate Fund, technology transfer and early warning systems
- Policymakers can identify and scale-up effective examples for national climate action plans by developing evidence-based policies. Outputs from pilot projects, research and critical analysis within multi-stakeholder processes (including consultations) generate well-informed policies

Mainstreaming Long-term CCA Strategies in Development Policies for ASALs

- Reducing existing vulnerabilities and preparing for upcoming climate change impacts can only succeed in a context where pro-poor development strategies properly account for the manifold needs of communities in ASALs
- Case studies from Mexico and Brazil showed that mainstreaming CCA into development planning requires: (1) supporting policy and legal frameworks to institutionalise nationwide CCA (2) developing institutional arrangements (e.g. high-level committees) to facilitate policy mainstreaming (3) a leading institution, usually the Ministry of Environment, to spearhead efforts, and (4) sustained political will from the government
- As initiatives move from lab (pilots) to land (national CCA mechanisms), they often encounter fickle, conflicting political interests, which can result in well-intentioned efforts getting stranded short of effective implementation
- The overarching solution needed to address the shortfalls of CCA mainstreaming in national development strategies, as identified by participants, is to build networks between ministries, practitioners, activists and policymakers at the local and national level; strengthening pro-poor strategies over the short- and long-term, thereby serving both conventional and climate-related development goals

Monitoring and Evaluating Climate Change in ASALs

- In order to know whether CCA initiatives are on track to meet long-term goals, monitoring and evaluating (M&E) is essential
- This is true at all scales, from the project to the national level. Resolving issues related to M&E in ASALs, where socio-economic obstacles and climatic uncertainties are many, is of considerable importance to improving programmes and securing additional funding, domestically and internationally
- In most ASAL regions, CCA is considered a new concept, meaning that M&E of CCA is especially innovative and rare, with Bangladesh exhibiting the most sophisticated programme from participant countries
- Obstacles slowing CCA mainstreaming, as identified by participants, included: weak institutions, minimal alignment and coordination between ministries and monitoring agencies, low technical capacity, inability to scale up M&E from small- to medium-scale projects based on requirements from donors, and lack of inter-ministerial communication and technical training



Learning Focus of Module Three

For module 3, the majority of participants' contributions made it clear that it is not for lack of political will that policymakers and institutions are failing to engage in long-term climate adaptation planning in their countries. Rather, the issue rests on an insufficient understanding of the myriad of interlaced problems faced by ASALs, as well as the complex solutions needed to address challenges tomorrow, while not diverting funds away from the needs of today. Thus, the will and capacity to address such deeper challenges in adaptation planning are generally limited due to the scale of the task at hand, meaning the solution will likely be found in the strengthening of institutional capacities and cross-departmental cooperation.

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Discussion Topic One: Strengthening Rural Adaptive Capacity

This discussion encouraged participants to share their views regarding the main considerations for long-term climate change adaptation in ASALs. It was immediately apparent, across regions, that there are many issues within this complex topic, which is understandable given what has already been covered in previous sections.

“The main issues essential for progress and success in the long term are (i) clear political will at all levels - local community, national, regional and global - to invest commensurately in technologies that are appropriate for the climate change contexts to be addressed; (ii) direct involvement of local communities that bear the brunt of climate change in most semi-arid settings in the developing countries, meaning we need to systematically document the various indigenous knowledge systems. Such an approach should come with devolution of power, facilitating co-management regimes that will vary from place to place depending on situation and context, but all recognizing the need for incorporating action from both ends of the ‘governance continuum’; (iii) sustained funding mechanisms that look at interventions and solutions that are cross-sectoral by breaking down sectoral silos and barriers of funding agencies that still operate exclusively with forestry, fisheries, wildlife, agriculture, or water. They are ALL part of functional landscapes and ecosystems that have to synergistically add up to the WHOLE; (iv) funding is connecting private businesses to climate change adaptation financing as a way to support the application of new technology for adaptation - bringing in the enterprise angle as a way to incentivize those actors that want to address adaptation. The above issues, by not being satisfactory at the moment, are essentially the main barriers to long-term climate change adaptation.”

- Jimmiel Mandima, United States (USA)

However, long-term CCA also requires an overarching framework that links and coordinates the multitude of complex climate-related subtopics with those of economics and development, so as to function coherently and effectively across all levels of governance.

