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■ CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS



### Editor

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### Content Editor

Adiba Bintey Kamal

Magnus Mayeen Ahmed

Afsara Bintey Mirza

### Exclusive Content Partner

International Centre  
for Climate Change and  
Development (ICCCAD)

### Graphic Design

Alamgir Hossain

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### Editorial, News & Commercial Office

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Shukrabad, Dhaka 1207

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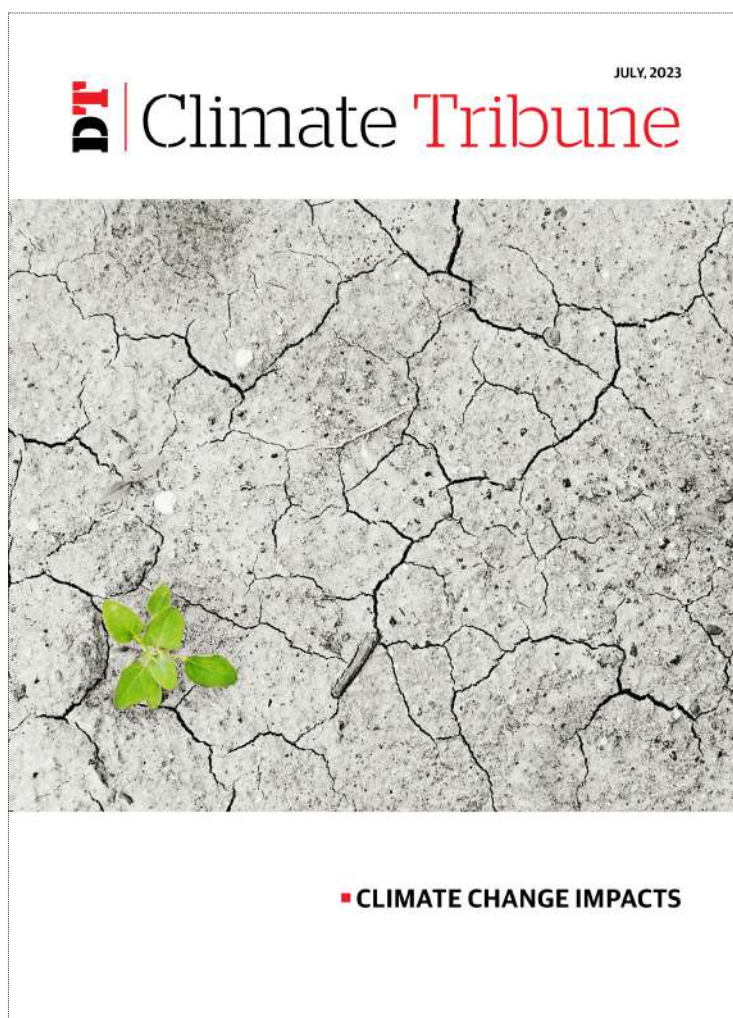
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PIXABAY

# Can donors enhance the capabilities of local actors to access climate finance?

Reflection from the 17th Community-Based Adaptation Conference on Climate Finance: an exchange on funders' roles and needs

Afsara Binte Mirza, Victoria Matusevich, Ameil Harikishun, Kazi Taiba Bari Nowsheen and May Thazin Aung

The 17th International Conference on Community-based Adaptation to Climate Change (CBA17) took place in May 2023 at Bangkok. Climate adaptation practitioners from over 50 countries gathered in person for a series of peer-to-peer knowledge exchange sessions on the locally led adaptation (LLA), its principles, and how LLA can be put into practice. This year's confer-

ence had five cross-sectoral themes and climate finance was one of them. The climate finance theme explored the way in which climate finance flows through the system, the different risks associated with it and how the risks can be minimised. Fundación Avina, International Center for Climate Change (ICCCAD), South South North (SSN) with support from International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and Voices for Just Climate Action (VCA) hosted a session under climate finance theme on “Strengthening capabilities to secure climate finance: an exchange on funders’ roles and needs.” The purpose of the session was to examine the chal-

## “Success criteria of a project should be defined or fixed by the community which will allow self-monitoring for improvement”

allenges and opportunities of local communities in accessing and managing climate finance fruitfully.

To foster a more realistic and interactive discussion, the participants were divided into five roundtables, each representing one of the proposed stages of a project cycle (access, implementation, project management, monitoring and reporting, and financial sustainability). Each roundtable was hosted by a representative of a climate fund. The session proposed an innovative approach where funders asked practitioners, community representatives and intermediate organisations on how they could potentially reshape their role in building capabilities of local communities within different stages of financing adaptation projects. The main questions addressed were the following: What are the main capability gaps that need to be addressed? What are the new/enhanced roles that donors can play in closing the gaps? How can collaboration amongst different actors be enhanced?

The roundtable for the “access” stage was hosted by Demetrio Innocenti from Green Climate Finance (GCF) and Jesper Hornberg from Global Resilience Partnership (GRP). Participants mentioned the need to enhance capabilities to build solid log frames and conduct due diligence. When preparing an application, flexibility in letting applicants share their spe-

cific needs was pointed out, as well as finding cost-effective alternatives for obtaining essential information for preparing an application, especially when developing a climate rationale. Also, addressing language barriers to ensure better communication was highlighted. This roundtable also discussed the challenge of recognizing the distinction between project support and project development support, along with the financial and technical consequences that many organisations face while preparing their projects. This also relates to the issue of outsourcing specific activities, potentially resulting in lost overhead and impeding the growth of internal capacity, thus perpetuating the preference for organisations already possessing established capabilities.

The roundtable discussion for the “Implementation” stage was hosted by Vincent Gainey from FCDO. The main takeaways include the need for donors to increase flexibility for investment and time to build local communities capabilities; donor expectations of outputs and outcomes often fail to align with the realities at the local level or even with intermediary organisations’ modality in implementing a project; and increasing ways to embed climate knowledge and impact at the local level. Participants from this roundtable also stressed that donors prefer to collaborate with organisations that already have some technical capacity in developing proposals, hence, those without that capacity tend to be overlooked.

Margaret Arnold from the World Bank hosted the roundtable dedicated to the “project management” stage. Participants stressed the importance of donors to maintain regular communications with the intermediaries and local communities to better understand the challenges faced by them on ground, facilitating more collaborative and effective project management. It is thereby crucial to follow an optimised approach for learning and adaptive management. Moreover, participants also highlighted how donors should work closely with intermediaries to efficiently engage and direct financial resources, and thereby keeping the scope to co-design projects with donors, intermediaries, and local actors and allow greater transparency and flexibility for local communities.

The roundtable on “monitoring and reporting” hosted by Monica Borrero, Programme Manager - Innovation Small Grant Aggregator Platform (ISGAP) at UNDP. During this breakout room participants acknowledged the need for mobilising local leaders, community volunteers, and existing networks to collect data, providing them access to utilise technology, introducing suitable tools for monitoring and reporting, conducting needs assessment, setting up baselines and engaging in co-production of knowledge. Additionally, donors need the capacity to understand the communities’ needs and aspirations. Success criteria of a project should be defined or fixed by the community which will allow self-monitoring for improvement. In addition to this, some second order indicators should be in place to tackle power imbalance. Donors can conduct monitoring field visits to maintain an in-

formal communication with the community and better comprehend the technical barriers (during the initial and ending phase). Above all, a chunk of money can be earmarked by donors for learning and training throughout the project phases dedicated to local communities.

Roundtable on the “financial sustainability and long-term impact” stage and was hosted by Omer-van Renterghem of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands and Amit Smotrich of USAID. During the interactive discussion, participants highlighted that financial sustainability is challenging as organisations are often funded ‘project-to-project’, with long-term impact threatened by funding ending without the next phase’s funding being secured. Therefore, more bridge funding and longer-term investment is needed to ensure that organisations can retain staff, plan longer-term, and ensure that impact is realised. This could also include specialised funding windows at the end of a project, to ensure that activities can continue until additional funding is secured. Donors changing requirements and investment priorities pose a challenge for smaller organisations as they are not always agile enough to pivot. Financial sustainability needs to be considered from the outset of the project development and delivery cycle. In this regard, donors can assist in assisting organisations with understanding what may be required to secure additional funding, and possibly build their capacities in this regard. Capacity is needed with regards to institutional development and how this is linked to achieving financial sustainability and organisational continuity.

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Afsara Binte Mirza is a Research Officer at ICCAD. Her research interest lies in locally led adaptation, non-economic loss and damage and just transition in Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

Victoria Matusevich is the Coordinator of the BASE Initiative at Fundación Avina. Her interest lies in promoting access to climate finance at the local level focusing on alternative approaches to develop the climate attribution.

Ameil Harikishun is the Finance Thematic Lead for the Climate & Development Knowledge Network (CDKN) and works to accelerate access to inclusive and transformative finance at the local level for climate action.

Kazi Taiba Bari Nowsheen is a Junior Researcher at ICCAD. Her area of focus is Resilience, locally led adaptation, and grant-making.

May Thazin Aung is a climate finance researcher at the International Institute for Environment and Development. Her work focuses on access to finance for those most impacted by climate change as well as a just transition to a low-carbon and climate resilient future.

“ Financial sustainability needs to be considered from the outset of the project development and delivery cycle ”





PIXABAY

## **Challenges & Prospects: The Road to Realizing Locally Led Climate Adaptation Principles**

Climate Adaptation at the Grassroots: Unveiling the Potential of Locally Led climate adaptation

The effects of climate change are indisputable, necessitating effective adaptation strategies. Global Commission on Adaptation has recognized this and stressed the importance of a locally led paradigm that differs from traditional top-down approaches. Eight fundamental principles form the basis of this paradigm: devolved decision-making, redressing structural inequalities, developing sustainable funding mechanisms, investing in local capabilities, a robust understanding of climate risks and uncertainties, promoting flexible programming and continuous learning, ensuring transparency and accountability, and promoting collaborative action. Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) is based on operationalizing these principles. However, despite the importance of LLA principles in building resilient societies, their implementation presents several challenges and opportunities.

LLA's first principle, which emphasizes the devolution of decision-making to the lowest appropriate level, undergoes significant challenges. The challenges include relocating the deep-rooted power dynamics and bridging international planning with local realities. In many cases, local communities are marginalized, lacking the ability to participate in the decision-making processes regarding adaptation. Being the front-line bearers of climate change impacts, these communities possess unique insights for effective adaptation strategies. Therefore, the key to enhancing climate adaptation effectiveness is to empower local communities and take advantage of their rich understanding of their local contexts.

Globally, the focus is escalating on social justice and equity, leading to structural changes in climate adaptation programs. The second principle of LLA emphasizes addressing structural inequalities within local communities. These communities include women, youth, children, disabled people, indigenous peoples, and marginalized ethnic groups. In conventional adaptation programs, immediate risk factors are usually addressed without considering the underlying structural problems. This calls for a fundamental shift in strategies. In order to address these issues, a thorough understanding of the socio-economic and political factors that result in climate vulnerability is necessary. Despite its complexity, the principle offers the possibility of forming more just and resilient societies.

The third principle of LLA emphasizes the need for patient and predictable funding, available over a long period, to facilitate the development of local governance, capacity, and institutions. The existing climate adaptation funding mechanisms challenge local actors due to its short-term horizons and complex accessibility. Implementing this principle, requires a comprehensive transformation of the climate financing system. The development of innovative funding mechanisms, simplified proposal formats, and multi-stakeholder

partnerships is gradually reshaping the availability of finance for local actors. However, the ongoing global discourse on the need for more predictable, long-term adaptation funding offers a promising outlook.

The fourth principle of LLA emphasizes investing in local capabilities to foster enduring institutional competence. Regarding operationalizing this principle, local entities often function as mere executors of set activities, with little atten-

“Globally, the focus is escalating on social justice and equity, leading to structural changes in climate adaptation programs”

tion paid to capacity building. Consequently, they often need help to take independent action on climate change. Despite these obstacles, this principle offers excellent potential: prioritizing investments for local capacities to promote institutional resilience and ensure long-term sustainability of adaptation strategies. Thus, the principle advocates for sustained adaptation efforts by empowering local institutions to lead future interventions.

A fifth principle of LLA calls for the amalgamation of local, Indigenous, and scientific knowledge to develop a compre-

hensive understanding of climate risks. However, the challenge lies in harmonizing these diverse knowledge types. Climate risk evaluations are dominated by scientific approaches that may inadvertently overlook the valuable input local communities provide. Despite this challenge, the principle offers the possibility of producing enriched climate risk assessments. It can inform the design of effective adaptation strategies based on the confluence of local and scientific insights.

The sixth principle of locally-led adaptation emphasizes flexible programming and learning through fostering an adaptive response to climate change's inherent uncertainties. Traditional programming structures are often rigid and inhibit adaptability to evolving conditions and lessons learned. This phenomenon makes it difficult to operationalize this principle. Due to the increasing recognition of the volatile nature of climate change impacts, flexible programming and learning are gaining importance. A continuous learning process from successes and failures can lead to more responsive and effective adaptation programs.

According to the seventh principle of LLA, transparent and accountable practices must be followed in all aspects of climate adaptation, from financing to program delivery. Nevertheless, operationalizing this principle is challenging as local actors and institutions are largely excluded from these processes, compromising transparency and downward accountability. However, the advent of digital technology and social accountability tools offers exciting prospects. For example, accessible digital platforms and social audits could facilitate the distribution of information to local actors. This ensures transparency and accountability in climate adaptation processes.

LLA's eighth principle encourages collaboration across sectors and levels. However, achieving this level of synergy presents challenges, primarily because of the need for coordination and the existence of multiple independent accountability systems. Despite these obstacles, the prospects for implementing Principle 8 appear promising. Collaboration can enhance the efficiency and scope of climate adaptation efforts. This increases individual efforts and reduces duplication, paving the way for sustainable and effective climate action.

Although implementing locally-led adaptation principles can be demanding, it offers an invaluable pathway to robust climate adaptation. These principles aim to enhance the resilience of local communities through harnessing leadership potential and forming a promising climate resilience paradigm. The substantial challenges associated with this process serve as opportunities, opening avenues for transformative innovations for long-term resilience. These principles catalyze a necessary systemic change, shifting adaptation strategies from traditional methods towards a more inclusive and sustainable model.

“ Although implementing locally-led adaptation principles can be demanding, it offers an invaluable pathway to robust climate adaptation ”

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AIY Lankapura is working at the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka as a Lecturer. His research interest lies in sustainable and climate resilient community development. Can be reached at: [amilalanka@agri.rjt.ac.lk](mailto:amilalanka@agri.rjt.ac.lk) , [amilalankapura2@gmail.com](mailto:amilalankapura2@gmail.com)





PIXABAY

# Flexible Funding and Programming for Locally Led Adaptation: The turning point for Locally Led Adaptation

Focusing on Flexible Funding and Programming for operationalizing Locally led Adaptation

**Mahira Nazniba Rodoshee, Rawnak Jahan Ranon**

The prevailing top-down approach to adaptation interventions has often overlooked the needs and priorities of the people at the frontline of climate change. Given the growing severity of climate crises and the lack of vulnerable communities' capacity to cope, efforts to adapt rather than mitigate have been the agenda for a long time now. But devising adaptation interventions without understanding the local context increases the risk of 'maladaptation.' The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) defines maladaptation as actions taken to help communities to adapt to climate change and minimize vulnerability, which leads to uncertain consequences and increased vulnerability.

Locally Led Adaptation (LLA), has the potential to curtail the risks of maladaptation by creating the space for local actors to take part in decision-making through being involved in planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluation for adaptation interventions.

LLA is still an evolving concept, but to operationalize and devolve the decision-making power at the bottom, changes need to be initiated at the top tier of the society. Shifting power to the local level will require flexible funding and programming, and consistent capacity building of local actors. Rigid funding mechanisms can lead to adaptation failures, as practitioners may be constrained by donors' restrictions on where and how the money will be utilized. Often times, after an adaptation project ends, donors lose accountability for measuring the success or overseeing the failures of the implemented practices.

“ conducting regular dialogues between the donors and local actors will ensure accountability and transparency in terms of the efficient usage of funds and avoid the risks of maladaptation ”

For example, during research on evaluating social equity in protected area co-management in the Sundarbans, south-western part of Bangladesh, it was observed that the co-management approach struggled after the Climate Resilient Ecosystems and Livelihoods (CREL) project ended. Co-management approach is one of the approach of the forest department where local people are actively engaged in protected area management with a view to curbing illegal activities and conserving biodiversity. This approach also supports to generate alternative income opportunities. However, Co-management Committee (CMC) in Sundarbans, despite possessing the necessary capacities, losses their of interest in AIG activities due to lack of adequate funds. Similarly, in Vanuatu, a project on securing potable water for two villages proved to be ineffective due to strict funding criteria and predefined objectives. As a consequence, the local communities used their own knowledge and networks to develop their contextualized water supply system. If the fund disbursement procedure is flexible, the local actors will be able to deal with the climate-induced uncertainties and risks in a context specific manner.

A good example of a flexible funding mechanism is seen in Da Nang, Vietnam, where the Women's Union, a women-led organization, empowered local grassroots groups to create their investment incentives. This approach allowed them to pilot incentives for storm-resistant housing, tailored to the needs of a low-income, predominantly female-led housing market. Moreover, quick and easily accessible funding plays a vital role in emergency responses, effectively addressing urgent needs wherever and whenever they arise. For instance, the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) established by Red Crescent for the coastal districts in Bangladesh, provides funds directly to the local humanitarian actors both before and after disasters. This emergency response approach not only minimizes the risks of calamities but also strengthens people's adaptive capacities. Additionally, this funding approach aligns with principle number three of LLA which is 'providing patient and predictable funding'.

In the adaptation area, there is a strong emphasis on sharing and promoting success stories, whereas failures are frequently overlooked.. This approach raises concerns about the efficient allocation of funding at the grassroots level. The programming needs to be flexible in terms of sharing learnings in a pragmatic way. The implementing bodies need to liaise efficiently with local governments to incorporate lessons learnt from the previous adaptation failures and inform donors accordingly. The implementing bodies need to embrace the culture of 'learning from failures'.

For instance, high economic value underpinned the expansion of the shrimp industry in the southwestern part of Bangladesh. Though this industry received enormous support from the donor agencies initially but gradually the funding started decreasing considering the contested outcomes of the shrimp industry. The negative social and ecological consequences prompted by this industry led the shrimp farmers to opt for crab farming. Therefore, sharing learnings allows the scope to avoid the risk of undertaking and continuing unsustainable adaptation measures.

In the prevailing climate change adaptation arena, climate finance flows from donors to local actors via different intermediaries, and in most cases, donors do not hold direct communication medium with the local actors. Hence, conducting regular dialogues between the donors and local actors will ensure accountability and transparency in terms of the efficient usage of funds and avoid the risks of maladaptation.

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**Mahira Nazniba Rodoshee is working as a Research Associate at the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD). E-mail: mahira.rodoshee@icccad.org**

**Rawnak Jahan Khan Ranon is working as a Research Officer at the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD). E-mail: ranon.jahan@icccad.org**





PIXABAY

# Adopting climate laws to uphold the rights of the local vulnerable communities

Necessity of Specific Climate Law to Fight with National Climate Vulnerabilities: Experiences and Expectations

**Moumita Das Gupta**

A way forward to tackle the country-specific climate vulnerabilities and challenges can be paved instrumentally by adopting and implementing necessary laws, policies and plans. These laws should establish and improve the rights of the most vulnerable communities, who are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis. By the first decade of this century, mainly the developed countries started to adopt their national climate change laws focusing on mitigation targets and institutional arrangements to establish innovative governance mechanisms. Gradually, by the end of the second decade of this century, the developing and the least developed countries started to adopt their own national climate change laws.

In 2002, New Zealand adopted their national law on climate change (the Climate Change Response Act, 2002 of New Zealand) where institutional arrangements and national mitigation targets were prioritized. Provisions for sector-specific mitigation measures were included in this legislation. Afterwards, when the United Kingdom adopted their climate law (Climate Change Act, 2008 of the UK), they considered carbon budgeting as one of the major climate related issues of the country. This law has provisions for trading schemes, establishing a committee on climate change, programs for adaptation to climate change and reporting before the Parliament. In 2009, the Philippines adopted a parliamentary



legislation (Climate Change Act of 2009 of the Philippines) to “mainstream climate change into Government policy formulations” by “establishing the framework strategy.” It has mainly established an institutional framework to conduct and monitor different activities undertaken to curtail climate change vulnerabilities.

Since then, a number of other countries have adopted specific climate laws based on national situations and requirements. These laws are being implemented to ensure smooth achievement of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs).

While establishing relevant institutions, the national climate change law of Kenya (the Climate Change Act, 2016 of Kenya) has also determined duties and responsibilities of relevant authorities of both public and private sectors. It has specific provisions for mainstreaming climate actions and strategies for public engagement. The law also has financial provisions with scopes for promoting measures for eliminating climate change.

“ Adoption of parliamentary legislation is highly important to nationally recognize legal rights of the climate victims, irrespective of their political views ”

In South Asia, only Pakistan has adopted such legislation in the year 2017 (the Pakistan Climate Change Act, 2017) by considering their own national contexts. Like others, this legislation has also established institutional arrangements. Additionally, it has created the ‘Pakistan Climate Change Fund’ where there is scope to provide financial assistance to support mitigation and adaptation projects. Earlier, Pakistan has adopted a separate legislation (the Global Change Impact Studies Center Act, 2013) to support sector wise research studies regarding tackling climate change. This institution is aimed to “undertake scientific investigations of the phenomenon of climate change at regional and sub-regional levels”.

On the other hand, relevant legislation of Kiribati (the Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Act, 2019) has even wider scope in this regard. While establishing relevant govern-

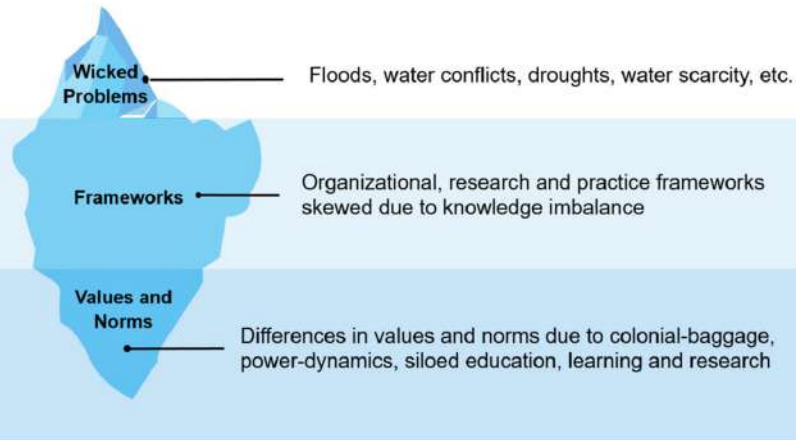
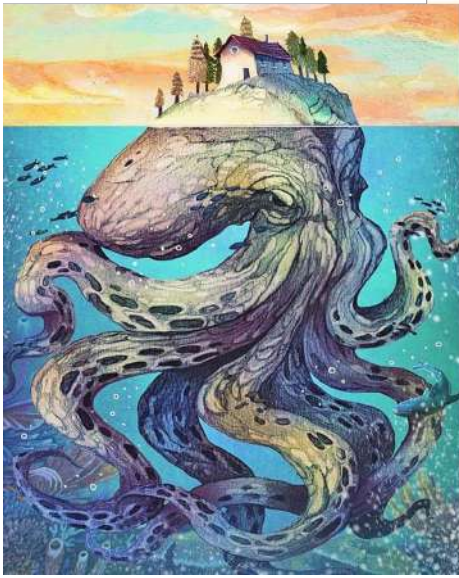
ance arrangements, it has also established a national expert group to ensure strategic coordination and to provide necessary technical advice. This law also focused on scopes for inclusive community engagements in decision making by considering age dimensions and gender dimensions.. Funding arrangements of this law have integrated measures for disaster management and climate change. Most importantly, it has created scopes to claim compensation from any private organization or individual who is responsible for willful negligence to cause direct loss and damage to any other person or organization.

In Bangladesh, the only parliamentary legislation to address climate change impacts is the Climate Change Trust Act, 2010 (Act No. 57 of 2010). It has created an institutional arrangement to finance tackling climate change. However, no provision was made for marginalized communities to exercise their rights and claim any facilities from this fund. There is also no scope for public participation in decision-making. Moreover, the procedural part of this law is not yet adopted by the Executives. Bangladesh has recently updated Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2021 and adopted the National Adaptation Plan (2023 - 2050) in 2022, and has numerous policies and plans at national level to fight climate vulnerabilities. However, absence of any particular parliamentary legislation is hindering the capacity to redress the righteous claims of the climate vulnerable and marginalized communities of Bangladesh. These communities should have the opportunity to avail their basic rights by taking adequate legal actions at the local level.

Adoption of parliamentary legislation is highly important to nationally recognize legal rights of the climate victims, irrespective of their political views. It is crucial to determine the procedure for imposing adequate compensations by weighing the losses and damages faced by marginalized communities currently. Enforcement of a well-equipped parliamentary legislation can be a key weapon to penalize those who are liable and responsible for accelerating climate change adversities at national level. It is indispensable to bring the climate change issues within the jurisdiction of the local courts. This will enable the judges to hear and decide relevant legal disputes at the periphery to ensure justice for the marginalized communities in the long run. Adoption of supporting parliamentary legislation will strengthen the position of Bangladesh in international climate negotiations by recognizing reasonable legal claims in this respect. It will create opportunities to pursue financing locally led adaptation initiatives and to claim compensations for local losses and damages.

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**Moumita Das Gupta is an Advocate affiliated with the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. She is working in the Centre for Climate Justice - Bangladesh (CCJ-B) as a Research Fellow. Her research interest lies in climate change laws, policies and governance mechanisms. She can be reached at [dgmoumita2014@gmail.com](mailto:dgmoumita2014@gmail.com) for future contacts.**



COURTESY

## How 'local' is locally led adaptation?

Looking beyond the rhetoric of 'local' - what can make climate adaptation planning truly bottom up

**Neha Khandekar and Arup Barua**

**R**ecent flooding events in New Delhi, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh or Germany are a wake-up call to the governments and heads of states to seriously reflect and start planning on climate disasters that are being overlooked currently. The aftermath of these disasters are faced by the most vulnerable population.

Locally led adaptation is gaining traction and it will be crucial to perceive how the framing of 'local' in locally-led adaptation will enable meaningful participation of local actors and institutions. Below we attempt to explain why and make an attempt towards how this framing can be grounded.

Under the umbrella of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, members of the epistemic community entailing dominant multilateral organisations, elite think tanks, funders, and international NGOs played a pivotal role in institutionalising and reshaping terminologies related to climate actions. Several terminologies such as 'participation', 'empowerment', and 'engagement' of the most vulnerable population in the climate change arena became buzzwords that were externally driven from the Global North.

Locally-led adaptation has been theorised as an alternative approach to community-based adaptation (CBA). Nevertheless, the pitfalls of CBA are yet to be fully investigated, and some projects of CBA profess increased resilience and reduced vulnerability to climate change of affected populations in a number of countries. Now, what LLA proposes in-

volves a robust transformation in the country's governance system, sub-systems and diverse institutions. While a local government is not politically mandated to perform its administrative reforms, and fully or partly rests on the central government for economic resources, it would not be easier to reflect on the 'local' agenda objectively.

Due to an imbalanced power structure, influence of political systems and hierarchies, bureau-technical process, the institutions and the actors of a local government or representatives would grapple in placing the 'local' agenda into the national agenda in a fully centralised governance system. Furthermore, following a Foucauldian perspective on the nexus of power and knowledge creation and dissemination, a local solution might be un-appraised compared to a donor-driven formula. Often funders' interest and ideas are given higher priority in ironing out local problems, considering western organisations and think tanks possess a wealth of scientific knowledge and sophisticated understanding of global issues alongside their financing instruments.

“ The contextual nuances can only be revealed by looking for alternative ways of doing science such as anthropological tools of inquiry and theories grounded in emotional and affective experiences of the vulnerable local communities' lives and livelihoods ”

The dominant way of doing climate science is still exclusionary. There is politicisation of knowledge production with powerful actors in control of creating dominant narratives. This has its roots in the colonial legacy but also inherent power inequities in the form of caste, patriarchy, geography etc at sub-national and national level.

Manifestation of vulnerabilities (exposure to risk and sensitivity) occur at the intersection of political, geographic and economic drivers of exclusion. However, vulnerability is also

a paradox with these very factors often being most informed about the solutions but labelled 'vulnerable'. Popular framing in media frames 'monsoon, storms' or 'uncertain weather' as a villain and paints a picture of insecurity. This sort of framing and labelling invites a whole host of top-down solutions imposed on 'beneficiaries'. Therefore, one needs to be wary of reductionism in climate and water (hydrological) sciences. And the fact that science or knowledge production is not value neutral.

(Using the metaphor of the painting 'The Prehistoric Power Of The Underwater World - The Octopus' & the iceberg to demonstrate the idea of visible vs hidden; that doing science and policy is not objective or value neutral)

The contextual nuances can only be revealed by looking for alternative ways of doing science such as anthropological tools of inquiry and theories grounded in emotional and affective experiences of the vulnerable local communities' lives and livelihoods. The mission thinking bullet pointed style messaging is good to set larger goals and visions but dilutes the lived experiences of people. Looking towards storytelling or narrative analysis can enlighten us working in the policy and planning space for understanding the histories and contexts better for planning tailored solutions. Seeking methods for social justice in both theory and practice can act as powerful agents in enhancing agency and representation for those excluded.

While framing locally-led adaptation in international negotiations, it is crucial to incorporate the thought process of creating agency for communities at the ground. Successful implementation will only happen when we confront the politics of knowledge production and financing, and advocate for representation of disciplines such as environmental humanities, history and the voice of the local communities.

Actively observing and participating in climate justice and decolonisation movements is equally important. Looking beyond 'mission thinking' towards storytelling as a powerful instrument for policy making; using participatory rural appraisal method for action research in planning adaptation on ground; grounding climate and water science theories embedded in emotional and affective experiences; and learning from the lived realities of the marginalised communities, or the daily mundane of lives of labour can be a way forwards to transform the current paradigm of locally led adaptation.

As Mao Zedong famously said, "It doesn't matter whether a cat is white or black, as long as it catches mice"; what matters most is not what label or terminology we use to define adaptation, we have to guarantee it that it addresses the structural inequalities and ameliorate the decision-making capabilities of local communities.

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**Neha Khandekar is a researcher and policy specialist based out of New Delhi, India. Arup Barua is a researcher and policy specialist based out of Dhaka, Bangladesh**



# Women leadership in localisation of climate actions in Nepal

Women's groups taking leadership to curate localised climate solutions



Sahayatra Nepal Ilam advocating with the municipality



Member of Karambot Agriculture Group on Agriculture Field

“ The country's federal constitution devolved many functions, authorities and resources to the local and provincial governments ”

## Pragya Sherchan

Women groups in Nepal have succeeded in influencing the local government/municipality to incorporate gender-just climate solutions (GJCS) in the municipality's policy and plan and incorporating in the municipal budget for implementation. The women groups had successfully implemented wetland conservation, small scale irrigation and establishment of public parks with financial partnership with the municipalities. They are now recognised by the municipalities and other stakeholders for their work on tackling climate change. This article sheds light on Prakriti Resources Centre's (PRC) gender and governance approach to climate justice and grassroots women's journey in actively engaging local governments to build greener municipalities.

The country's federal constitution devolved many functions, authorities and resources to the local and provincial governments. Among other functions, the local governments, had the mandate to localize national policy guidelines on climate change, environment and natural resource management, and take actions accordingly. PRC takes this as an opportunity to support community women groups and local government representatives to work collaboratively for establishment of climate-friendly and gender responsive development as one of the priority agendas at municipal level. PRC tailored its support to 20 women groups to increase their knowledge on climate change, climate finance, environmen-

tal justice and the disproportionate impact of climate change on women and girls. The women's knowledge and capacity building support paid off well. Documented evidence shows that the women, with increased knowledge and confidence, started talking about climate change and environmental problems within their communities as well as with the municipal authorities. This created a scope to share their views in other public forums at municipal and federal levels.

PRC implemented a project with 8 selected women's groups amongst the existing 20 to promote mutual trust, and improve working relationships between local government's municipal elects and the women's groups. PRC facilitated interactions between the women's groups and municipal elects and staff on municipal plans and budgets, to making local level development plans and budget climate and gender smart.

Localisation of climate actions is gradually gaining traction among both local governments and women groups. The women's groups took leadership and started approaching the municipality office bearers and inquired confidently about the programmes and budgets on climate change, environment conservation and genders issues, while demanding transparent and inclusive planning and budget preparation processes. They started actively participating in the planning meetings with written proposals based on their collectively identified climate solutions. These groups continue their lobbying with local governments to implement their climate solutions.

After consistent rapport building and lobbying few of the women-led climate initiatives were chosen for implementation by their municipality, which are illustrated below. Some of the women groups have continued to access the palika budget since then.

### Success Stories

Karambot Agriculture Women's Groups from Ramechhap's Manthali Municipality-2 turned desolate soil green. Due to a lack of irrigation facilities, 2.54 hectares of land sat fallow. Then, women's groups fought for a municipal budget for a well functioning irrigation system. They were also able to obtain a municipal budget of Rs. 100,000 (about \$1,000 USD), and PRC and the women group also contributed and acquired a water pumping machine and pipes. As a result, they could cultivate crops and vegetables. This success inspired other women to grow vegetables and get market access. This also became a significant source of income for several families. This accomplishment has now inspired women's groups to demand a municipal budget for the construction of a vegetable collection center and the response is positive..

Srijansheel Mahila Samaj Nepal, Tarakeshwor Municipality-4, Kathmandu, reclaimed the encroached public land and converted the land into a public park. Previously, the land was used as a landfill for waste collection by the locals. The group received Nepali Rupees 1,000,000 (approximately \$10,000 USD) for conservation and beautification of the park from the municipality. The women groups reported that they were threatened by the encroachers. However, they got support from the municipality and police to evacuate the land. In July 2023, the women's group had successfully handed over the park to the municipality..

Since 2020, Sahayatra Nepal, an environmental organization in Ilam Municipality-7, Ilam, has continuously lobbied for the formulation of the climate adaptation plan with the municipality. They organised a series of meetings and dialogues with the municipal officials. Finally they succeeded this year, as the Ilam municipality decided to prepare a Local Adaptation Plan of Action (LAPA), and allocated a budget to Sahayatra Nepal and PRC for co-developing the plan. PRC will support Sahayatra Nepal in developing LAPA of Ilam municipality.

These transformative stories show how the women leaders led local adaptation interventions. The women's groups and the municipality worked collaboratively for climate solutions locally. PRC documented learnings of these initiatives and designed nine principles of gender-just climate solutions in the publication titled 'Gender Just Climate Solutions- a discussion paper.'

### What have the women groups achieved so far?

Women groups have been able to change the gender stereo-

types and tackle the structural inequalities; and gained recognition and respect from the municipality and from their society.

"Sahayatra Nepal, Ilam is now known as a leading environmental organisation in Ilam. The municipality has highly acknowledged our work on wetland conservation. It invites and collaborates with us on environment and climate activities. We are working in a few places, but we are receiving requests from many other municipalities for support and advice. We are happy that our collaboration with PRC and Tewa

““ These transformative stories show how the women leaders led local adaptation interventions ””

has earned us recognition and respect.” - Hem Kumari Siwa, Chairperson, Sahayatra Nepal.

Besides this, the women groups build their institutional capacity and knowledge to identify climate problems and implement the solutions. They know how to access the municipal budget and sustain their climate works even after the project period, by reducing interdependency and taking ownership for making their cities greener and sustainable for all.

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Pragya Sherchan is working in Prakriti Resources Centre as a Programme Officer and leading a gender and resilience theme. Can be reached at [pragya@prc.org.np](mailto:pragya@prc.org.np) / [sherchanpragya001@gamil.com](mailto:sherchanpragya001@gamil.com)





PIXABAY

# A yearly overview of LLA activities of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD)

Scaling Up Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) in Bangladesh

Locally led Adaptation (LLA) is becoming a widely accepted and promising approach among development practitioners. LLA is unique, in the context of dealing with the impacts of climate change and scaling up adaptation interventions, as it emphasizes more on local ‘leadership’ rather than local ‘engagement.’

In a climate-vulnerable country like Bangladesh, adaptation interventions require to be sustainable, comprehensive, and context-specific. However, only ensuring the participation of the local communities in the decision-making process might not be sufficient. Before ensuring the community’s participation, it is essential to enhance the local communities’ potential in understanding and evaluating the climatic risks, threats, vulnerabilities, and resilience.

Once the communities are aware, they can actively lead the adaptation process, determining their needs and introducing appropriate solutions. Moreover, the promotion of a locally-led approach can also support local loss and damage which is a burning concept in today’s climate change arena. The government of Bangladesh, as well as different international and national development agencies, are working relentlessly to promote local communities’ leadership and enhance their capacities. Some of these interventions are reflected in the recently published National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2023-2050, and the Mujib Climate Prosperity Plan (MCP) 2022-2041.

Similarly, being one of the first endorsers and facilitators of LLA, the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD), a prominent research organization from Bangladesh has been promoting LLA at national, regional, and international levels, since 2021. This article highlights ICCCAD’s past and on-going LLA-related activities.

Introducing the National Platform on Locally Led Adaptation, Bangladesh (NPLLA, Bangladesh): In May 2022, ICCCAD organized a two-day multi-stakeholder consultation in Dhaka, where more than sixty participants from different government departments, INGOs, NGOs, CSOs, academicians, researchers and the private sector took part. The consultation was organized to highlight the importance of incorporating LLA and its eight principles in the different phases of any adaptation interventions. The most significant outcome of the program was the introduction of the ‘National Platform on Locally Led Adaptation (NPLLA)’ in Bangladesh. The platform now has more than twenty institutions and individuals as core members

Introductory Meeting of NPLLA: The first introductory meeting of the NPLLA was organized in September 2022, where the members shared their past and present LLA initiatives and challenges of scaling up LLA nationally. The platform members also shared their views on promoting and incorporating LLA in different projects and programs going forward. The objectives of the National Platform: (i) communicate local messages from grass root level to the national level,

“ Once the communities are aware, they can actively lead the adaptation process, determining their needs and introducing appropriate solutions ”

(ii) document case studies and good practices of LLA, (iii) ensure multi stakeholder engagement for knowledge generation and capacity enhancement.

Establishing the Divisional Platforms on LLA (DPLLA): One of the first outcomes of the NPLLA has been the establishment of the “Divisional Platforms of LLA (DPLLA).” To scale up the NPLLA activities in a “bottom-up” manner, the DPLLAs will be established across the eight-division of Bangladesh to (i) enhance collaboration within multiple stakeholders within the respective division and with the national level, (ii) enhance inter-sectoral cooperation and minimize knowledge gap, (iii) enhancing capacity of the local and grass root actors and government institutions in terms of climate change and community development, and (iv) promoting local leadership within the most vulnerable communities.

In February 2023, the first DPLLA was launched in Khulna. At the event, more than forty participants from different GOs,

INGOs, NGOs, grass root organizations, women and youth-led organizations, CSOs, and universities took part, shared their local needs, obstacles of scaling up LLA.

**Short Course on LLA:** In June 2023, to share the evolution, theories, and case studies of LLA, a four-day long, short course titled “Locally Led Adaptation and Local Loss and Damage: A Nexus Approach” was organized by ICCCAD with the support of the Independent University Bangladesh (IUB). This course fostered peer-to-peer learning and co-production of knowledge with the national and international participants. In total 23 participants from India, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and the Netherlands took part in this short course.

