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| Climate Tribune



■ **LOCALLY-LED ADAPTATION:
PRINCIPLES, BENEFITS AND IMPLEMENTATION**

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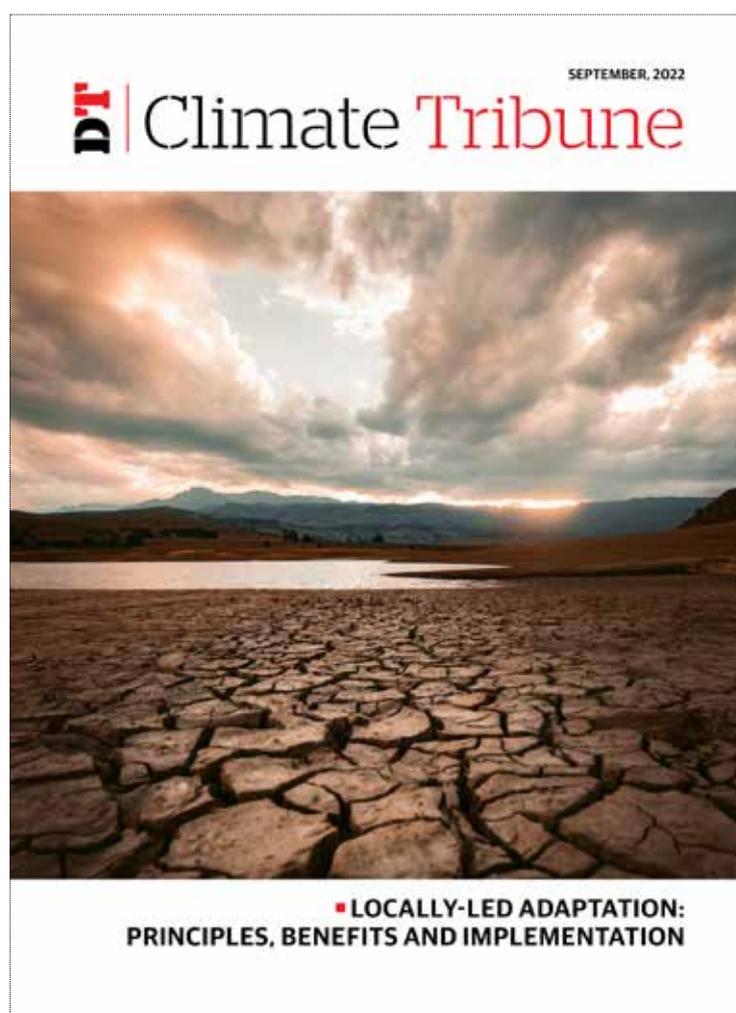


PHOTO: UNSPLASH

Financing climate adaptation at the last mile

The Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL) facility assists communities in becoming climate resilient



Several Union Parishads in Khulna and Bagerhat installed water treatment plants using PBCRG to address salinity related scarcity of drinking water.

COURTESY

Abdullah Zahiruddin Ahmad

To fight poverty, promote local economic growth, and improve planetary health, the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) offers financing models that unlock public and private resources domestically. One such transformative financing mechanism of UNCDF is the “Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL)” facility, which supports communities and economies to be more climate resilient.

In least developed countries (LDCs), LoCAL increases local governments’ access to climate finance, integrates climate change adaptation into local development planning

and budgeting systems, and improves understanding and response to climate change by involving local level stakeholders. The LoCAL mechanism follows a “business-unusual” approach, and adheres to many of the principles of locally-led adaptation in practice. Currently, it is operational in 30 LDCs, including Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, the LoCAL mechanism is utilized by the “Local Government Initiative on Climate Change (LoGIC) Project” to help Union Parishads (the lowest tier of government) in 72 highly climate-vulnerable unions in seven districts to take climate change adaptation actions. With support from UNCDF, UNDP, the European Union, and the Embassy of Sweden, the implementation of the LoGIC

project is led by the Local Government Division (LGD) of the Bangladesh government. The main objectives of the project include strengthening locally led adaptation and establishing a local climate finance mechanism.

The LoGIC project supports an inclusive process by ensuring the involvement of women, youth, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, and other marginalized groups of people so that their differential adaptation needs are addressed. Local government representatives and community members bear the responsibility of defining, prioritizing, designing, implementing, and monitoring climate adaptive interventions.

Union-level climate change risks are assessed by blending local people's knowledge with scientific information and data. GIS-based risk maps are produced for different sectors for each of the unions. The assessed risks inform the development of union-level risk reduction action plans (RRAPs). Prioritized climate adaptive interventions from the RRAPs are included in the annual development plan and budget of the union parishads following administrative processes. Thus, the LoGIC project uses the existing fiscal system of the government instead of creating a parallel one. This helps in mainstreaming climate adaptation and strengthening the climate financing system at the local level.

As part of the LoCAL mechanism, the LoGIC project provides "Performance-based Climate Resilience Grants (PBCRG)" as a financial top-up to offset the additional costs of making local development investments climate resilient. PBCRGs are allocated among the unions based on the level of their vulnerability to climate change, the governance-related performance of the union parishads, and the total area and population size of the unions.

In the first three years, the LoGIC project provided PBCRGs as well as technical support to the 72 Union Parishads for implementing 637 community-level climate adaptive schemes of various types. The schemes covered sectors or issues like agriculture, water, sanitation, water management, rural road network, reducing loss and damage, improving adaptive and absorptive capacity, nature-based solutions, and so on. More than 900,000 climate-vulnerable rural people are benefited from the adaptive schemes.