“Long-term climate change adaptation should address issues related to finance, insurance, infrastructure investment, effective information dissemination, new weather resistant crop seeds, precision technology for agriculture, effective methods for the integration of climate change policies into plans of action by incorporating these measures in the national economic and development plans. Thereby strengthening vulnerable communities to confront floods and droughts, devising alternative sources of livelihoods for the poor and vulnerable, and translating the benefits of growth into reduction of poverty levels through an inclusive growth.”

- Sarah Ahmed, India

To provide such a framework, participants called for the development of comprehensive climate action plans that have a scope of work reflecting the challenges, available resources and socio-political will of each country. The role of science to catalyse the willingness to act (e.g. mitigation and adaptation policies) and organise (e.g.



community-based strategies) was mentioned repeatedly across regions. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation was emphasised as critical to the tracking of programme progresses, playing a pivotal role in efficacy and reform (when needed). Additionally, in Zimbabwe, for example, there was a call for climate-proofed infrastructure, access to scientific information for decision makers, and a lively civil society – with the latter acting as a key stakeholder in planning for a climate-ready future. Other participants pointed to very specific topics, such as the Green Climate Fund, technology transfer and early warning systems.

“The main barriers for successful long-term adaptation are lack of finances, technology and government support. Most countries that face the greatest impacts of climate change are the developing countries that lack finances to implement adaptation programmes. Finances for adaptation need to be secured through the various international channels such as the Green Climate Fund. It is expensive for LDC’s to pay for Intellectual Property Rights and to carry out research on this. Technology should be affordable and accessible for all and governments should prioritize implementation of adaptation programmes. Setting up Early Warning Systems are essential if adaptation is to be effective, meaning access to information must be improved.”

- Kizita Shula Mwamba, Zambia

All of these components, although absolutely essential to long-term CCA, as a starting point they may already assume too much regarding the population and decision makers’ perception of climate risks. In many developing societies a great deal of uncertainty remains with respect to climate change and the time horizon of its impacts, meaning there is a concurrent need for continued public outreach and dialogue where socio-political doubt exists.

“The main barriers for successful long-term adaptation are lack of awareness amongst the general public and even sometimes political leaders about the seriousness of the implications of warming of temperature and climate change in the long run; in most developing countries the poor particularly are more concerned about their needs today rather than what is to come in the future and therefore their attitude to follow business-as-usual way of living.”

- Sarah Ahmed, India

“Acceptance issues are paramount – is climate change really happening? This can be addressed with stepping up awareness and sensitization. This is a significant barrier because CC is futuristic and abstract, meaning people are likely to resist the associated scientific conclusions.”

- Monica Chundama, Zambia

Once there is broad-based support for action on climate change, scaling-up to a national plan presents many pitfalls. How, then, can policymakers trust that they are scaling-up an effective policy when developing these national climate action plans, often treading into unfamiliar territory?



“By developing evidence-based policies. Policies that arise from desk reviews of case studies and expert technical inputs, alone, may be unable to sufficiently address long-term considerations in CCA. Outputs from pilot projects, research, and critical analysis within multi-stakeholder processes (including consultations) generate invaluable lessons and well-informed policies that work.”

- Simon Shomkegh, Nigeria

What’s more, despite the technical capacity and international experience of many multilaterals and NGOs, ASALs in developing regions have their own unique requirements that can challenge proven, effective strategies in non-ASAL regions.

“Climate change adaptation is indeed an extremely complex issue. It becomes all the more complex in the context of applicability of adaptation measures in the different arid and semi-arid regions of the world. Despite certain geographical and climatic similarities, there can be a number of cultural, ethical, economic, and political dissimilarities, which can hinder a smooth and seamless implementation of adaptation measures. All long-term climate change adaptation measures should first take these aspects into consideration to be more effective.”

- Sarah Ahmed, India

Lastly, the long-run policy uncertainties of climate change perplex even those working to shape said policies into more progressive mechanisms. The challenge at hand can be overwhelming, but participants pointed out the importance of using short-term achievements to inspire optimism for potentially daunting long-term efforts.

“Most of us are not scientists with ways and means to test and analyse our findings on this subject, so we rely on those scientific minds to decipher findings and then predict the outcome. And are we required to believe and to heed predictions on climate change? Even those in the scientific world have not the answers to what the outcome will be. And solutions are not always what we want to hear. Many times the answers to questions like the changing of climates can be found in the everyday lives of ordinary people and what effect it has on the overall populace of this earth. Already plants and animals are feeling the effect of this change of climates caused by humans. As for long-term goals, they should be achieved by short-term achievements. I work in rural Africa and one of the questions I ask at my presentations is how many trees are being replanted to replace the ones cut each day? Just to supply the heat for cooking and warmth? The responsibility of replenishing should not be shrugged off onto someone else or passed on to government. I use trees as an example; since we are the direct benefactors from the cutting of trees, it is then our responsibility to make sure they are replaced.”

