

Adèle Arendse | Towards Scaling Up Community Based Adaptation (CBA) to Climate Change: The International SSN Network Experience Addressing Climate Change, Promoting Sustainable Development

Good morning everyone. I feel like I am on a talent show and need to perform. Anyway, I am from an NGO called SouthSouthNorth. It is a network of organizations based in six southern countries. We do mitigation as well as adaptation work. I have some pamphlets and posters there on the table if you want more information.

Just as a little bit of a background, SouthSouthNorth has experience in the field of sustainable development, climate change, poverty reduction, social change, gender etc. What we try to do is pioneer new approaches and apply new instruments to address climate change and promote sustainable development. So in a sense, where methodological gaps exist, we try to recognize that and share that with the international community.



What I will be talking about today is our experience in dealing with adaptation, specifically community-based adaptation and I will expand a little bit more on that as we go along.

This is just a picture of the international adaptation team. Together, as I said, we are working in the six different countries and that is basically Bangladesh, Indonesia, Brazil, South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania.



So the first question is basically, what is adaptation to climate change. There is a body of international experts that reviews all climate change published literature and that is called the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). They produce an assessment report of all of the literature every five years or so. The latest report is the fourth assessment. There are also different working groups. I am not going to go into any of the details because it is all available on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change website.

Just to say that this group acknowledges that millions of people will be affected by climate change in the future and this will take the forms of floods, droughts and any other extreme events as well as threats to food security. In fact, they acknowledge that climate change is already impacting us. As a reaction to this, the international community, as well as countries, are trying to plan for these changes that are actually happening now as well as in the future.

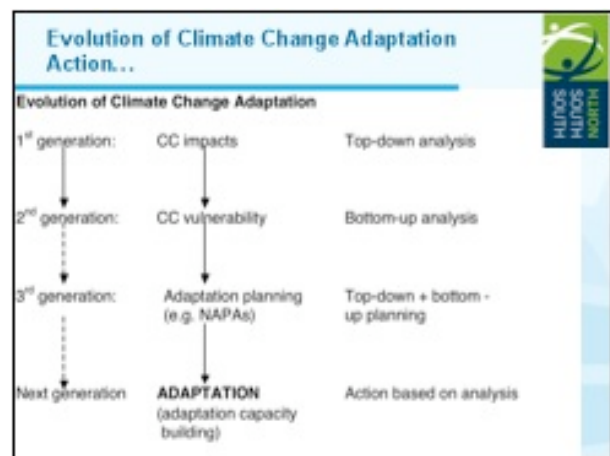
The definition, according to the IPCC, is that adaptation is the adjustment in natural and or human systems in response to any climate stimuli that actually has harmful impacts or provides beneficial opportunities.

In order to understand what adaptation really is, you will come across a number of words, including sensitivity, vulnerability and adaptability. I just want to explain very briefly what that is all about. What is being said is that the most vulnerable ecological and socio-economic systems are those with the greater sensitivity to climate change and have the least ability to adapt. Sensitivity is thus the degree to which the system will respond to a given change in climate and that can basically be taking measures, looking at the composition and functioning of an ecosystem and how it responds to different climate stimuli and changes in the climate stimuli. Adaptability is the degree to which system can adjust to, adjust in response to these sensitivities in basically what is happening or in anticipated changes. This can be likened to the term 'adaptive capacity' or 'resilience' of systems where there is an ecosystem or human system. This is all encompassed in how vulnerable systems are to climate changes. This then depends on the sensitivity and the ability to adapt.

Just looking at that, why we are talking about sensitivity, why are we talking about vulnerability is that we need to look at what the links are between adaptation and poverty. Again, the body of knowledge, the IPCC, said that developing countries, as we know, are disproportionately affected by climate change and they are the most vulnerable and least able to adapt due to various constraints and that impact on their livelihoods. It affects their ability to adapt to any changes.

So basically climate change poses a substantial threat to any poverty reduction efforts that has been happening, is happening and will happen. Thus, adaptation to these changes is vital and a priority for any long-term programme that addresses poverty reduction. If we look at current coping strategies, that is a good start to see how people will adapt in the future.

This is just a very brief diagram to explain the evolution of how we actually came to adaptation. The first generation of people looked at climate impacts. That is basically the scientists looking at what has been happening, what are the trends, what has been happening. It was very much a top-down analysis. Then the next generation of thinkers came and said, this is actually impacting our systems, it is actually impacting our people. Then they started looking at what was happening on the ground. Then they said, okay, let's plan for the changes that are coming. And now there is a new generation of thinkers that are saying, we need to stop planning at some point. We need to take action. All of this action is based on all of this analysis that has been happening.