**Action Research and Generating LLA Evidence:** Action research has been a long-time practice of ICCCAD. Recently, the LLA program of ICCCAD has conducted two action-research projects solely focused on LLA. The UNDP-supported research aimed to assess the Climate Change Resilience Project (CCRP) conducted in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) through the lens of LLA; and “establishing a climate-resilient migrant-friendly town through LLA” project which was initiated in Mongla, Khulna by BRAC, SPARC, and GCA.

**Inclusion and Mainstream ‘LLA’ in the National Policy Documents:** ICCCAD has been supporting the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change (MoEFCC) of the government of Bangladesh (GoB) in developing the National Adaptation Plan (2023-2050), and other national policies and strategies related to climate change adaptation. One of the major contributions of ICCCAD in the NAP and the Mujib Climate Property Plan (MCP) development process, was the inclusion of LLA.

**Knowledge Management and Dissemination:** To disseminate the findings from the field studies and research, key activities of the LLA program of ICCCAD include publishing peer-reviewed journal articles, policy briefs, op-eds, commentaries, research reports, working papers, book chapters, columns, and articles in the national periodicals. From 2022 till June 2023, 17 publications under different categories have been recorded from the LLA program of ICCCAD. Besides, a special issue on Locally Led Adaptation is published annually under the Climate Tribune of Dhaka Tribune. Additionally, LLA program has a strong presence in disseminating LLA-related knowledge at this year’s Global Gobeshona Conference 3, Resilience Hub, the 17th Community-Based Adaptation Conference (CBA), side events at the LLA pavilion in the UN Conference of Party (COP27), and other national and international conferences.

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**Savio Rousseau Rozario is leading the Locally Led Adaptation (LLA) program of the International Centre for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) as the Program Coordinator. He can be reached at [savio.rozario@icccad.org](mailto:savio.rozario@icccad.org)**

“ Action research has been a long-time practice of ICCCAD ”



# Building Resilience on the Frontlines: LLA to Address Climate Change Impacts in the Vicinity



Women carrying hay to feed her cattle

- Photo Courtesy

Umesh Basnet and Nikita Basnet

The consequences of climate change are far-reaching and affect environmental, societal, and economical aspects of every life on earth. Even though climate change is considered as a global issue, in reality, it mostly affects the vulnerable people at the local level.

Hence, the concept of locally led adaptation (LLA) is very crucial to lessen the climate vulnerabilities at household level and to drive the communities towards climate resilience. The promulgation of the new constitution in 2015, introduced federalism in Nepal which delineates the powers and responsibilities among three tiers of government. This is to ensure a balance of power, promote regional development and inclusivity, and address historical inequalities and regional disparities to ensure decision-making is localised and responsive to local needs. The constitution of Nepal has already created an enabling environment for operationalizing LLA in its national context. This article provides examples of how climate change is impacting lives and livelihoods of local vulnerable communities residing within different geographical locations of Nepal. It also highlights their local leadership in adapting to climate change.

“ The promulgation of the new constitution in 2015, introduced federalism in Nepal which delineates the powers and responsibilities among three tiers of government ”

Sindhuli district lies in central Nepal and is characterised by a diverse landscape ranging from lowlands to the hills. Agriculture and animal husbandry is the main income source of the local economy. Recently, the residents at Ranikhola community located at an elevation of 1590 metres, have experienced seasonal shifts in temperature and precipitation. Mr.



Cultivating Medicinal and Aromatic plant species to diversify the livelihood

- Photos Courtesy





Typical traditional house made up of locally available resources

Fatta Bahadur Tamang, 89 years old local residents, said that they haven't received winter rainfall since the last 5 years and during monsoon they are receiving erratic rainfall leading to flood and landslides. The community has also experienced a rise in temperature in recent years, which is leading to a rise in mosquitoes and exotic plant species. The overall agricultural productivity of the area has reduced and the rate of migration has risen. However, the local communities are taking leadership and innovative adaptation measures like crop diversification, water source protection and management, reforestation and livelihood diversification to increase their adaptive capacity.

Similarly, the Hilepani community of Tinpatan Rural Municipality has its own story. Due to prolonged drought during winter, the existing water sources had dried off leading to water scarcity. In order to continue living in that area, the local communities availed water from the source by using electric water lifting technology with generous support from Nepal Water for Health (NEWAH), a non-government organization. However, this was costly for the local communities and not sufficient for drinking and cooking purposes. Followed by this, the community utilized their traditional knowledge to find alternative measures of clean water by adopting rainwater harvesting technique or carrying water from nearby streams to supplement the wa-

ter deficient for livestock feeding and latrine fluxing..

These are only a few examples on how climate change and its associated impacts have been directly affecting the most marginalised and vulnerable communities.. The cases mentioned above, showed that every community has their own distinct climate change related challenges. Hence, locally led adaptation (LLA) can aid to prioritise the needs of the local communities and tailor solutions which fits their socio-economic contexts. This means the LLA strategy is important in the context of Nepal to empower local communities to take ownership and control over climate change adaptation efforts in their specific contexts. LLA utilises local knowledge and innovations and helps to foster ownership, participation and inclusiveness. By empowering communities to lead their own adaptation efforts based on their needs and priorities, the climate vulnerable communities of Nepal can create more robust and effective responses to the impacts of climate change.

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Umesh Basnet is working in The Mountain Institute as a Research Coordinator and his research interest lies in Climate Change, Sustainable Development, Biodiversity Conservation and other Socio-Economic and Anthropological research. Can be reached at (ubasnet065@gmail.com, ubasnet@mountain.org)

Nikita Basnet is studying in St. Xavier's College and her research interest lies in Climate Change. Can be reached at (basnetnikita686@gmail.com)



RVT tank impacted by Flash flood at Hilepani community, Sindhuli.JPG