- Garry Brooks, Canada



Discussion Topic One – Key Lessons

- Broadly, the main issues for successful long-term CCA are clear political will at all levels of governance, direct involvement of local communities, sustained funding mechanisms that look at cross-sectoral interventions and solutions, and funding that is connected to private businesses that support the application of new CCA technologies
- However, long-term CCA considerations must offer an overarching framework that links and coordinates the multitude of complex climate-related subtopics with those of economics and development, so as to function coherently and effectively across all levels of governance
- To provide such a framework, participants called for the development of comprehensive climate action plans that have a scope of work reflecting the challenges, available resources, and socio-political will of each country. The role of science to catalyse the willingness to act (e.g. mitigation and adaptation policies) and organise (e.g. community-based strategies) was mentioned repeatedly across regions. Additionally, monitoring and evaluation was emphasised as critical to the tracking of programme progresses, playing a pivotal role in efficacy and reform (when needed)
- There was a call for climate-proofed infrastructure, access to scientific information for decision makers, and a lively civil society – with the latter acting as a key stakeholder in planning for a climate-ready future. Other participants pointed to very specific topics, such as the Green Climate Fund, technology transfer and early warning systems
- Policymakers can identify and scale-up effective examples for national climate action plans by developing evidence-based policies. Outputs from pilot projects, research and critical analysis within multi-stakeholder processes (including consultations) generate well-informed policies.

Supplementary Materials

Participants were provided with the following resources in preparation for Discussion One:

- [Rethinking Adaptation for a 4°C World](#)
- [Building Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change in Less Developed Countries](#)
- [When Not Every Response to Climate Change is a Good One: Identifying Principles for Sustainable Adaptation](#)
- [Are There Social Limits to Adaptation to Climate Change?](#)
- [Four Reasons For Concern About Adaptation to Climate Change](#)
- [ELLA Brief: Setting the Scene: Long-Term Climate Change Adaptation Needs](#)

Participants did not share any additional resources and relevant organisations for this discussion.



Discussion Topic Two: Mainstreaming Long-term CCA Strategies in Development Policies for ASALs

As covered in previous sections, CCA in ASALs is a complex process that brings together diverse stakeholders with different opinions and incentives: politicians, technocrats, civil society, private sector, donors and the communities themselves. For this reason, much of their focus is on integrating adaptation into existing development policies and practices; after all, reducing existing vulnerabilities and preparing for upcoming climate change impacts can only succeed in a context where pro-poor development strategies properly account for the manifold needs of communities in ASALs.

We have seen throughout the Learning Alliance that ASALs in Latin America show considerable progress in reducing their vulnerability to climatic variability and change. Yet, integrating adaptation planning into a long list of other government objectives for vulnerable communities is a challenge, especially under significant budgetary constraints. In addition to participants' experiences with this challenge, this discussion also took a closer look at what Mexico and Brazil have achieved in terms of institutionalising CCA, and whether their actions have been successful in providing opportunities for mainstreaming.

"Climate change discourse in Zambia over the last decade demonstrates increasing acceptance that CCA is a development issue, requiring national-level planning efforts to mainstream this thinking into national development strategies. This has been an important progression from when CC was perceived to be solely an environmental issue. It does seem, however, that there is further need to understand specific adaptive capacities, including how they reinforce each other, if at all. In some areas cash transfers are being used to reduce individual's and families' vulnerabilities, but synergies related to how this can also benefit the adaptive capacity of households, for example, are not being explored. A constraining factor is the sectoral approach to development planning and resource distribution."

- Monica Chundama, Zambia

Related to this topic, other major concerns at the intersection of climate and development in many countries were infrastructure improvements, access to credit, poverty reduction and improved health care. When looking at specific examples from Brazil and Mexico, participants found many takeaways regarding how to mainstream climate initiatives within development policies.

The common steps identified in these two cases were as follows.