So the global response to climate change adaptation is basically coordinated in the UN under the Convention on Climate Change. The latest that the parties who have signed the Convention are working with is the Nairobi Work Programme, which basically outlines a programme of work from 2005 to 2010 that looks at impacts on vulnerability and adaptation with an aim of helping all the parties to improve their understanding and assessment of climate change as well as to make informed decisions about practical actions that need to happen on the ground. One of the specific programmes is targeted at the Least Developed Countries that are obviously the most vulnerable in providing support for their planning processes. That culminates in national adaptation plans of action.

The other process that is happening under the UN is establishing an adaptation fund to support adaptation in developing countries. While these activities are going on, and just to say that how this was basically spurred on was that the Stern Review, which was released about three years ago, basically highlighted that there was an urgent need to adapt and if you didn't do it now, the costs of adapting is going to be so much higher in the future. They noted that there is also no quick fix solution and funding is not the only thing that is going to solve the problem.

Just to move on then. You have adaptation but then you have different movements within the adaptation community. One community is focusing on the most vulnerable and that is basically called Community-based Adaptation. That notes that while there is support at the country level to help them plan, this is not enough. Governments are not necessarily capacitated to implement adaptation measures on the ground and hence, they have also noted that because people and countries are vulnerable to climate change and it varies and at a national level, they can only do so much. There is a growing movement that we need to note what is taking place at the grassroots level and basically support that bottom-up process to ensure that the vulnerable are able to adapt.

In this sense, I am using just a very loose definition of what I mean by community and it is basically a group of people that have a common understanding of something, whether it is practices, thinking, whatever. So it is a very broad definition. Then just to say that Community-based Adaptation, basically it encompasses all actions that are responding to climate stimuli, that are controlled by and benefit anyone that is active at the local level.

In summary, in the action that does take place at the local level needs to have a few elements, otherwise it cannot be called Community-based Adaptation. It needs to be people-centered, it needs to foster livelihoods, it needs to strengthen capacity through training and in other methods as well as supporting information sharing. The action should also incorporate appropriate indigenous knowledge, interprocesses. It needs to reduce the risk of disasters. It needs to support social change and it needs to engage in advocacy to address underlying causes of poverty. And it is a process. One of my colleagues in the SouthSouthNorth Network said that adaptation is not a destination, it is a process.

You have seen this diagram before but just to say that there are a lot of methods and frameworks that have looked at how you deal with impacts, how you assess impacts etc. A lot of it is focused on climate impacts and vulnerability. This is basically what you will call, you come across climate screening and

climate proofing and the basis of a lot of these activities in terms of frameworks and methodologies that are out there to help practitioners deal with this issue is focused a lot on development projects, development activities. It focuses on development and then adds climate as an extra stress to deal with in development projects.

But there are limitations to this kind of approach. It doesn't fully recognize that there are significant overlaps between adaptation and development. Then looking at when they do climate screening and climate proofing processes, it doesn't actually take into consideration the actual socio-economic, political and cultural aspects that are involved in adaptation. Thus, there is also a new way of thinking that looks at what we call Adaptation by Design. It takes the assessments to another level by looking at what can you plan, how can you do it, what kinds of actions need to happen and then looking at what kind of adaptation strategies are actually necessary to correct the assessments of current vulnerability to climate change impacts and looking at the appropriate use of technologies, traditional coping practices, diversified livelihoods and whatever government and local interventions there are.

To take this thinking a little further, the SouthSouthNorth Network, before anyone really started thinking about what is adaptation, how do you do adaptation, what does it look like, in 2005, the SSN adaptation team decided to experiment in these six countries. We knew that the adaptation fund was going to come into effect.

The adaptation fund is a fund that has been set up as part of the Kyoto Protocol, you can look that up as well. It takes a two per cent levy off of all clean development mechanism projects, the carbon credits that are there, it takes two per cent of that value and puts it into the adaptation fund to actually fund adaptation. It is benefiting from the whole mitigation market mechanisms that are out there. If we were to have an operational adaptation fund, we would need to ask the question, so how would they disperse the funds that are in there and how would people be able to access. It's not a lot of money and it will be completely oversubscribed so you actually need a process where you actually prove what adaptation actually is, what you are doing is adaptation. What we thought is let's put together a framework for donors, not only for the adaptation fund, that evaluates and verifies adaptation processes and this effectively means that you prove additionality within the adaptation interventions. It is very similar to what is happening in the mitigation world where they also need to prove what they are doing is actually reducing greenhouse gases.

So the basis of the approach was to consider Community-based Adaptation in the poorest regions that are most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and use this methodology and systematic approach for other like development practitioners to find where these areas are by using climate impact indicators, using poverty data and finding hot spots for priority adaptation interventions. We thought that these two aspects were potentially eligibility requirements for accessing these funds.