Through the climate-adaptive PBCRG schemes, the project also endeavours to reduce gender-based and other types of socio-economic inequalities. In fact, the majority of the implemented PBCRG schemes are gender-responsive. Social and environmental screening is carried out in selecting each of the PBCRG schemes. Partnerships are established with relevant government departments, NGOs, universities, and individual experts for design and implementation. The partnerships ensure the quality of adaptation benefits, technology transfer, and capacity building of local level stakeholders and promote a "whole-of-society" approach.

Implementation of the climate adaptive measures is monitored and verified by supervision committees formed

“ To enhance the flow of climate finance to the local level, the LoGIC project is advocating with the national government so that climate vulnerability is also considered as a criterion in distributing development funds among the Union Parishads of the country ”

with the participation of representatives of beneficiary communities and relevant government departments. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the schemes' benefits, local-level management committees are formed, and a user fee mechanism is introduced where applicable.

At the end of each implementation year, the schemes are audited by an outsourced audit firm and the union parishads are ranked based on their performance, which is used to make the following year's budget allocation. The implementation and monitoring mechanisms and the audit process empower local people, increase their sense of ownership of adaptation actions, and contribute to improving the local government's capacity for planning, budgeting, financial management, reporting, and accountability.

In many cases, local actors are indeed capable of providing effective adaptation solutions. This is because they are well aware of the local context. However, lack of access to adequate finance is a major challenge to unlock their potential.

According to research carried out by IIED, only 10% of the committed international climate finance is distributed at the local level. Therefore, to enhance the flow of climate finance to the local level, the LoGIC project is advocating with the national government so that climate vulnerability is also considered as a criterion in distributing development funds among the Union Parishads of the country.

To facilitate the process, in consultation with the government, the LoGIC project is preparing a climate change vulnerability index for all 4,901 unions and municipalities in the country.■

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Global goal on adaptation's potential to incorporate local communities' voices

The GlaSS Work Programme can be a catalyst for developing countries to acknowledge adaptation matters in their own locality



DHAKA TRIBUNE

Afsara Mirza and Md Bodrud-Doza Zion

Climate change adaptation is being prioritized in policy and planning across the world. According to the Adaptation Gap Report, at least 79% of all countries have executed at least one national-level adaptation planning mechanism (ie, a plan, strategy, policy, or law).

At COP21 in 2015, after the developing countries demanded the necessity to scale up adaptation, it was incorporated into the Paris Agreement (PA) as a long-term goal. The Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA) was addressed in PA to “enhance adaptive capacity, strengthen resilience, and reduce vulnerability to climate change” (UNFCCC, 2016a). At COP21, Parties also created the global stocktake (GST) in Article 14 of the Paris Agreement to acknowledge the progress towards long-term goals of adaptation, including the GGA. However, there were no comprehensive next steps outlined on how it would be operationalized over the next few years.

This was the case due to the methodological and political complications involved with establishing a global goal that tried to capture multifaceted and contextual realities of adaptation around the world. The African Group of Negotiators (AGN) kept an agenda item on the GGA at COP25 in 2019; however, it was not established.

Many formal and informal discussions took place to unpack the GGA throughout 2020 and 2021. In 2021, the Adaptation Committee (AC) of the UNFCCC developed a technical paper to review the overall progress in achieving GGA. At COP26, in 2021, Parties launched the Glasgow-Sharm-el-Sheik programme (GlaSS) to do extensive work on the GGA by setting eight objectives to operationalize the GGA and increase adaptation action at the local, national, and regional levels to recognize the context-specific dynamics of the countries.

However, the GGA will be ineffective if the GlaSS Work Programme is unable to promote the local communities’ participation and decision-making capacities through its eight objectives. The GGA should make sure that communities hold individual and collective influence over defining, prioritizing, designing, monitoring, and evaluating adaptation actions to implement adaptation solutions and improve finance flow.

The GlaSS Work Programme can be a catalyst and an inclusive space for developing countries to acknowledge adaptation matters in their own locality. The GGA will be a vital tool to promote the co-production of knowledge through integrating cultural practice and ancestral knowledge for effective alignment with local institutions.

Additionally, the GGA should ensure that accountability and transparency are ensured by developing a framework for conducting the Locally-led Adaptation Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (LLAMEAL). This can be a feasible approach to achieving GGA, by tracking the eight principles of LLA by capacitating the implementers, funders, and local communities to decide their needs for developing external expertise and access to information.

For instance, principle 1 will help to track the community leaders who possess decision-making power within international and national platforms and delivery mechanisms for adaptation. This also aims to assess if 70% of adaptation finance flows directly to local institutions --

or directly via the relevant national institutions to identify investment behind community priorities.

Whereas principle 2 will help to understand the pace of platforms that incorporate adaptation decisions and see if local adaptation engages with the drivers of risk and vulnerability, considering gender and intersectionality.

Principle 3, on the other hand, will help to track long-term adaptation initiatives that are incentivized through Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), and long-term strategies, reducing the focus on short-term projects. Principle 5 will enable us to

“The GGA should make sure that communities hold individual and collective influence over defining, prioritizing, designing, monitoring, and evaluating adaptation actions to implement adaptation solutions and improve finance flow”

analyze the participatory processes across the programme cycle to comprehend if generational knowledge is taken into account in decision making. Other principles can also be tracked similarly.

For tracking actions happening at a local level, it might be beneficial to shift towards a more outcome-oriented tracking, which will make it more flexible and create room for local organizations to comply with standards, especially as they operate in dynamic operational environments.

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Evolution of LLA: How locally-led adaptation came into the climate change arena

LLA ensures that a fruitful relationship is built between local communities, civil societies, and the local government with the central government bodies

Fatema Akhter, Dr Saleemul Huq, and Afsara Binte Mirza

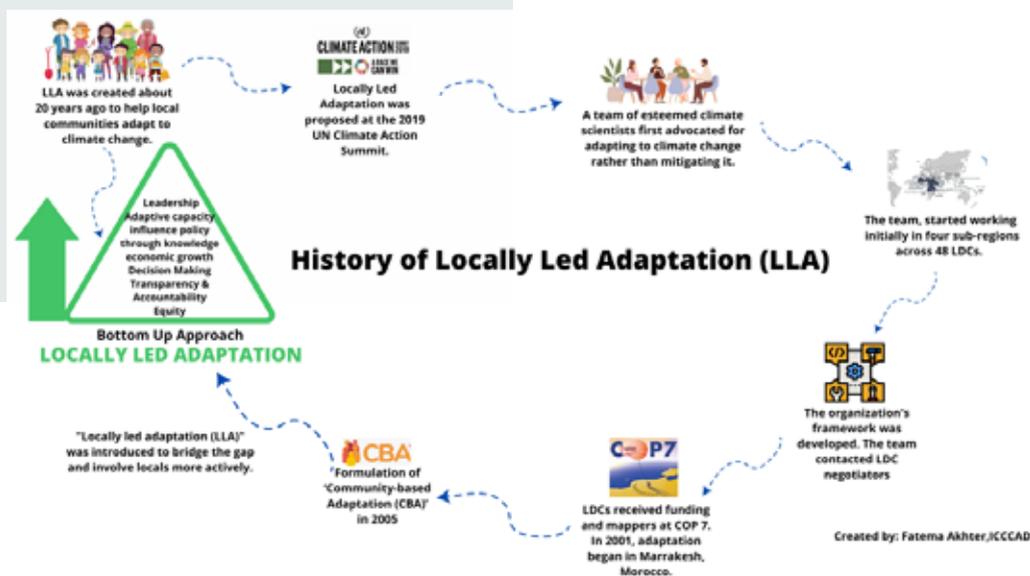
Climate change has become one of the greatest threats to mankind nowadays. For many years, several national and international policies and practices have been adopted for climate change adaptation and mitigation actions. Yet, only 10% of global climate finance reaches local communities and institutions.

Hence, an effective strategy is needed to involve the local actors who are at the frontlines of the climate crisis. Here, locally-led adaptation (LLA) can be of use. LLA keeps the local people at the heart of any decisions by valuing their local and ancestral knowledge. Local communities' lived realities and intergenerational wisdom has been found to be effective to resolve issues of the triple crisis -- climate change, poverty, and nature.

History of developing locally led adaptation (LLA)

The term "locally-led adaptation" (LLA) was first proposed during the United Nations Climate Action Summit in 2019. However, the notion of LLA was embedded almost 20 years ago, to combat the climate crisis with the help of adaptation techniques by the local communities.

A team of esteemed climate scientists contributed significantly in the initial stage to the idea of adapting to climate change rather than working on mitigation techniques, especially in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs). The primary agenda of the team was to combine hands with LDCs and make them realize the severity of the climate crisis.



The team started working initially in four sub-regions across 48 LDCs. These sub-regions included some Southern and Eastern African countries such as Francophone, Lusophone, and Portuguese-speaking countries, along with some South Asian Countries such as Bhutan, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos.

In the beginning, the group of climate scientists started working with partners who already implemented some sort of local-level adaptation interventions. Later, the team of scientists started to collaborate with the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) Group -- representing the world's poorest and most vulnerable nations.

In 2000, the LDCs group came into existence through the recognition of UNFCCC. Later in 2001, during Conference of the Parties (COP) 7 at Marrakesh, Morocco, the LDC group successfully received “the LDC fund” and “the mappers” to begin the journey of adaptation

Since then, the LDC partners each year have met at COP to discuss various matters related to climate change, health, and agriculture. Simultaneously, the necessity of “capacity building exercise” on climate change increased, which led to the formulation of “community-based adaptation” (CBA) in 2005. Through the concept of CBA, the nations realized that all the development efforts for poverty eradication will eventually become useless if climate change is not taken into consideration.

Later, more networking was conducted with the civil society and the second conference of CBA took place in 2007, in Bangladesh. However, while implementing community-based adaptation (CBA) activities, it was noticed that the local communities had limited

“ It will be crucial to witness how this COP27 will build a pragmatic roadmap to implement LLA at local, national, and regional levels ”

8 PRINCIPALS OF LOCALLY-LED ADAPTATION

PRINCIPLE 01

Devolving decision making to the lowest appropriate level



PRINCIPLE 03

Providing patient and predictable funding that can be accessed more easily



PRINCIPLE 05

Building a robust understanding of climate risk and uncertainty



PRINCIPLE 07

Ensuring transparency and accountability



PRINCIPLE 02

Addressing structural inequalities faced by women, youth, children, disabled and displaced people, Indigenous Peoples and marginalised ethnic groups



PRINCIPLE 04

Investing in local capabilities to leave an institutional legacy



PRINCIPLE 06

Flexible programming and learning



PRINCIPLE 08

Collaborative action and investment



involvement in the decision-making process.