"The Mexico and Brazil examples show us that mainstreaming CCA into development planning requires: (1) supporting policy and legal framework for institutionalizing CCA at national level (2) developing institutional arrangements (high-level committees) to facilitate mainstreaming (3) a leading institution, usually the Ministry of Environment (4) political will from the government"

- Monica Chundama, Zambia



“Integrating climate change adaptation into development planning is not only a technical issue but also a great political affair. The overall growth and development of a particular area depends up on the flow of information and implementation policies from “Lab to Land”. In this respect, others should follow the examples of Mexico and Brazil.”

- Saon Banerjee, India

Although Mexico and Brazil were both equally applauded for their efforts, each offered different lessons to participants.

“In Mexico, the establishment of scientific advisory committees and improved engineering standards provided the necessary technical adaptive inputs in development projects and reduced environmental degradation. If these methods are effectively utilized throughout the development planning process, non-climate sensitive development projects will be reduced, meaning less vulnerability to climate change impacts and environmental degradation.”

- Simon Shomkegh, Nigeria

“I appreciate Brazil’s effort to create institutions by moving from policy to law. This is a good starting point for the mainstreaming process, which leads to sustainable CC adaptation. Despite these legal provisions, however, mainstreaming adaptation has not been successful. In fact, Brazil has performed better with regards to implementing mitigation actions over adaptation. In Ghana, CC adaptation issues are articulated in the national development policy framework - Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) 2010 - 2013. It provides for mainstreaming of CC issues by sector ministries, departments and local authorities. The major challenge is the lack of coordination and institutional fragmentation, just as in the case of Mexico. We need to build capacities at all levels and strengthen institutions to achieve sustainable CC adaptation.”

- Samuel Adoboe, Ghana

So, when ideas move from the lab to land, they often encounter the fickle tides of conflicting political interests, which can result in well-intentioned efforts getting stranded short of effective implementation.

“I would say that the examples from Brazil and Mexico illustrate that adaptation to climate change is much more than a technical endeavour. It is intrinsically a political process that depends on, and operates within, a great variety of actors, institutions and scales. It also shows that legal and institutional frameworks are important and needed, but not sufficient, to advance adaptation at the local level. Although new knowledge to understand and investigate these processes is welcomed, there is an urgent need to integrate different disciplines, approaches, discourses and epistemologies to adapt to climate change. This is a real challenge for the years ahead, providing avenues for renewed intellectual, academic and political engagements.”

- Rafael Martins, Belgium



The overarching solution needed to address the shortfalls of CCA mainstreaming in national development strategies, as identified by participants, is to build networks between departments and ministries that strengthen pro-poor strategies over the short- and long-term which serve traditional and climate-related development goals.

“Mainstreaming CCA is an important component to withstand the vulnerabilities that ensue, particularly in developing countries. The list of possible ways forward (see Bahadur et al 2010) encapsulates almost all the social and political lacunae that impede successful adaptation, even where adaptation policies are, by now, institutionalized in some form or other in most countries. Policymakers and practitioners must weave these suggestions for implementation through the national policies. Such a step would indeed change the outlook of considering adaptation as a ‘poor cousin’ to mitigation.”

- Sarah Ahmed, India

Discussion Topic Two – Key Lessons

- Reducing existing vulnerabilities and preparing for upcoming climate change impacts can only succeed in a context where pro-poor development strategies properly account for the manifold needs of communities in ASALs
- Case studies from Mexico and Brazil showed that mainstreaming CCA into development planning requires: (1) supporting policy and legal frameworks to institutionalise nationwide CCA (2) developing institutional arrangements (e.g. high-level committees) to facilitate policy mainstreaming (3) a leading institution, usually the Ministry of Environment, to spearhead efforts, and (4) sustained political will from the government
- As initiatives move from the lab (pilots) to land (national CCA mechanisms), they often encounter fickle, conflicting political interests, which can result in well-intentioned efforts getting stranded short of effective implementation
- The overarching solution needed to address the shortfalls of CCA mainstreaming in national development strategies, as identified by participants, is to build networks between departments and ministries, practitioners and policymakers, local and national actors; strengthening pro-poor strategies over the short- and long-term, thereby serving both conventional and climate-related development goals

Supplementary Materials

Participants were provided with the following resources in preparation for Discussion Two:

- [Building Adaptive Capacity to Climate Change in less Developed Countries](#)
- [Video: Continued Needs for Climate Change Adaptation in Drylands - Impressions from Bahia, Northeast Brazil](#)