The framework is basically been called LOCATE, which is called Local Options for Communities to Adapt and Technologies for Enhancement. This framework, as I said, has been tested in the six countries and it follows a basic four-phase process, and follows some of the discussion in the third IPCC assessment

report. These are basically to identify where those hot spots are, to find people to work with, to design a process, to implement and then to monitor and evaluate the impact of this process. This is targeted at people that actually, they are not starting from a development point of view but from a climate point of view. The only reason that we have chosen this method is that the adaptation fund would be there and climate change is their point of departure. We have decided that this is our point of departure. But at the end of the day, I must say that climate adaptation project doesn't look very different from a development project, but your point of departure is different.

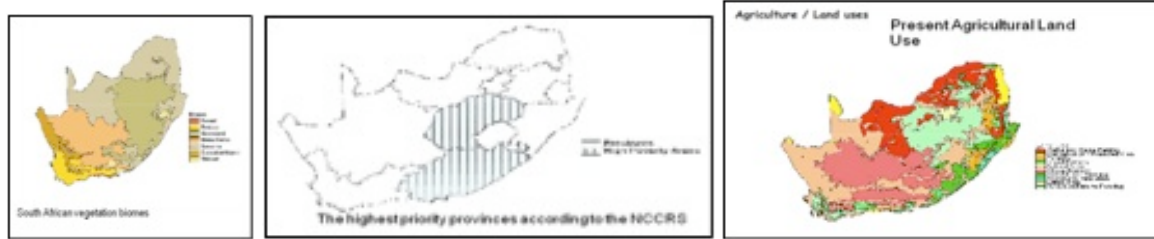
In order to understand, and I will go through this briefly, you can always chat to me afterwards about the details is, that again, if you need to understand vulnerability, you need to understand adaptation. There is some basic research that you need to do as a development practitioner or anyone that wants to do an adaptation project. You need to look at what the climate impacts are out there, what is happening in terms of coping strategies, what is predicted for the future, what are the shocks and how are people dealing with this. A lot of this information can be sourced from the UN, from the IPCC assessment reports, from national communications, country-level impact reports, the national adaptation plans of action etc. So a lot of the information is already out there, you just need to draw, get it from somewhere. It is a very top-down approach, this process. So you have looked at the climate impacts, the probabilities etc., now you need to look at the poverty side of things. There are poverty-mapping exercises, censuses etc. so there is a lot of sources of information.

In the first phase, identification of the hot spots, as I said, this is a very quantitative process and it basically you ask some key questions, some key tasks and there are some key tools. And the outcome of this process is basically using GIS mapping to take in all this data and overlay it on each other. Also just to say that this method and all these questions are based on the sustainable livelihoods framework. So it is not new, it is drawing from other methods and frameworks that are out there.

In order to verify that you have identified a hot spot, there are also a process where you need to do to these places to ask certain questions, find out what is happening and cross check and basically doing a scoping exercise for potential people to work with, project partners, as well as looking at what are the current coping strategies. So it is very much a top-down, looking in, taking a snapshot, what is happening in the hot spots.

And then there is a process of identifying the project owner. This is also quite a qualitative process. Once you have identified your hotspot, once you have verified that this truly is a hot spot, you go in there and you start talking to people. I would also caution that this point you need to be quite sensitive to what is happening in particular areas. You are very much doing a low-key scoping, talking to people, find out exactly what is going on, gauging the enthusiasm for getting involved and actually doing the project.

This first identification stage, in summary, is that at the end, you get your hotspot, you find your list of potential and eligible partners to work with as well as exploring some ideas. The outcome of this process is your hotspot map.



Just to give you a very brief snapshot of what my colleagues did in 2005 before I joined SSN. I am just going to throw a series of maps at you so just bear with me. So what are the impacts, what are the changes historically in terms of whatever variable you choose, precipitation, whatever. And then you start looking at land use and what is happening in your country and then you start identifying what areas are most vulnerable to climate change. A lot of our information in South Africa was sourced from our national Climate Change Response Strategy. So a lot of countries have done some work, it is just about accessing that work. Then looking at biomes, what is most vulnerable, poverty, where the poverty hot spots are. That is basically overlaid into your hotspot map.

In this particular one, you will see the red spots are the ones that have quite a few variables laid over each other and those are the hotspots. But you can also choose to work in other areas that you feel are quite needed. But this is just to use as a guide to where your adaptation interventions need to be and target the most vulnerable.

Then you move into a phase of project design. Again, you are asking some key questions about vulnerability, what sectors do you want to work in, potential project owners. This all culminates in a document we call the Project Idea Note, the PIN. This also follows a process that goes with the mitigation process so for those of you involved in climate change, this is not new. This is just to systematize your thinking of climate change, the impacts, who is vulnerable etc.

This gets fleshed out a little bit more into what they call a Project Design Document. This document actually takes awhile to put together as you really need to think about and get your head around what is really happening at the local level, what are the factors influencing adaptive capacity. In this way, what we have done in the SSN Network is that we have put formats and asked some questions to what has been happening. How do you start thinking about this? Actually this is the basis of any project proposal that you put together to access any adaptation funds. It is a very very useful exercise to go through.

Your next step is to obviously source funding and at this point, we actually envisage that if the adaptation board decides to use this kind of framework as a guide, at that point you go to the adaptation fund board and say we want to access funds and here is all the information you could possibly ever need to understand what we mean by adaptation.

Then you go to the implementation phase where you actually do all of the activities that you envisage and then you need to monitor and evaluate the impact of the process. This should also be part of your project design as well.

The SSN Network then actually experimented in the six different countries and we've come up with a couple of lessons learned. They are actually all documented in the CD-ROM and there are a couple on the table. Through the application of the framework, there is one lesson I would like to highlight.

It is participation, participation, participation. It is very important when you plan something like this, you need to involve the stakeholders at every level of the project cycle and without that, forget it. You don't need to do an adaptation project and you don't need to access funding. It is not going to be worthwhile. It will be a failure.

This framework was basically published in a publication called *Tiempo*. It is also available online. It is in the *Bulletin on Climate and Development* produced by the International Institute for Environment. This methodology is very basically outlined in the issue in July 2006. Basically, we feel this is quite a good tool as it provides a systematic approach to creating, designing and implementing a Community-based Adaptation project. As we said, this is a work in progress.

This framework is now also being applied in eight other African countries. This project is called Community-based Adaptation Africa. It is being funded by the Climate Change Africa Adaptation Programme, which is a jointly funded programme by IDRC and DFID. Through this project, we aim to enhance the methodology with even more broader experiences in different ecological, political and socio-economic contexts. So I would just say watch this space.

So what we have seen is the very first stages of scaling up Community-based Adaptation and there are a number of activities that are already happening. The understanding is there now. When I started working at SouthSouthNorth about two and a half years ago, people were still grappling with what is adaptation. But there is a very clear now, this is what we are going to do and I think this methodology also helps to guide the thinking, if anything. You don't have to follow all the steps, but just to ask the questions and think through things.

We also note that Community-based Adaptation is also taking place where there is a development deficit out there. So you really can't do adaptation without meeting basic development needs. Development projects have not fulfilled their purpose so far. It is still a process. And I think adaptation will probably help this process but it is a bit difficult to say that you can prove adaptation without, you can't prove adaptation without actually doing development without it. There is a whole theoretical discussion that I can't get into.

Based on what is happening, there are a number of organizations that are active in this field. There is Practical Action, there is CARE, I can't even begin to list all of them. Just to note that there are a lot of new approaches that are empowering local communities and countries to address climate impacts. These now need to be scaled up. There is an urgent need for these groups to share their experiences and widen the application of Community-based Adaptation. And we need to move away from pilots and move to a more programmatic approach for addressing adaptation needs.

In summary, without scaling up or scaling out of Community-based Adaptation is all good and well, but you can't do this without funding. We need to create a critical mass. The body of knowledge of Community-based Adaptation (CBA) is growing but it is not enough just yet but we need structure in the information. If we expand the knowledge, we therefore pioneer leadership within the ecojustice movement to support the CBA and scaling up of CBA.



Just some activities that can ensure the scaling up of CBA. This includes sharing of knowledge, access to knowledge is also quite important as well as activities that support capacity development and sharing those. It is supporting partnerships. It is supporting promotion of action research and monitoring, empowerment activities as well as policy at local, national and global levels.

Once we start scaling up and scaling out, we also need to speed this up. If any of you are interested in CBA or quite involved in some way, there are a number of discussion groups on email, website you can go to. This is basically a list of learning platforms and processes where you can find more information about what is going on out there. One I would like to highlight is the Community-based Adaptation Exchange. It is a website that is hosted by the International Development Studies in the UK. They encourage anyone who has anything to do with CBA to contribute information so there is a one-stop shop for anyone who wants to know anything.

Another one I would like to highlight is at the recent Community-based Adaptation conference, held in Bangladesh this year, the Global Initiative on Community-based Adaptation was launched. The Initiative hasn't got a body or feet on just yet. It's still in the conception stage. But it is also trying to draw on all of the initiatives that are out there. If people want to know more about climate facts, they can be linked to experts in that field. It is basically encourages development practitioners, academics, government, whoever to come into the initiative and share experiences.

That's it. Thank you.