To fill this gap, a new concept was introduced called locally-led adaptation (LLA). The UNFCCC's LDCs group is emphasizing the call for a locally-led response in their "LDC 2050 Vision," delivered through the LDC Initiative for Effective Adaptation and Resilience (LIFE-AR). The LDCs have aimed to spend 70% of their climate finance at the local level by 2030 and invited climate funders to partner with them to deliver this goal.

Similarly, to maintain synergy with the LDCs Group, the Global Commission on Adaptation highlighted the urgency of locally-led adaptation action in its flagship report, "Adapt now" in 2019. The commission's Locally Led Action Track (LLAT), established in 2021, was created on a decade of foundational work by IIED, Slum Dwellers International, Huairou Commission, International Center for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), and many others on financing for adaptation, accessing the basic resource, and urban services in vulnerable communities.

To strengthen the LLAT objectives, IIED worked with WRI, ICCCAD, and more than 50 other stakeholders at events over 2019 and 2020 to create a set of eight principles for LLA action.

LLA ensures that a fruitful relationship is built between local communities, civil societies, and the local government with the central government bodies. Hence, making the top-down approach ineffective by involving the local communities to exercise individual and collective control over defining, prioritizing, designing, monitoring, and evaluating adaptation actions.

The COP26 Resilience Hub Synthesis Report highlights how locally-led adaptation is crucial for transformative and equitable climate actions. The report also signifies how realistic and equitable adaptation actions can be conducted by involving women, youth, disabled, displaced, and indigenous peoples during the design, decision-making, and implementation phase.

It will be crucial to witness how this COP27 will build a pragmatic roadmap to implement LLA at local, national, and regional levels. ■

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“ LLA ensures that a fruitful relationship is built between local communities, civil societies, and the local government with the central government bodies ”

What does it mean when nature-based solutions and locally-led adaptation come together?

Bangladesh is not lagging behind in adopting the approaches and principles of NbS and LLA



Dr Haseeb Md Irfanullah

In March this year, the Fifth United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) made a very useful contribution to the Nature-based Solutions (NbS) discourse. Over the past few years, we have been noticing a lot of attention to NbS, but we did not have any UN-endorsed definition of NbS. The UNEA-5 filled in that gap.

The definition it adopted frames nature-based solutions as: “Actions to protect, conserve, restore, sustainably use, and manage natural or modified terrestrial, freshwater, coastal, and marine ecosystems, which address social, economic, and environmental challenges effectively and adaptively, while simultaneously providing human well-being, ecosystem services, and resilience and biodiversity benefits.”

organizations, local government institutions, and other local stakeholders not only collectively identify, prioritize, plan, and implement adaptation actions, but also monitor, evaluate, and learn from these actions.

Of course, the local people and entities cannot work in isolation; their adaptation actions need to be supported by national governments, donors, civil society organizations, and other private sector agencies.

To ensure that NbS interventions are effectively designed and implemented, IUCN developed a global standard for NbS furnished with eight criteria and 28 indicators. The first two criteria talk about the importance of understanding societal challenges, like climate change, to be addressed by a properly designed NbS intervention.

Other criteria highlight the fact that NbS must help



This is essentially an elaboration of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)’s widely-quoted NbS definition articulated back in 2016.

Another climate change-related approach that is increasingly receiving traction is Locally-led Adaptation (LLA). Like any new concept, LLA is yet to have a widely-accepted definition. But we can say that LLA actions happen when the concerned local communities and their

to achieve net biodiversity gain in an ecosystem, and be economically feasible to implement and follow inclusive governance which will also lead to a proper understanding of NbS-related trade-offs. Evidence-led adaptive management is another criterion, and so is sustainability and mainstreaming of a good NbS intervention in all possible locations.

Similarly, to make sure that LLA is making a real difference on the ground, last year the Global Commission on Adaptation,

International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED), and World Resource Institutions developed eight principles of LLA.

These essentially focus on the decision-making process, addressing structural inequality, ensuring sufficient fund flow, developing necessary capacities, ensuring knowledge based on climate risks, creating learning opportunities from programs, ensuring transparency and accountability, and facilitating wider collaboration.

So, NbS and LLA approaches have many common elements such as participation, transparency, accountability, equity, capacity building, financing, flexible programs, knowledge and learning, collaboration, and of course sustainability. While implementing NbS interventions for climate change adaptation, LLA principles therefore could be very useful to take into account.

The Glasgow Climate Pact -- an output of the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) of climate change held in Glasgow, UK last November -- talks about NbS and LLA, of course without using these exact terms. For example, keeping in mind NbS, the Pact reads: “Emphasizes the importance of protecting, conserving, and restoring nature and ecosystems to achieve the Paris Agreement temperature goal, including through forests and other terrestrial and marine ecosystems acting as sinks and reservoirs of greenhouse gases and by protecting biodiversity, while ensuring social and environmental safeguards.”

The Pact also repeatedly recognizes the “important role of indigenous peoples’ and local communities’ culture and knowledge in effective action on climate change,” thus incorporating LLA elements.

Bangladesh is not lagging behind in adopting the approaches and principles of NbS and LLA. The Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan is the first investment plan of Bangladesh where we describe how we want, not only to become a resilient nation but also a prosperous nation by investing \$76.18 billion by 2030. This plan is also the first plan which explicitly outlines NbS interventions in a wide range of natural and modified ecosystems.

It is also the first national instrument that elaborately describes investing in LLA to reduce and prevent climate-induced losses and damages through locally-led adaptation hubs. It further aims to mobilize \$1bn per year in LLA by 2030.

Over the last few years, Bangladesh has been preparing climate-relevant budgets to be allocated to its 25 ministries and agencies. In the current financial year (2022-2023), the climate budget is around \$3.4bn, which is 4.5% of the national budget and 0.7% of the national GDP. Of course, how much is allocated to NbS interventions or LLA actions to build climate resilience is yet to be estimated.

Nevertheless, Bangladesh’s development partners are already channeling funds to link NbS and LLA. The Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) of the

“ These lessons and experiences should then be used as evidence to direct climate finance to NbS and LLA ”

UK has recently launched the Bangladesh Climate and Environment Program (BCEP) -- a GBP-120-million program to run from January 2022-March 2027.

Under the BCEP, the South Asia Office of the Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) in Dhaka has been working towards the output -- “scale-up of locally-led adaption, nature-based solutions, and financing for adaptation.” It is also expected that other projects would contribute to the BCEP output -- “increased climate resilience of vulnerable communities and protection and restoration of nature” which would further create an opportunity to align NbS and LLA together.

All concerned are now preparing for the COP27 to be held this November in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. While the COP27 Presidency is organizing the Biodiversity Day thematic dialogue on November 16 to discuss nature and ecosystem-based solutions, no exclusive time has been allocated yet for LLA.

But it is understood that discussions related to LLA principles will be held on several other days, especially on Adaptation and Agriculture Day (November 12) and ACE (Action for Climate Empowerment) and Civil Society Day (November 15).

It will be crucial to see how NbS and LLA are translated into integrated, effective, sustainable, local to global actions to enhance local communities’ resilience. These lessons and experiences should then be used as evidence to direct climate finance to NbS and LLA. ■

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Fulfilling the water demands of Juraichari: An LLA success story

How water helps improve lives
and livelihoods

Mahzabeen Mahfuz

As we were driving through the scenic roads of the Chittagong Hill Tracts, mesmerized by the beauty, I said out loud, “how wonderful must it feel to live in a place such as this.” The local woman sitting nearby replied with half a smile, “surely it’s breathtaking for those who come here for a few days, one can only understand the struggles when one starts living here.” And she was far from being wrong.

Life has always been challenging for the people living in this region due to its remoteness. On top of this, the ever growing impacts of climate change have been making the living situation harsher by the day. There has been a significant increase in erratic rainfall, heat waves, droughts, landslides, and flash floods in recent years. However, this is not a disheartening listing of all the challenges of living in the hill tract districts but rather an interesting story of a community that came together to adapt to this changing world and a project that helped them to achieve so.

For the past few summers, Juraichari -- a remote upazila of Rangamati that is only accessible by boats -- has been experiencing intense heat waves and erratic rainfalls. The people here live simple lives, often growing crops and fruits to make a living. These prolonged droughts resulting from the



extreme heat and lack of rainfall had been causing massive crop failures and thus, affecting the local economy and people's standard of living.

The areas where people depended on springs and other surface water bodies for daily consumption and domestic use had to start migrating to lower grounds as water bodies dried up every year. By some stroke of luck, in 2018, UNDP decided to implement a pilot project on locally-led adaptation in the upazila.

This project focused on developing the skills of the local communities in order to improve their livelihood and manage the watersheds. And the best part was that the communities could themselves choose the interventions they deem necessary with some assistance from experts.

Thus began the Climate Change Resilience Project (CCRP).

The first part of the process was the formation of the Climate Resilience Committee (CRC), for which UNDP with the help of karbari/village headmen held meetings with villagers from five selected paras/villages from each of the unions. During these meetings, two people from each of the paras were selected to represent them in the CRC. Thus, a committee of locals was formed who then elected a president, a general secretary, and a treasurer amongst themselves.

The District and Upazila Parishad Chairman were also included in the committee as advisors. Though people were free to form the committee however necessary, UNDP did assert a condition that the treasurer would have to be a female alongside other female members of the committee. This was done to ensure representation from both genders.

Following the formation of CRC, the members took feedback from their respective paras and after discussing with the UNDP staff, Zila Parishad staff, and other relevant experts, decided to install five solar power water pumps within their upazila. Given the massive water crisis and the limited budget, locals believed this was the best possible course of action and the committee was now fully responsible for implementing this. Hence, a committee bank account was created where they received the funding from UNDP in installments based on their progress.

As the work began, so did the challenges, while four of the boreholes were established in no time, each took about 15 days, and one was showing no sign of the water layer. The experts believed there was no hope for that locality since there was no alternate suitable location to install another borehole. The stubborn conductor, also a local fellow, was not ready to give up. He and his men kept boring till they found water on the 72nd day.

Another major challenge was the persistent Covid-19 lockdowns which made it impossible to get hold of and transport the building materials to this remote area. The prices of the materials skyrocketed as well. The locals had to use all their connections and influence in Rangamati Sadar to

acquire the materials and everyone stepped in to help in any way they could.

As this intervention was operating on a limited budget and the inflation posed another challenge, the local collectors decided to not demand any contributions from UNDP. As a gesture, the vulnerable community provided free labour to set up the solar pumps.

When the water dried up, local communities residing at the paras teamed up and helped to manually carry all the building material 15km in the intense heat. And this is how the local community of Juraichari set up the five solar power water pumps by united effort and determination.

You can hear it in their voices when the locals tell you the story, that all their hard work has paid off, as they now have four solar pumps irrigating an area of 45 hectares. Land that used to be barren is now growing two to three crops a year.

“When the water dried up, local communities residing at the paras teamed up and helped to manually carry all the building material 15km in the intense heat”

The fifth solar pump is providing drinking water for 154 out of 180 families in one of the areas.

The most fascinating part is perhaps that the CRC committee still exists even after the project has ended. To continue the operations of the pumps, the villagers now pay Tk50 every month in the committee fund for repair and maintenance. And the people of Juraishari intend to keep it that way for maintaining good governance -- thus fulfilling the CCRP's hope of instilling ownership of the project interventions amongst the local communities. ■

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Climate Bridge Fund: A successful mechanism of applying locally-led adaptation principles in Bangladesh

The CBF mechanism includes comprehensiveness; the main essence of the LLA



UNSPLASH

Golam Rabbani and Anindita Hridita

The eight principles of locally-led adaptation (LLA) are designed to empower the local communities to address the adverse impacts of climate change. When the local communities are part of designing and implementing the adaptation measures, they can ensure that the measures are context-specific, need-driven, and curate effective solutions.

That is why Climate Bridge Fund (CBF) adapted the LLA principles in its modalities to introduce sustainable solutions. CBF was established by BRAC with support from the government of Germany through KfW.

How CBF practices the LLA approach

The impacts of climate change are different for all people, based on their contexts. This is why the first principle of LLA talks about a bottom-up approach to decision-

making. CBF believes that only context-specific solutions can be effective and sustainable. Each and every project supported by CBF is designed through consultation with targeted local communities and relevant government authorities.

This is a mandatory step in project designing which ensures the involvement of the lowest appropriate level from the beginning of the project. The project interventions are prioritized based on the needs of the people. While identifying those needs, CBF projects also focus on the marginalised groups, especially people who migrated due to the impacts of climate change. With the increasingly adverse impacts of climate change in different parts of the country, the mobility of people has increased to a great extent.

The climate migrants, already affected due to climate change, become more vulnerable after arriving in the overcrowded slums in the urban areas. Their struggle to fulfil their basic needs and uncertainties regarding income and housing makes them suffer more. The main target population for CBF is thus the climate migrants with special attention to women and any other group that are in a marginalized situation.

They suffer disproportionately during any crisis which is in line with the second principle of LLA -- which is about addressing structural inequalities faced by different marginalised groups.

The support that the affected communities require needs to be timely to ensure that they can recover from the crisis. LLA tells us to provide patient and predictable funding which can be easily accessible. CBF is developed based on this principle as the modality ensures that the funding can be accessed quickly and easily by the implementing organisations.

The disbursement mechanism is also very quick and procedurally should not take more than six months between submission of a concept and the first disbursement, as guided by the Operational Manual of CBF.

It is important to strengthen local capacity to manage such funding and design effective adaptation measures. CBF has an inbuilt capacity development process for the main stakeholders including climate migrants, project staff, and city authorities. They all are equally important and need simultaneous attention to ensure the sustainability of the measures and an institutional legacy which is the fourth principle of LLA. The continuous engagement of the city authorities with the adaptation projects eventually helps them review their future plans, and projects and disseminate the learning in the sector.

CBF puts additional emphasis on building the capacity of the project staff and thus organizes a series of training sessions. The projects are designed in consultation with the communities and then implemented through community-

led organizations. Those organizations are empowered and capacitated in a manner that they can continue being the voice of the community. They receive different training to enhance their skills, function as a group of leaders, and ensure the maintenance of the project interventions beyond the project timeline.

While developing the capacities of the project staff and the community, CBF highlights the discussion on context-

““ While developing the capacities of the project staff and the community, CBF highlights the discussion on context-specific climate risks and uncertainties ””

specific climate risks and uncertainties. They share their experience of the past and present situations and CBF tries to help them have a clear understanding of the future risks as well.

This field-level exercise largely helps the partner organizations and the project team to improve their understanding of how best their interventions link with the impacts of climate change. The fifth LLA principle includes building a robust understanding of climate risks and uncertainties which CBF follows from the beginning of

the project design with different consultations.

CBF-awarded projects are implemented by the partners and CBF facilitates the implementation process including monitoring of the projects. There is a quarterly monitoring process that allows CBF to visit the fields and observe the progress and document the learning on a regular basis.

Moreover, there is a process to revise the annual work plan and budget after six months of implementation to make those more realistic and adaptive. The main purpose of CBF is to support the people who are in need, thus, partners are always encouraged to share their challenges and field learning and allowed to make justified changes in the project based on the field reality. This flexibility to adapt learning ensures that the measures are more effective which is another principle of LLA.

Moreover, CBF also brings the partners and the management representatives together to ensure that the management can directly learn about the projects from the partners. LLA principles include transparency and collaboration action. CBF also believes in collaborative action and co-financing to address sustainable adaptation measures. Regular consultation takes place with the relevant government agencies, CSOs, and local communities in different stages of projects.

The CBF mechanism includes comprehensiveness which is the main essence of the LLA. The proper implementation of the principles can help any fund to be effective and sustainable. People are at the centre of the CBF projects and they are consulted and involved adequately throughout the



CBF maintains transparency in both the evaluation and implementation stages of projects. CBF secretariat is accountable to its advisory committee, KfW, and trustee board. All decisions are finalized through these three bodies and everything is reviewed and assessed by them. Project Fact sheets are uploaded on the website once the agreements are signed through which anyone can know about basic project information.

project cycle. It is they who will ensure that the adaptation measures will sustain beyond the project. ■

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Challenges and potential solutions in implementing LLA at local level: The context of Bangladesh

Insights of local communities on locally led adaptation



DHAKA TRIBUNE

Savio Rousseau Rozario

The ongoing natural disasters around the world remind us how vulnerable we are to the dire impacts of climate change. According to a recent report published by the Relief Web, a total of 432 catastrophic events took place in 2021 all over the globe, which is significantly higher than the average of 357 annual catastrophic events from 2001 to 2020. These natural disasters are not discrete incidents. Rather, they are proving IPCC predictions to be true. However, the impacts of climate-induced disasters are not felt equally by different strata of society.

Communities that live in the closest proximity to nature, and are directly dependent on natural resources are at the frontlines of climate-induced disasters. These communities mostly include poor, vulnerable groups of society and indigenous and ethnic communities.

In most cases, the indigenous communities have minimal access to basic needs, become the victims of socio-economic exclusion, and lack the capacity to deal with the impacts of natural disasters. However, the communities have been coping with the changes for millennia.

Over the period, they have developed various adaptation measures that are proven to be effective, eco-friendly, sustainable, and cost-effective. Nevertheless, many of their interventions and adaptation solutions that can be scaled up and replicable are yet to be recognized, promoted, and mainstreamed. Most importantly, their active participation and social inclusion in the decision-making process need to be ensured for the holistic development of the society, building resilience to climate change, and fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals.

In this regard, Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) can be an effective approach to help the local communities and the most vulnerable groups in ensuring their active participation



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“ It is observed that mass-scale adaptation measures that are undertaken to improve the wellbeing of the local communities, fail to understand and consider the local and geographical context of the project’s implemented area ”

in the overall planning and decision-making process. Additionally, LLA also promotes equity, justice, transparency, accountability, and collaboration, and creates an institutional legacy by introducing patient and predictable funding, and building the capacity of the local communities; securing their legal rights and wellbeing.

Bangladesh, a South-Asian nation is considered one of the most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change and was ranked seventh on the Global Climate Risk Index by German-Watch, in 2021. Simultaneously, the country is also recognized globally to be a pioneer and role model in terms of climate change adaptation. The country has made a transformative shift over the last few decades in terms of adapting to the impacts of climate change with a prime focus on resilience and capacity building (mainly institutional).

However, the active participation and consideration of the local communities’ views in the decision-making and planning process were reported to be insignificant. Therefore, some of the adaptation interventions that were undertaken for the welfare of the local communities turned out to be detrimental in the longer run, resulting in maladaptation practices.

To overcome this gap and to build a bridge between the local communities and the different stakeholders (local government, central government, and other entities), utilising the LLA approach could be instrumental. However, there remain several challenges to incorporating LLA with the development measures that lead to resilience building of the local communities who are at the frontlines of climate change.

Drawing from grounded research and personal experience with local communities (marginalised, and indigenous communities) some of the major challenges in implementing LLA are as follows:

Firstly, it is observed that mass-scale adaptation measures that are undertaken to improve the wellbeing of the local

communities, fail to understand and consider the local and geographical context of the project's implemented area. This occurs when an initiative is designed excluding the viewpoints of the local inhabitants, who deal with the challenges every day, at ground level. Therefore, in order to make the adaptation measures more effective, conducting local-level consultation and understating the local context is necessary.

Secondly, while promoting adaptation measures, especially with the indigenous and ethnic communities, linguistic and dialect barriers become a grave concern. As different indigenous groups speak in different languages and dialects, sometimes it becomes difficult to make them

“ The traditional system and top-down approach restrict locally led practices to be scaled up, and LLA could be the key to promoting such activities ”

understand the planned initiative and bring them under the same umbrella. As a result, the actual challenges remain unfolded and prevail in the community. Using a common language that is accepted and well-spoken by both parties (service receivers and implementers) can be a potential solution to overcome the challenge.

In LLA, the equal participation of all the stakeholders within the community is essential. However, in many parts of the country, the participation of women is highly insignificant when it comes to decision-making. Social

stigma, misconceptions, illiteracy, and patriarchal social structure are some of the prime reasons for women to be passive in the overall decision-making process.

Therefore, to ensure the active participation of women, special focus should be given to educating women and girls. Simultaneously, the importance of women in the decision-making process should also be preached within the local community. Religious leaders and community activists can play a vital role here.

Oftentimes it is also observed that the poor and marginalised communities become the victims of participatory exclusion. Political biases, nepotism, marginalisation, and corruption lead to participatory exclusion. This can be eradicated by ensuring accountability and transparency within the social system.

At the same time, along with the government, the donors and implementers should also be more cordial in ensuring the participation of the most vulnerable communities in the planning and decision-making process.

Finance is a key issue to support any sort of development measure including climate change adaptation. However, it is found that the top-down finance flow is often difficult to access and be disbursed at the local level. It is also observed that local government authority does not possess financial autonomy.

Hence, there is an urgent need to decentralise adaptation financing and create scopes to collect funds from locally generated revenues, central government grants, donor funds, and NGO and private sector donations which would be channelled through a transparent mechanism.

Evidence from around the world suggests that local communities are well aware of their duties and responsibilities in terms of tackling disasters through various adaptation measures. However, in the context of Bangladesh, the above-mentioned challenges have been prevailing in society for a long time, hampering the overall adaptation and development efforts.

The traditional system and top-down approach restrict locally led practices to be scaled up, and LLA could be the key to promoting such activities. But LLA can only be effective and functional when the prevailing social challenges are addressed.

Collaboratively the local governments, the private sector, and civil society organisations are capable of minimising and eradicating the challenges at a local level. The combined strategies and joint ventures can not only create the platform for a successful LLA implementation but also address climate risks, and ensure holistic development. ■

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Utilizing local communities' traditional knowledge to stop maladaptation

How TRM can be an LLA approach

Shamrita Zaman and Maliha Masfiqua Malek

At present, the hardships caused due to the climate crises on a global scale are undeniable for the current and future periods. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group (WG) II's 6th Assessment Report has acknowledged that levelling the global temperature by 1.5°C would result in unescapable growth of climatic calamities and pose detrimental risks to the population and its associated ecosystems.

A report by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) titled "The State of Climate in 2021" declared that extreme weather events are the "New Normal." Hence climate change adaptations, either planned or autonomous, must be in continuous practice and improvement.

IPCC WGII 6th Assessment Report has admitted a myriad of benefits of implementing adaptive measures across multiple

sectors, like nurturing agriculture, food & livelihood security, disaster resiliency, technology & innovation, and so on.

The burning question is which scale is needed to implement adaptation measures to substantially reduce climate risk and vulnerability. Actually, the number of poorly designed adaptation practices could exacerbate climate-induced vulnerabilities rather than mitigate them, resulting in maladaptation.

Maladaptation is when a group of people becomes more vulnerable to climate change impact than their previous state after applying a certain adaptive measure. The adaptation strategies would be fragile when dominating factors (inequalities, reliance on infrastructural and institutional frameworks, synchronisation with development schemes, etc.) are sidestepped. As a consequence, these could cause "rebound vulnerability," which means vulnerabilities could relapse back from low to high severity for existing situations or



generate a new driver. That's why IPCC WGII 6th Assessment Report has referred to maladaptation as an unintended consequence.

Once the adaptation goes wrong, it has to be settled for the well-being of the society and community who are the frontliners of experiencing rebound vulnerability from climate change. The eight principles of Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) endorsed by the Global Centre on Adaptation (GCA) have the potential to negotiate with maladaptation.

The core theme of LLA is that adaptation measures have to be people-centric with an aim to exclude historical elimination and injustice. Therefore, local communities and institutions have to be involved to evaluate the shortcomings of the already existing maladaptation. Further steps to bounce back from maladaptation by LLA have to be planned with improved funding from the higher level of authority. Correspondingly, The LLA approach should be a combination of indigenous knowledge from lower appropriate levels and a mixture of scientific understandings of the experts.

“TRM is not an innovation of the 21st Century”

The reflection on how LLA can contribute to recovering mismanagements imposed by maladaptation to get a climate-resilient society is crucial. A case study from polderization in Bangladesh demonstrates that the construction of 139 polders (earthen embankments) during the 1960s in the southern coastal belt is considered to be a successful adaptive measure.

This measure became fruitful for flood protection and food security inside the polder which was visible immediately within 10-15 years. Nevertheless, the polder project was planned without taking into account the dynamic hydro-ecological context of the locations. Hence the polders interrupted the interconnectedness between the floodplain-river.

In this way, the floodplains were deprived of getting a high volume of silts which are accompanied by the river tides. Consequently, sediments were starting to be deposited alongside the riverbed by increasing the height of the riverbed simultaneously. Raising the water level higher in the river than the level of the land within the polder, accelerates the degradation of land.

The horrific consequence is prolonged waterlogging. Shifting the polder boundary towards the east and land subsidence inside the polder are secondary cascading disasters to occur after waterlogging. Such a scenario raises questions in the local community about how to maintain a balance between the inside and outside of the polder. The equilibrium in water movement is an inevitable solution for the sustainability of the polder. 'Tidal River Management (TRM)' is such a solution.

TRM is not an innovation of the 21st Century, rather it is an indigenous technique to control rivers through sediment and tidal flow management by implementing ancestral ecological knowledge of floodplain areas of the Bengal delta. In Bangladesh, it was first adopted by local communities and NGOs along Beel Bhayna and Beel Dakatiya (located in the Khulna-Jessore region) by raising land of about 31 km in the 1990s.

The local community practice of "overflow" irrigation and effective management of sediment is newly termed TRM by experts. The concept is simple i.e., the local community cut the embankment at an appropriate point to let the river flow in and allow the sediment to settle into the floodplain. The height of the land gets raised by sediment deposition with the passage of time. Also, the soil gets nutrients from those depositions. The sediment does not deposit on the riverbed so river navigability remains uninterrupted. Hence, TRM is an LLA approach for minimising the maladaptation practice of traditional polderization of the coastal community in Bangladesh.

The certain case of applying TRM for averting water logging issues in polderized areas has conceptualised how LLA could be an effective pathway to curtail maladaptive outcomes. It is well articulated that maladaptation is influenced by multiple drivers (for instance, location, group of people).

Therefore, assessment of the vulnerability drivers, harmonisation of adaptation strategies with development trajectories, the inclusion of vulnerable communities in the development agenda, and cost-benefit analysis by the decision-makers in accordance with resource availability are some of the measures to reduce lock-ins and generate opportunities. Hence, the ground-breaking eight principles of LLA would assist the practitioners and decision-makers to have a way out from the detrimental impacts of maladaptation and initiate a journey toward practising successful adaptation measures. ■

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