- [How do Development Policies and Practices Address Long-Term Adaptation Concerns in Latin American Dryland Regions? An Interview with M.C. Lemos](#)
- [Second International Workshop on Mainstreaming Adaptation to Climate Change – Managing Adaptation Processes](#)
- [Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation into Development Planning: A Guide for Practitioners](#)
- [Mainstreaming Processes for Climate Change Adaptation: Collection of Best Practices](#)
- [Mainstreaming Climate Change Adaptation in Latin American Drylands: Examples from Mexico and Brazil](#)



Discussion Topic Three: Monitoring and Evaluating Climate Change in ASALs

In order to know whether CCA initiatives are on track to meet long-term goals, monitoring and evaluating (M&E) is essential. This is true at all scales, from the project to the national level. As will be shown, resolving issues related to M&E in ASALs, where socio-economic obstacles and climatic uncertainties are many, is of considerable importance to improving programmes and securing additional funding, domestically and internationally.

In most ASAL regions, CCA is considered a new concept in and of itself, meaning that M&E of CCA is especially innovative and rare.

“The design of M&E systems for CCA programmes is an area that needs to be explored and developed in arid regions. Some monitoring work may be possible, but adaptation-specific systems, with clearly verifiable indicators, are not yet common as compared to other human development issues like HIV/AIDS. I think this can be attributed to the relative newness of CCA as a concept (where work is still being done to establish best practices in key areas like M&E).”

- Simon Shomkegh, Nigeria

As developing countries with ASALs struggle to build sufficient M&E know-how, it is understandable that the obstacles encountered along the way are many.

“In Ghana, we are just beginning to implement ASAL adaptation projects, so there are no specific examples to share. The National Adaptation Strategy, launched last year, envisages that an M&E system will be established at the Ministry of Environment under the Climate Change Committee to monitor national programmes. At regional and district levels, monitoring will be integrated with existing structures and systems. There are already difficulties monitoring existing, non-CCA programmes and projects, at all levels, due to resource constraints: human, financial, logistics etc. In my opinion, it will be even more difficult to monitor CCA programmes because of weak institutions, as well as poor mainstreaming of adaptation in planning and monitoring processes.”

- Stephen Awuni, Ghana

In addition to weak institutions and poor CCA mainstreaming, other obstacles identified by participants included: minimal alignment and coordination between ministries and monitoring agencies in Bangladesh; low technical capacity in Nigeria; scaling-up M&E from small- to medium-scale projects based on requirements from donors; and lack of inter-ministerial communication and technical training in Zambia. Based on participant responses, Bangladesh was deemed to have the most sophisticated national M&E project.



“Bangladesh has an M&E prototype for CCA providing impact evaluations, broad development trends, and evidence-based decision-making for leadership. Unfortunately, coordination between ministries and monitoring agencies is insignificant. Despite this shortcoming, the M&E planning unit provides dynamic services and a qualified staff, with adequate knowledge of project formulation, project documentation, and the implementation needed to carry out CCA activities.”

- Mousumi Pervin, Bangladesh

Although participants had minimal national-level experience, village-level M&E lessons were shared.

“M&E is so important to any project - be it large or small. The actual exercise of M&E can be very simple or so complicated that it bogs itself down. Most of our projects are on the smaller side and are internally funded. It works very well at the village level, but if funders are involved they often roll their eyes at our clear, one-page reports. I must admit that the M&E of our projects is perhaps our weakest point; not at the village level, but more so as we grow into bigger projects so too must our M&E process become more proficient. There is seldom a large funding proposal that passes through our organisation that does not include a section titled, ‘Describe how you will carry out the M&E on the project’. M&E has already been identified as an area for improvement at African Community Project in 2013.”

- Garry Brooks, Canada

Discussion Topic Three – Key Lessons

- In order to know whether CCA initiatives are on track to meet long-term goals, monitoring and evaluating (M&E) is essential
- This is true at all scales, from the project to the national level. Resolving issues related to M&E in ASALs, where socio-economic obstacles and climatic uncertainties are many, is of considerable importance to improving programmes and securing additional funding, domestically and internationally
- In most ASAL regions, CCA is considered a new concept in and of itself, meaning that M&E of CCA is especially innovative and rare, with Bangladesh exhibiting the most sophisticated programme
- Obstacles slowing CCA mainstreaming, as identified by participants included: weak institutions, minimal alignment and coordination between ministries and monitoring agencies, low technical capacity, inability to scale-up M&E from small- to medium-scale projects based on requirements from donors, and lack of inter-ministerial communication and technical training



Supplementary Materials

Participants were provided with the following resources in preparation for Discussion Three:

- [Assessing the Effectiveness of Climate Adaptation](#)
- [Making Adaptation Count: Concepts and Options for Monitoring and Evaluation of Climate Change Adaptation](#)
- [Participatory Monitoring, Evaluation, Reflection and Learning for Community-based Adaptation: A Manual for Local Practitioners](#)
- [Tracking Adaptation and Measuring Development](#)
- [Monitoring and Evaluating Climate Change Adaptation and Development in Latin America's Drylands](#)

Participants shared additional resources for those interested in exploring this topic further:

- [African Community Project](#)



MODULE 3 CONCLUSIONS

Recent climate scenarios for ASALs hold few positive results; namely, higher aridity, drought frequency and extreme temperatures in tropical and subtropical are among the primary consequences. To make matters worse, more serious impacts are expected much earlier than first anticipated. Recent research points to the possibility of a +2°C world in the 2030s, and +4°C by 2060. How, when, and through what means we can best adapt are these questions urgently require answers.

Our discussions have made clear that one way forward is to mainstream adaptation into conventional development planning. Ideally mainstream adaptation integrates climatic risk management (such as investments in drought-resistant crops, cisterns or weather insurance) with social and political reform (cash transfer programmes, social security and participatory management, for example). After all, vulnerability to climate change is crosscutting by nature, covering both social and environmental spheres, meaning that the best solutions will likely have to function in both spheres as well.

Latin American countries (LAC) are bracing for climate change by implementing ambitious climate change strategies at national and sub-national levels. However, predominant attention is paid to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions mitigation, leaving relevant adaptation actions underdeveloped, such as vulnerability and impact assessment, monitoring & evaluation (M&E) systems, climate-resilient agriculture or capacity-building actions. Fortunately, adaptation is now becoming a national priority in more countries through the adoption of laws, plans and programmes.

Two of the primary factors limiting LACs' progress with respect to CCA are institutional fragmentation and political discontinuity. For example, environmental ministries that frequently lead adaptation processes have little power to influence other government departments' approaches. Moreover, ASALs are often overlooked, missing out on benefits from programmes or activities. The research base for ASAL adaptation in Latin American is underdeveloped and unable to adequately support adaptation planning, including M&E systems. Civil society participation is also weak in several Latin American, Asian and African countries.

Participants' contributions made clear that there is no lack of political will to engage in climate adaptation planning in their countries, per se. The issue rests on an insufficient understanding of the myriad of interlaced problems faced by ASALs, as well as the complex solutions needed to address challenges there. Thus, the will and capacity to address such deeper challenges in adaptation planning are generally limited due to the scale of the task at hand. For LAC, most outcomes in strengthening



adaptive capacities seem to be linked to socioeconomic progress and political stability, rather than specific climate change actions. This carries the risk that adaptation planning will continue to be a mainly technocratic endeavour, without connection to sustainable development policies. This is risky because, as climate change impacts worsen, progress achieved in development may be destroyed as a result of climate-vulnerable, or even mal-adapted development strategies. On the other hand, a development focus that incorporates climate change adaptation may reduce barriers to implementation as well as the likelihood of no-regret, climate-proofed structures and policies.

ELLA thanks all participants for their excellent contributions during this Learning Alliance. As practitioners of the content covered in this report, we wish you the best of luck in your work empowering communities, informing decision-makers and increasing the resilience of your countries' societies.

At the end of the three modules, participants shared additional resources and links to relevant organisations for those interested in exploring this topic further:

- Community-Based Adaptation: Mainstreaming CBA into National and Local Planning
- Economic Impact Assessment of Climate Change in Key Sectors in Nepal
- Science and Policy of Climate Change: Blended Learning Programme
- The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR): Call for Abstracts

MODERATORS AND GUEST SPEAKERS

Charlotte Heffer (permanent moderator)

Martin Obermaier (permanent moderator)

Daniele Cesano (co-moderator)

CONTACT [SSN](#):

To learn more about discussions on the Learning Alliance on Climate Change Adaptation in Semi-Arid and Arid Regions, contact the author, Jarrod Miles Russell (an ELLA Brazil Project Consultant at Jarrod.m.russell@gmail.com).



FIND OUT MORE FROM [ELLA](#):

To learn more about Latin America's climate adaptation methods in semi-arid regions, read the [ELLA Guide](#), which has a full list of the knowledge materials available on this theme. To learn more about other development issues, browse other [ELLA themes](#).

ELLA is supported by:

